

# POEMS

By Jennings Carmichael.

STATE LIBRARY OF N.S.W.  
MITCHELL LIBRARY

DSM/  
A821/  
M

Digitised under the State Library of  
NSW's Digital Excellence Program.  
Due to the nature of the original  
material or digitisation process there  
may be instances where the digital  
copies are not exact matches of the  
originals. If you have any questions or  
would like to provide feedback,  
please email  
[collections.library@sl.nsw.gov.au](mailto:collections.library@sl.nsw.gov.au)

ANGUS & ROBERTSON,  
89 CASTLEREAGH ST., SYDNEY  
BETWEEN KING & MARKET STS.

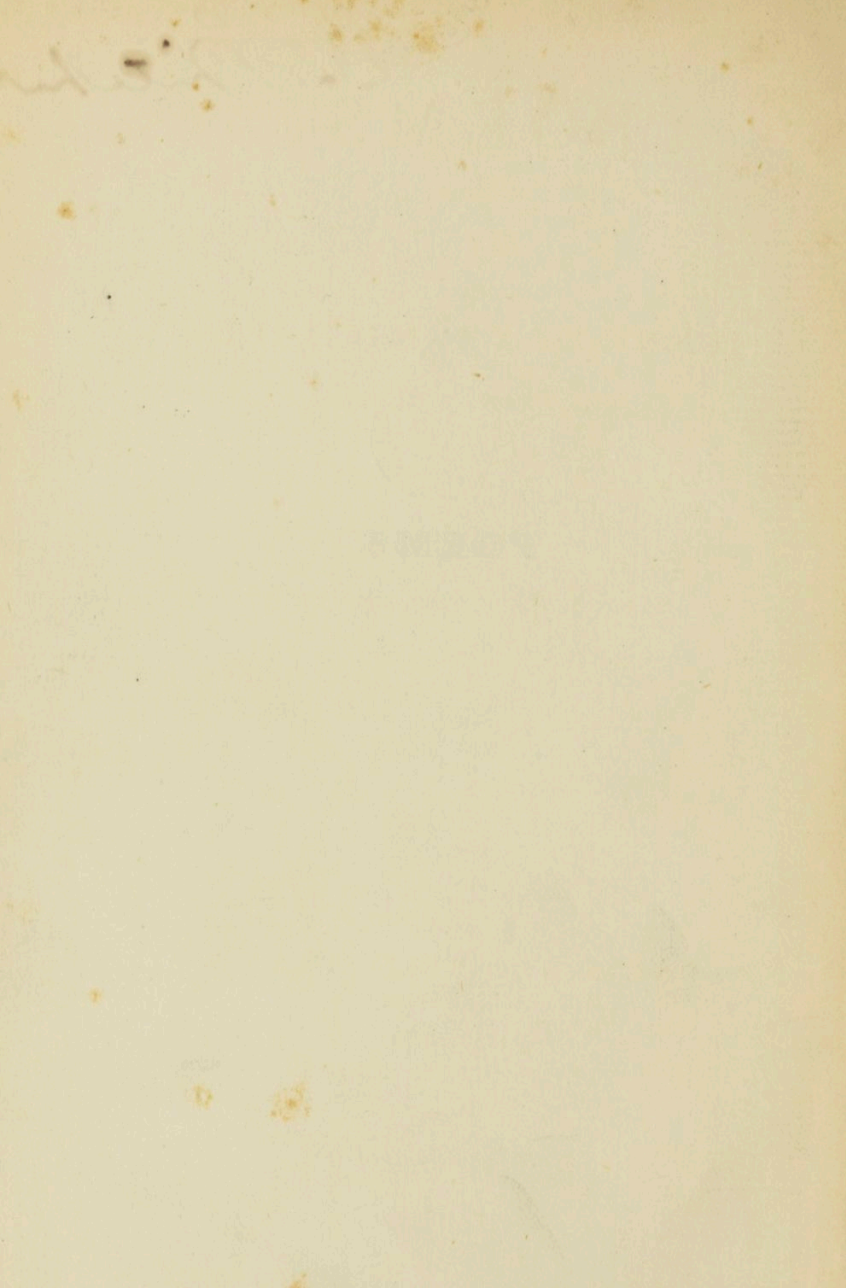





*W. Mitchell.*



POEMS





# POEMS



BY

JENNINGS CARMICHAEL


(MRS. FRANCIS MULLIS)

“Look into thine heart, and write”

LONDON  
LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.  
AND NEW YORK  
MELBOURNE  
MELVILLE, MULLEN, AND SLADE

1895

*All rights reserved*



Printed by BALLANTYNE, HANSON & Co.  
At the Ballantyne Press



## INTRODUCTION

AUSTRALIAN ladies have been strongly in evidence during recent years. They have particularly asserted themselves, with conspicuous success and pronounced acceptance, in the arenas of fiction and music. The names of "Tasma," Ada Cambridge, Mrs. Campbell-Praed, Mrs. Humphry Ward, Mrs. Mannington Caffyn, Miss Mary Gaunt, Madame Melba, Madame Sherwin, Madame Saville, and Miss Ada Crossley are a few that occur at once to the recollection. But Australian women have not hitherto distinguished themselves in the cultivation of the highest and noblest form of literary expression. I think I am correct in saying that the volume which it is now my privilege and pleasure to introduce to the British reading public, is the first substantial collection of poems from the pen of a native Australian lady issued by a London publishing house of the first rank.

Australia, indeed, is very strong in fiction, both on the male and female side, and rather weak in poetry. She produced two remarkable and original poets in Adam Lindsay Gordon and Henry Clarence Kendall, both of whom died before they could enjoy the satisfaction of seeing their works published in

London amid a chorus of critical approbation. A third Australian poet who has achieved a London as well as a Colonial reputation survives in the person of Mr. James Brunton Stephens, but he has not published anything for a long time past. However, a young lady of Melbourne, whom Mr. Stephens has complimented with the title of "The Australian Jean Ingelow," now steps into the breach and proves to us that the line of Colonial poets is by no means ended. Miss Jennings Carmichael, whose collected poems will be found in the following pages, has won a considerable appreciation and popularity in Australia by her graceful and inspiring verses in the Colonial periodicals. She is endowed with both humour and pathos, but, as a rule, her poetry is suggestive of the more serious and impressive aspects of Colonial life and character. Her girlish years were spent in the weird forests of Eastern Victoria, and it was there she acquired the intimate knowledge of what Marcus Clarke has called "the phantasmagoria of that wild dreamland termed the Bush," which is one of the keynotes of her poetry. It was as an observant nature-student in these untrodden solitudes that Miss Carmichael commenced to clothe her thoughts in verse. When she was taken to the metropolis, Melbourne, where her education was completed, she entered on a new and serviceable range of experiences as a nurse in the Children's Hospital of that city. The scenes and incidents of suffering infantile humanity that came under her

observation in that institution she has graphically depicted in prose as well as in verse. Under the title of "Hospital Children" she has published a book of striking and deeply interesting sketches of life in the midst of the afflicted little ones. A large edition of Miss Carmichael's poems has already been subscribed for in Australia, and the admirers of her work are confident that the English edition will be no less successful.

Miss Jennings Carmichael spent her most impressionable years in the solitudes of the Australian bush, in study and seclusion, and from the sounds, the sights, the scenes, and the varying aspects of primeval nature in the southern world, much of her inspiration has been drawn. Her first poems were composed during her girlhood in the bush, and, although she subsequently took up her abode in Melbourne, and is now a resident of that city, the influence of her early environment continues to colour her thoughts and to permeate her poetical efforts.

Miss Jennings Carmichael has already acquired an Australian fame as a graceful and genuine poetess, and I will confidently venture the prediction that this collection of her impressive and melodious verses will have the effect of expanding her celebrity from Colonial to British.

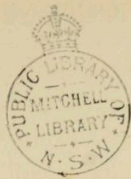
Although her observations and experiences of life have been limited by the restrictions of a colonial environment, evidence will, I think, be found in this volume that Miss Jennings Carmichael possesses the

spirit, the sympathetic insight, and the imaginative power of the true poet, which enable her to appeal with direct and convincing force to the common heart of humanity. Personally, I am perhaps a prejudiced critic, as, I confess, I have read Miss Jennings Carmichael's poems, as they appeared from time to time in a leading Melbourne weekly journal, with deep interest and no little admiration; but I may be permitted to express the hope and the belief that the general consensus of British critical opinion will be tantamount to a cordial welcome to her as a sterling acquisition to the poetesses of the Victorian era.

J. F. HOGAN.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,  
WESTMINSTER, S.W.,

*June 23, 1895.*



## CONTENTS

	PAGE
The Dead Laureate . . . . .	I
When Lightwood Flowers . . . . .	3
At Ebb-tide . . . . .	5
The Dance of the Shadows . . . . .	7
A Wallaby Christmas-tide . . . . .	11
To a Laughing Jackass . . . . .	14
A Poem 'bout Me . . . . .	17
Noon at Tynong, Victoria . . . . .	20
Only Ted . . . . .	22
Unspoken . . . . .	25
Wattle-Gold . . . . .	27
A Story at Sunset . . . . .	29
To A. C. C. . . . .	33
By an Australian Plain—Evening . . . . .	34
Getting at Jim . . . . .	37
English Trees in Australia . . . . .	39
The Birds' Home-Coming . . . . .	42
One, Two, Three . . . . .	44
A Lost Baby . . . . .	46
Eventide . . . . .	48
Ours to Keep . . . . .	50

	PAGE
The Shadow of the Cross . . . . .	52
Alder-Lievest . . . . .	54
Nine Years Old . . . . .	56
In Glenmarie Orchard, Victoria . . . . .	59
“God Knoweth Best” . . . . .	62
In the Furrows . . . . .	64
Evening-Time . . . . .	66
To J. J. M. . . . .	69
When God says “No” . . . . .	71
“Peace, Perfect Peace” . . . . .	74
Shadow and Shine . . . . .	76
Little Jim . . . . .	80
To an Urchin . . . . .	83
The Wooden Legs . . . . .	85
A Nursery Lullaby . . . . .	88
At the Last . . . . .	90
Renunciation . . . . .	93
A Bush Noontide, and Thoughts . . . . .	96
A Bird’s Nest . . . . .	99
A Christmas Morning Soliloquy . . . . .	101
A Spray of Gippsland Wattle-Blossom . . . . .	104
Late Laurels . . . . .	108
A Bush Gloaming . . . . .	110
A City Sparrow . . . . .	113
Tomboy . . . . .	116
In the Nursery . . . . .	119
To the Little Ones . . . . .	121

# CONTENTS

xi

	PAGE
In the Bush—Afternoon . . . . .	123
Laughing Jackasses . . . . .	125
From the Pomegranates . . . . .	127
The Southern Breeze . . . . .	129
An Autumn Mood . . . . .	131
To Ivy . . . . .	133
A Wooden Doll . . . . .	135
Baby . . . . .	138
An Old Bush Road . . . . .	140
Will you Remember? . . . . .	143
A Remonstrance . . . . .	145
The Chime of Bells . . . . .	147
Granny . . . . .	149
For Some One's Sake . . . . .	151
“In the Cool of the Day” . . . . .	154
A Woman's Mood . . . . .	158
Beautiful Life . . . . .	161
Let there be no To-morrow . . . . .	163
The Theme . . . . .	165
Autumn . . . . .	167
The Neglected Garden . . . . .	169
Old Manuscripts . . . . .	171
The Prodigal . . . . .	174
Wattle-Time . . . . .	176
Sunset in the City . . . . .	178
In the Twilight . . . . .	180
To C. F. R. . . . .	184

	PAGE
Passion and Poppies . . . . .	186
A Minor Key . . . . .	188
In the Moonlight . . . . .	190
The Cross . . . . .	192
Sweet Summer's Dead . . . . .	194
Just as Well . . . . .	195
Good-bye, My Friend . . . . .	197
The Years Ago . . . . .	199
Faded Flowers . . . . .	200
Not such a While Ago . . . . .	202
In Vain . . . . .	204
Were it Light instead of Darkness . . . . .	206
Elm Trees in Autumn . . . . .	207
In Memory . . . . .	210
A Good-Night . . . . .	212



## THE DEAD LAUREATE

As music soaring into strength and sweetness,  
Closing a long refrain,  
Gathers the subtile notes of incompleteness  
Into a crowning strain ;  
So Death's "Amen," with chords supreme in  
gladness,  
Rose from thy harp's sweet strings,  
In perfect music, with no moan of sadness,  
To Heaven on angels' wings !

Dear singer, in the English moonlight dying !  
Falters my voice and falls ;  
I see thee in the morning darkness lying,  
The "glory on the walls."  
O calm life's setting tide, serenely flowing  
On to the ocean far !  
I watch thy fair, grand spirit outward going,  
Eager to cross the bar.

Ah me ! thro' every English heart is wailing  
That sadness of farewell !  
"Our Poet dead !" we sob, with voices failing,  
Hearing thy evening bell.

But "moaning bar," to thee, seemed music sighing  
Gentle as deep relief ;

Too full of God's own psalm wast thou for crying  
Of ours to give thee grief !

O Poet King ! whose laurelled head has taken  
Death's garland of white flowers ;  
Thine eyes beneath the wreath will never waken  
To earth's unresting hours.

Thy magic voice is mute—its perfect singing  
Will never more o'erflow ;

Yet there is deathless music in the ringing  
Of melodies we know.

For us earth's broken chords ; for thee the sweetness  
Of symphonies afar ;

Till we, too, hear the psalm in its completeness,  
Swelling across the bar.

Till we, too, follow, trustful, unresisting,  
Where souls "put out to sea,"

Hearing above "Farewell" the song insisting  
Of God's full harmony.

## WHEN LIGHTWOOD FLOWERS

A MEMORY of landscapes comes to me,  
The flush of springtide fills my heart again ;  
The lissom budded twigs once more I see,  
A yellow largesse over hill and plain.  
A wealth of blossom blows upon the earth,  
In the young passion of awakening hours,  
But brightest bloom in all the land has birth,  
When lightwood flowers.

A far-off river current curls and sweeps  
Its gurgling waters in my ears once more ;  
I watch again how each slow ripple creeps  
In foamless wavelets on that river shore ;  
I see the grey boat moored upon the bank,  
Beneath the shadow thrown from leafy bowers ;  
I hear the singing in the rushes dank,  
When lightwood flowers.

Still hang the gnarled roots o'er the placid tide,  
Where I would lie in girlish, gladsome days,  
Watching the sparkles o'er the river wide,  
Till eyes were dazzled by the golden rays.

Still float the yellow blossoms down the stream,  
Shaken from slender limbs in perfumed showers,  
Beneath whose sweetness I could dream and dream,  
When lightwood flowers !

I hear the waters swirl below the roots,  
And seem to see again, with restful eyes,  
The bronzy buds, and leaves, and spiral shoots,  
Wedded to break the blue of cloudless skies.  
How was I wont to listen to the sound  
Of throbbing pulses, and returning powers !  
The heart of Nature leaps within the ground,  
When lightwood flowers !

The reedy marshes girdled by the hills,  
The low-set orchard on the willowed road ;  
The dreamful distances where blue mist fills  
The bushy spaces of the birds' abode.  
The stretch of valley, rich with growing grain,  
Dyed with the glory of the sunset hours ;  
The ranges haunted by a wraith of rain,  
When lightwood flowers.

O ! springs of girlhood, ye were wondrous sweet ;  
O ! suns of girlhood, ye did shine so strong ;  
No springtides bring your flowers beneath my feet,  
No noontides shine so brightly, nor so long.  
The loveliest and best seems dead and cold,  
Buried as surely as your lispings showers,  
And memory only brings the days of old,  
When lightwood flowers.

## AT EBB TIDE

WHEN the long-rolling waves are receding,  
    Flowing wearily back from the shore ;  
When the beautiful billows are speeding  
    To the golden-hued shingles no more ;  
When bright hopes die away in the sadness  
    Of darkness, despairing and wide !  
In the sorrow that follows the gladness,—  
    I am yours at the ebb of the tide.

When the passionate hours you remember,  
    Are gone with their glamour and glow ;  
When the fire has gone out, and the ember  
    In ashes lies coldly below ;  
When the flowers in life's garden you tended  
    So carefully, fade by your side ;  
When the glory of being seems ended,—  
    I am yours at the ebb of the tide !

When you come to the close of the story,  
    And put by the book with a sigh ;  
When the last of the sun's golden glory  
    Is pale in the shadowing sky ;

When you care not for darkness or morning,  
But reckless whatever betide,  
All life's morrowful promises scorning,—  
I am yours at the ebb of the tide !

Not yours when the breakers come flowing,  
Proudly in from the purple mid-sea ;  
Not yours when the noontide is glowing,  
And the world from night's shadow is free ;  
Not yours in the light and the gladness  
Of wonderful moments that glide,  
Unhaunted by phantoms of sadness,—  
But yours at the ebb of the tide !

At the ebb of the tide you will find me,  
Waiting steadfast, and faithful, and true ;  
For your sorrow and need, dear, will bind me,  
As never your gladness could do !  
Then come, O Belovèd ! at setting  
Of sunlight, when shadows are wide ;  
All the wrong and the anguish forgetting,—  
I am yours at the ebb of the tide !

## THE DANCE OF THE SHADOWS

BLOWING high, blowing low,  
Where the sunlight's aglow,  
Come, sweet wind, swift or slow !  
Shake the seed from the trees,  
Bend the flowers on the leas,  
Let the river of shadows o'erflow !

They are dancing away,  
Under blossom and spray,  
Like sprite children at play !  
How their shapes change and pass  
On the delicate grass,  
And fleck every curve of the way !

Blowing high, blowing low,  
All the world's swinging so,  
In the winds to and fro !  
Whither dancing so gay  
Thro' the hours of the day,—  
O where, airy shades, would ye go ?

There are hills sloping green,  
With deep valleys between ;

Ye would love them, I ween !  
There are tremulous flowers  
Under shadowy showers,  
And stretches of meadow unseen.

I know rivers that run,  
Brim with light from the sun,  
And of darkness there's none ;  
Slip away to the beams  
Of the sun on the streams,  
Their fleetness will soon be outrun !

Race along with the tide,  
Winds it narrow or wide,  
There'll be beauty beside ;  
Ripple dusky and cool,  
Into shallow and pool,—  
Ye're welcome whatever betide !

Every blossom that blows,  
Dandelion or rose,  
Your cold kisses may close !  
Ye may drown every beam,  
In the wells of the stream,  
And chill the warm breeze as it goes.

While ye laugh with the light,  
Lovely ghosts of the night,

Haunting hollow and height !  
 Ye are wed to the day,  
 Tho' the darkness may say,  
 " I claim all the shadows by right ! "

Blowing high, blowing low !  
 O ! I love you all so,  
 Wind and shadow, sun-glow !  
 Glide along o'er the earth,  
 For its beauty has birth,  
 Where gloom, breeze and sunshine o'er-  
 flow.

Spirit, where would we fly,  
 Thro' the world—you and I,  
 To what land—'neath what sky ?  
 Could we hasten away  
 With the shadows to-day,  
 I wonder where'er we should hie ?

Happy shadows to blow  
 Thro' a world to and fro,  
 O, I envy you so !  
 This pent spirit must rest,  
 Like sick bird in its nest,  
 However it wearies to go !

O, to leave for one day  
 This close prison of clay,

And with you dance away !  
 Down some infinite stream,  
 We might find out our dream  
 Of the beautiful, hidden away !

Blowing low, blowing high,  
 Wheresoever we fly,  
 Haunting memories lie !  
 All our earth-ways are wet,  
 With the tears we forget,  
 When we laugh in the light of the sky.

So I ween it is best  
 To be here in the nest,  
 Little bird in my breast !  
 Let the shadows run free  
 Over woodland and lea,—  
 We might only gain grief and unrest !

Blowing high, blowing low,  
 While the beam-broken flow  
 Of the shades come and go.  
 There's God's breath in the breeze,  
 There's God's voice in the trees,  
 I kneel in the clover, and know !

## A WALLABY CHRISTMASTIDE

A "WALLABY" Christmas, Jack, old man!—

Well, a worse fate might befall us!

The bush must do for our church to-day,

And birds be the bells to call us.

The breeze that comes from the shore beyond,

Thro' the old gum-branches swinging,

Will do for our solemn organ-chords,

And the sound of children singing.

Yon wide blue sky, breaking in between,

We catch in these passing glances,

The glimpse of river and creek below,

Where a gap in the leafage chances,

Mean more than the light thro' the springing arch,

Filling dim cathedral spaces :

God's living aisles lead to altars high—

We are ever in holy places !

Let's lie an hour on the rough bush grass,—

The swag will do for a pillow,—

And list to the low bush monotone,

The boom of the distant billow.

We get our text and our sermon, too,  
After all we've missed, friend Jack!  
Let's turn our faces to God's great East,  
Alone on the "wallaby track!"

O, hear the warble among the birds,  
With never a note of sadness!  
They're all too pure for the need of prayer,  
And the Jubilate gladness  
Is matin chorus and vesper hymn  
Wherever a bird is singing!  
There's never a choir so true, I know,  
To-day where the bells are ringing!

Somewhere I've heard that the deepest theme  
Is not the saddest and gravest;  
That God crowns life with a psalm of praise  
Where the truest note's the bravest.  
So far away in the steepled town  
There are singing lips that falter,  
And trembling knees that were better here,  
With us, on our wild earth-altar!

So, Jack, we will hold our Christmas Mass;  
For chancel—these woods in morning!  
Sweet Nature's calling her acolytes,  
Never one his office scorning.  
And pure-eyed priests, clad in holy robe,  
Are here with the Father's treasures!  
The wind comes in with an organ depth  
In its soft and solemn measures.

The wide woods murmur responsive song,  
And the wild birds' lifted throats  
The sub-strains catch, till they echo forth  
In a warble of perfect notes !  
So let us find in the blended voice  
Of the wind, of the earth and sea,  
The lovely hint of a fragment-song  
From the chant of eternity.

Thus we shall not miss what others seek  
Where the Christmas bells are swinging.  
Our elfin sextons were out to-day,  
And Nature's chimes are a-ringing !  
Our service of praise and prayer was heard  
From earth's beautiful altars wide ;  
God's " Nunc Dimittis " has blest us, too,  
In a " Wallaby Christmastide."

## TO A LAUGHING JACKASS

LAUGH on, brave bird, up on the stricken tree !  
Thy joyous song rings clear ;  
Not leafy bough nor blooming branch for thee,  
Tho' thousands rustle near !  
The barren, broken limb is thine by choice,  
And from its dead arms start  
The passionate outpourings of thy voice,  
In tones that thrill the heart.

Laugh on, brave one ! thy sober, soft-plumed throat  
Gives out the gladdest psalm ;  
No wild-winged singer has a purer note,  
Nor knows a subtler charm.  
Thou art my darling of all birds, no strain  
Is quite so dear to me !  
For in thy happy voice I find again  
The joys of memory.

Once more the sunset-light the valley fills ;  
The marsh is all aglow,  
Dark shadows deepen on the lifted hills,  
The rayless sun sinks low.

And on my childish head, uncovered all  
In reverential prayer,  
A wondrous benediction seems to fall,  
And tells me God is here !

Then kneel I tranced amid the rustling grass,  
In that large sunset light,  
And thro' my young soul visions seem to pass  
Deep, beautiful, and bright.  
And thy glad voice, brave singer, overhead  
Thrills thro' my drooping life :  
Thy full song seems to say, " Give joy instead,  
Not strains with sadness rife.

" This murmuring world needs gladness, not lament ;  
Tune thy crude harp again,  
And from its strings be nobler music sent  
Than grieving chords of pain.  
The true psalm is a pæan rich in praise  
And brings the peace ye crave :  
The sad, complaining discords ye upraise,  
Are neither true nor brave ! "

Dear laughing bird ! thy sweet, rebuking strain  
But simple mockery seemed !  
The grief-strung strings of life held so much pain,  
Such anguish from them streamed :  
How could I know the unreality  
Of life, apart from Truth ?  
I had not these clear eyes wherewith to see  
The mysteries of youth :

I did not know the sunward side of wings,  
    In shadow overhead ;  
Nor understand why every wild bird sings  
    As if its young were fed !  
Now can I join thee with a wiser mind,  
    In glad courageous song :  
God's harmonies are Love and Joy combined ;  
    All other themes are wrong.

## A POEM 'BOUT ME '

“ ARE you really the poetry-maker,  
That writes in the papers we see ?  
Oh, I like little poems 'bout children,—  
Will you make a poem 'bout me ?  
I'm not sick, like the hospital babies,  
I know I'm as strong as can be ;  
Can't you write about well little people ?  
Please make up a poem 'bout me ! ”

“ I am really the poetry-maker,  
My darling,” I said, with a smile ;  
“ I can write about ‘ well ’ little people,  
In verse that would stretch to a mile !  
You can stand, and look over my shoulder,  
To say what I've written is true ;  
Hold the sheet with your fat little finger,  
I'm writing a poem 'bout you.”

“ There's a certain small girl in the city,  
Her face is as round as a rose ;  
She has curled, sunny hair, all a-tangle,  
Blue eyes, and a snub little nose ;

Rosy lips has this dear little maiden,—  
 The reddest of cheeks ever seen,  
 And the brownest of wee, dimpled fingers ;—  
 I see they are not over clean !

“ Now, this dear little girl in the city,  
 Her face is as round as a rose,  
 Tears most terrible rents in her dresses,  
 And wears all her shoes at the toes.  
 Listen, reader ! I'll tell you a secret  
 Of what this small lady can do. . . .  
 Now, my dear little Midget, stand steady,  
 I'm writing a poem 'bout you.

“ Up the biggest old gum in the garden  
 Those worn little slippers can climb. . . .”  
 “ O yes ! say all about the tame 'possum,  
 I got for the children that time !  
 And do tell how the fat gander chased me  
 'Till I was as scared as could be !  
 You are really a good poetry-maker,—  
 I do like this poem 'bout me !

“ Say the puppies got into the garden,  
 And spoilt all the plants that I set ;  
 Tell how Kitty's poor dolly was ruined  
 Thro' being left out in the wet.  
 And you might as well say I'm not speaking  
 To Nellie or Millicent Fife,—  
 They are truly the horriddest children  
 I ever played with in my life !

“ Put in all about Alec’s new pony,  
I’m going to ride him some day ;  
And the cat with the snowy white kittens,  
That mother is giving away ;  
And say, too, we have got a retriever,  
That swims like a fish in the sea.  
O ! I think you are getting on grandly ;  
This is a nice poem ’bout me ! ”

So I write in the sunshiny morning,  
My dear little friend at my side,  
With her pretty lips rosily parted,  
The clear, childish eyes open wide.  
And I pray that her innocent sweetness  
Unspoilt and unsullied may be ;  
That no future may mock the soft query,  
“ Can you make a poem ’bout me ? ”

## NOON AT TYNONG, VICTORIA

It is a day to dream one dream,  
And then in full content to die,  
Bearing away in memory  
The colours of that cloudless sky ;  
The odour of the fragrant grass,  
As 'mid its seeded spears we lie ;  
The motion of those throbbing wings,  
That thro' the dense blue distance fly.

It is a day to dream one dream  
Of earthly peace, forgetting all  
The bygone gloom of darker days,  
The keen cold blasts, and sullen fall  
Of slant grey rain ; the leafless line  
Of solemn poplars, straight and tall ;  
The burial hours of mid-year June,  
That wrap the earth with sombre pall.

A day to dream one dream of rest,  
Untortured by foreboding fears ;  
To drink with joy the breezy gust  
That round this spreading lightwood sheers.

To clasp dear Hope with eager arms,  
And look with eyes undimmed by tears,  
While memory blots away for once  
The sorrows of the yester-years.

In the broad marsh the colours glow,  
Nut browns and blues, and liquid gold;  
Deep purples fill the dimpling clefts,  
Piercing each wooded mountain fold.  
On yonder gradual slope the clear,  
Transparent summer-sunlight holds  
No trace of shadow,—standing bright  
Against the circle of the wolds.

A day to dream one dream of rest,—  
O friends, your happy voices ring  
So freshly from the glowing lawn  
That glistens through the sombre wing  
Of yon old fir; sweet is the sound  
The echoes to my senses bring,  
Painting soft pictures of content,  
That ever to the heart will cling!

## ONLY TED

ARE you crying, Mother, darling,  
Crying, Mother, all for me ?  
Is my hand in your hand lying,  
Are these tears of yours I see ?  
Why then are you weeping, Mother ?  
Dick and Joe are safe in bed,—  
Is it that I am not sleeping,  
You are here by me instead ?

Mother, do not fret about me,  
Tho' I am so sick to-night ;  
Press my hands to one another,  
I will say my prayers all right.  
I will say " Our Father," Mother,  
Like you taught me years ago,  
When you loved me, Mother, darling,  
Just as much as Dick and Joe.

O ! how sorely you 'd have fretted,  
If they had been hurt instead !  
Keep my trembling hands together ;  
Hold them till my prayers are said.

If for me you weep so wildly,  
How you 'd cry for Dick or Joe !  
I am only Ted, dear Mother,  
What 's the use of grieving so ?

Think that I shall never vex you  
Any more with noisy plays ;  
And, may be, when I am taken,  
They 'll forget my naughty ways.  
Joe and Dick are only babies  
To a fellow eight years old ;  
They will not recall the brother  
Who was " always rough and bold."

Mother dear, I know you 're sorry  
That I lie awake in pain ;  
Yet I well could bear another  
Night, to have you near again !  
It is such a long while, Mother,  
Since you sat beside my bed ;  
That was when there were no others,  
—Dick nor Joe—but only Ted.

Do not think me silly, Mother,  
When I tell you how I cry  
Every night to hear you going  
By my door to where they lie.  
Though I know I'm often naughty,  
And deserve no kiss in bed,  
Surely, sometimes, when you 're passing,  
You might call " Good-night " instead !

Mother, darling, I am dying, . . . .

You will kiss me first to-night :

Little Joe and Dick are sleeping,

Nurse put out the candle-light.

They are safe and cosy, dearie,

And your kiss for them will keep,

While you stay beside me, Mother, . . . .

Just until I fall asleep.

There's a prayer I may remember,

Help me, please, to say it right ;—

“Jesus, tender Shepherd, hear me,

Bless Thy little lamb to-night.”

Mother, darling . . . . I was trying . . . .

Never to be naughty more. . . . .

Say “Good-night” . . . . if you won't kiss  
me . . . .

When you're passing . . . . by the door.

## UNSPOKEN

WHILE the river flows to the ocean,  
It has many a word to say ;  
It lingers by deep and shallow,  
It loiters and laughs the way.  
Now sighing above the pebbles,  
Now singing by blossoms gay ;  
Thro' shining and showers, and the blowing of  
flowers,  
The river will have its say.

But near to the deep sea drawing,  
With its great pulse beating slow,  
The voice of the river falters,  
The tones of the tide sink low.  
The prattle of laughter changes  
To murmurs of breathless rest,  
And with white arms wide to the wondrous tide,  
It sinks in the ocean's breast !

And love has the life of the river,  
Many-voiced when the stream is young,  
While over the shallowest spaces,  
The loudest of songs are sung.

And love's silent, too, as the river,  
Finding never a word to say,  
When the infinite deep lays for ever asleep,  
The babble of yesterday !

So it is that I sing no greeting  
To thee I have loved so long ;  
Did I love thee less it were easy  
To tell all my heart in song.  
Forgive that it fails and falters  
This voice, by the great love-sea ;—  
I reach thee a hand, dear one, as I stand  
All dumb on the shore with thee !

## WATTLE GOLD

You are here again, in the wind and the rain,  
Dear little heads of gold !  
Your blooms uncurled, in the wakening world,  
As lovely as of old—  
The shadow of cloud does not make you  
shroud  
Your blossoms from the cold !

You are first in bloom, in spite of the gloom,  
Of rainy wind-blown ways ;—  
So eager, I trow, to goldenly glow  
Though chilling winter stays ;  
And the cold, grey showers fall on your flowers,  
In swift, mid-season days.

You seem to forget the wind and the wet,  
Brave little blossoms bold !  
You claim no right from the tardy sunlight,  
But break your buds of gold,  
'Neath a gloomy sky, where the storm-clouds  
fly,  
And the rain mists are unrolled.

Come out in the grey of the wintry day,  
A sunlight new for the land !  
Let your gold and green in the world be seen,  
A garland for every hand.  
Glow under the skies, for adoring eyes,  
And yield to the spring's command !

O beautiful flowers ! you bring the hours  
Of soft and sweet springtime ;  
You seem to be late, as we wistful wait,  
Thro' winter's rain and rime.  
O chase the gloom with your glorious bloom,  
And bring the season's prime !

Blow, foliage soft, in the air aloft,  
And swing your budded leaves ;—  
Such wealth untold are your treasures of gold,  
No wonder there are thieves !  
O "perfume rare," you are everywhere ;  
Your balm to memory cleaves !

O blossom ! so bright, in the low-toned light  
Of soft, shadowy day !  
You have brought the gold, from the hours of old,  
And strewn it in my way.  
Some things will outlast, the winter past,  
The thoughts you bring to-day !

## A STORY AT SUNSET

LOOK ! there is the homestead—here the gate ;  
The old pine drive, up sweeping,  
Is cool and dark with the shadows' weight  
O'er grass and gravel creeping.  
Behind, see the stretch of bare, walled plains,  
With sunset skies about them.  
How the pine trees burn with the crimson stains,  
What tones on the grass without them !

The road winds on from the gate ; its sand  
Looks red in the low sunlight.  
Far as you see is her Father's land,  
Taking that bush to the right. . . .  
Hush ! she is riding between the firs,—  
She comes at a flying pace :—  
Did you ever know a seat like hers,  
Or see such another face ?

Afraid of her glance ? O, never doubt !  
She will only find in me  
One of the tramps that are always about,  
Not the man I used to be.

On chin and cheek now my beard grows black,  
My hat's pulled low on my brow.  
How would she know her debonair Jack,  
In the man that I am now ?

Look ! she is turning her face this way,  
Did you ever see such eyes ?  
No wonder they scorched me through that day  
I cursed my soul with lies !  
We had been lovers more than a year,  
And I failed, as most fail,—well,  
I wonder if all men pay as dear,  
Or spend such a time in hell ?

I know I was never fit to wake  
One throb in her pure young breast,  
But I wooed her for my own soul's sake,  
As we men seek for the best,  
When life's first flush goes, and the oats are sown,  
We find in a harvest yonder !  
When time comes for gathering in our own,  
What shall we reap, I wonder ?

In her an angel of truth I found,  
Too innocent to doubt me.  
I felt that I stood on holy ground,  
With her young arms about me ;  
And God knows well how I hoped to live  
To the light she held above me ;  
To give the best that I had to give,  
In thanks that she could love me !

I failed. Even now my heart-beats rise  
With a dull and heavy pain ;  
O, the scorn of those reproachful eyes,  
I feel them burn me again !  
How a woman's soft lips scourge !—that part  
With a kiss in every curl !  
I 'd sooner meet a sword in my heart  
Than a glance from that slight girl !

\* \* \* \* \*

It's all passed now, and I seem to see  
The wrong, but with its reason.  
Why should she sully her soul with me,  
To make me hers a season ?  
For the canker root seemed fast in the core,  
And life gone past retrieving,  
I might have slept as I slept before,  
So where's the use of grieving ?

But I like to come at times to the place,  
Where heaven once lay about me ;  
And catch a glimpse of the perfect face,  
That looks so calm without me.  
Her soul was pure as a flower in snow,  
Held sweet in maiden trances.  
Why do we let all our angels go,  
And miss our own soul's chances ?

It's all a puzzle, but somewhere yet  
We'll read life's riddle aright.  
The last lines fade in the deep sunset,  
There's a sense of the coming night.

And standing here on the darkening plain,  
With the horizon lights burnt low,  
I feel it is better, in spite of pain,  
To have loved and lost her so.

TO A. C. C.

PERHAPS in some dim sphere afar,  
Our earthly lives may find completeness ;  
And in some fair, diviner star,  
Friendship may know immortal sweetness.  
So if no more we see thy face,  
And time divide us when we sever,  
May Heaven hold one star in space,  
Where we can all be friends together !

BY AN AUSTRALIAN PLAIN—  
EVENING

THE young night lies upon the quiet land,  
By large horizons rimmed ;  
The winds are blowing from the low sea-strand,—  
The distant hills are dimmed.  
Dusk's sweet irresolution lingers round,  
Blurring the faint outline  
Of fences, pencilled on the sunburnt ground,  
And shadowy sheep and kine.

Promise of stars illumines the pallid sky,  
The wondrous sky of plains ;  
O lovely sweep of heaven to earthly eye,  
O'er-flushed with sunset stains !  
O crystal heaven, infinite, unmarred,  
Drinking in gloom like wine !  
Drink deeper, till the swarthy night is starred,—  
God's radiant lamps divine !

Branches are swinging in the rapid breeze,  
Keeping the birds awake ;  
I hear the songsters in the swinging trees,  
With liquid throats ashake.

The crows caw hoarsely as their ebon wings  
 Winnow the misty space;  
 While loud the laughter of the jackass rings,  
 The glory of the place.

The dogs are howling to the rising moon,  
 Climbing the glimmering sky ;  
 Eve's humid shadows leave us all too soon,  
 And dusky hours are by.  
 Shapes grow distinct, and normal once again,  
 The hills stand as of yore,  
 We see the boulders, scattered o'er the plain,  
 Naked and bare once more.

And birds grow drowsy in the clapping leaves,  
 Their gurgling warbles end ;  
 Soft shadows 'neath the trees pale moonlight  
 weaves,  
 Where wind-blown grasses bend.  
 The star-points sharpen in the firm, pure sky,  
 Ringed by horizons mild,  
 And winds are rolling onward with a cry,  
 As of a seeking child.

O wailing winds ! O grave night-lands ! I feel  
 Your power to being's core !  
 Vague, restless memories o'er my spirit steal,  
 And yearning needs of yore.  
 Dear Heaven, your stars burn through my soul like  
 flame,  
 I cannot meet their light !

So high above the shadow of earth's shame  
 They seem to me to-night !

Blow, gusty breeze !—I share thy quest to-night,  
 Since rest is me denied ;  
 My spirit follows thy mysterious flight  
 Into the darkness wide !  
 Shall we be sleepless phantoms in dim space,  
 Lost to earth's cradling breast ?  
 O bear me to some sweet abiding-place,  
 Where tired heart may rest !

Dim, wind-swept, starry world of eventide,  
 Thy silence stills my cry ;  
 So deep a rest broods o'er the level wide,  
 Such peace is in the sky !  
 Here is no place for any meaner need  
 Than spirit feels,—no room  
 For striving passionate, or urging greed,  
 In this sweet starlit gloom !

Even the swift winds lull, and quiet trees  
 Hold solemn darkness now.  
 A faint breath, from the slowly-sinking breeze,  
 Dies softly on my brow.  
 O rest, my soul ! for earth's profoundest peace  
 Lies on the large night-lands :—  
 Here life's complaining discords wholly cease,  
 In faith that understands.

## GETTING AT JIM

“DON’T thrash the game little chap, sir !”

Said Jack, and his eyes were dim.

“ I don’t mind the licking a scrap, sir,

Just gimme a hiding for him !

I know he ’s a bit of a lad, sir,

And always up to some trick,

But Jim isn’t real bad, sir ;

Young Jim is a reg’lar brick !

“ You should see how he can fight, sir,

And hold his own like a man !

Why only the other night, sir,

He laid out a fellow called Dan—

A great big, bullying chap, sir,

He ’d make more than two of Jim !

But Jim didn’t care a rap, sir,

My ! how he pitched into him !

“ Jim never will split on a chum, sir,

He’ll stand the racket alone.

If you ask until you ’re dumb, sir,

He won’t say who fired a stone !

A good old flogging for him, sir,  
Just hammers the devil in ;  
D' you think a fellow like Jim, sir,  
Can be got at thro' his skin ?

“ You gimme a hiding instead, sir,  
And don't mind leaving your marks !  
Why, Jim would go off his head, sir,  
He 'd soon give over his larks !  
Just try it once for a change, sir ;  
I 'm not afraid of my back !  
It 'll be uncommonly strange, sir,  
If Jim don't keep on the track.

“ Say you will flog me for him, sir,  
I think I can see Jim's face !  
That is the way to fix Jim, sir,  
He won't see me thrashed in his place !  
Wire into him as you will, sir,  
He 'll have his lark till he 's dead !  
But if you 'd give him his fill, sir,  
Just hammer his mate instead.”

## ENGLISH TREES IN AUSTRALIA

“Autumn leaves down drifting  
In the mellow air,  
Ye have left in shifting  
All the branches bare !”

THE fragrant city garden round me lies,  
Warm in the autumn sun,  
With sere trees pencilled clear against the skies.  
The leaves dropt one by one  
Wide o'er the freshening grass, now foliage-strown ;  
A wind-gust softly stirs  
Till tawny leaves are lifted up and blown  
With needles of the firs.

Between the fallen brown comes up the green,  
And now, when blades are grown,  
The leaf-robed boughs no longer intervene ;  
No shielding shades are thrown  
Down on the tender life around the roots,  
To keep it sweet and fair ;  
The light falls, mellowed, on the unsheathed shoots,  
And so the trees are bare !

No wind comes wooing to the waiting arms  
 Ready to fold it fast ;  
 The vacant boughs are shorn of all their charms,  
 And so the breeze steals past.  
 No birds are singing in the elms—instead  
 The firs are full with song,—  
 A truant impulse turned each feathered head  
 As the sly wind went along !

High, naked tree—each twig so clear and true,  
 With woven tendrils fine  
 Against the beauty of the broken blue,—  
 I love these limbs of thine !  
 Their charm remains for me, in spite of loss,—  
 Altho' the leaves lie round,  
 In splendid dissolution, far across  
 The rich autumnal ground.

There is a stern austerity and strength  
 In each nude branch I see ;  
 An urgent life in every lifted length  
 That reaches up from me :  
 A hidden grace that seems to overlie  
 A latent loveliness,—  
 So spirit-fair they look against the sky  
 In dainty nakedness.

Brave leaf-stript branches ! Do I guess aright—  
 And does your spirit sing  
 Of all the buds that tarry for the light,  
 Waiting the unborn Spring ?

Are ye full conscious of the wealthy store  
    Soon thro' the bark to press,  
And robe you, as in young-eyed Springs of yore,  
    In garb of loveliness ?

Well may ye bear the season's pause, and take  
    Deep draughts of sunlight good :  
The little buds to softly, slowly wake,  
    Sleeping within the wood.

Well may ye rest with patient strength tho' bare  
    And spectral as a wraith !  
Nature with you, in ever-present care,  
    Has never broken faith.

You know, wise trees ! 'tis sometimes best to cast  
    The old robes quite away ;  
The vesture, beauteous and new, grows fast,  
    And will be worn one day.  
So steadfast stand : a lesson great I see  
    In your appointed fate ;—  
God has another garb of faith for me,  
    If I will trust and wait.

## THE BIRDS' HOME-COMING

LIST to the drowsy pinions beating,  
High in the azure of Heaven outspread !  
All the birds from the moors are meeting,—  
Dark flying shapes in the sunset red.  
Sure are the trees in the old plantation,  
No morning's nest will be out of sight ;  
Happy birds after day's probation,  
To sleep secure in the nest at night !

The darkling plumes of the gums are crowded  
'Gainst the pale haze of the fading sky ;  
Lonely crests of the hills are shrouded,  
And brooding mists on the waters lie.  
Ye look into the sunset sweetness,  
O little birds, from your leafy towers !  
While full throats sing of the day's completeness,  
Drinking the dew of these gloaming hours.

I hear the warblings of countless voices,  
The flutterings soft of myriad wings ;  
Each heart in the nested choir rejoices,—  
My own gives answer with yearning strings.

Little birds, ye have taught me, sweetly  
Singing your loves in the dying day !  
Angels' voices are yours ! completely  
Bringing back faiths that were far away !

Sing, darling birds ! ye are nearer heaven,  
Than I, who watch you with lifted eyes :  
I, kneeling here on the earth, unshriven,  
With God's reproach in the vesper skies,  
O not the weariest bird is weary  
As I, of the search thro' the long daylight !  
Father, save from the darkness dreary,  
And bring me home with the birds at night !

## ONE, TWO, THREE

I HAVE a love of one, two, three,  
Never was love so fair ;  
Dimples are deep in her fingers wee,  
Sunbeams shine in her hair.  
Gay and glad are her laughing eyes,  
Clear as a morning sea ;  
And white her brow where the love-lock lies,  
Dear little one, two, three.

One, two, three has a voice that sings  
Under the blossoms fair,  
Love has a merry laugh that rings  
Out in the golden air ;  
One, two, three has a form so sweet,  
I must love it for aye !—  
From shining head to dear little feet,  
Sweeter than tongue can say.

“ Dear little love, I wonder how  
Old little love can be ? ”  
Answers she with a wrinkling brow,  
“ Lollie is, one, two, three.

One, two, three will be two, three, four,"  
So says cousin Elaine,  
"When wattles bloom by the creek once  
more,  
Out in the open plain."

"One, two, three will be growing old  
When wattles flower!" I cry;  
She shakes her tresses of ruddy gold,  
With a doubtful look in her eye.  
"Will two, three, four be as old as you,  
And mother and Auntie Fay?  
O! Uncle Jack, they never am true  
The 'dicolous things you say!"

"Well, dear little love, it so may be,  
But listen, some things are true;—  
I tell you now that you love me,  
And fancy! I love you!  
And if 'tis so when the bloom is back,  
What matter how old you be!  
So long as you have your Uncle Jack,  
And I little one, two, three."

## A LOST BABY

DEAR little brown-eyed Baby Boy,  
Where have you gone astray?  
Who has stolen the chubby head  
And soft little curls away?  
Who has taken the wee, round face,  
Dimpled in chin and cheek?—  
Dear little brown-eyed Baby Boy,  
Tell me where I shall seek?

Baby boy, with the locks of gold,  
Answer me, I implore!  
The warm little arms curl round me, dear,  
Cling to my neck once more!  
Rose-red lips come cooing to mine,  
Parted for kisses sweet!  
I love you, dear, from the darling head  
To the little dimpled feet!

Baby Boy, you have gone away!  
The high chair, painted blue,—  
A pair of shoes, and a tiny cap,  
Are all that's left of you.

A baby cap, once owned with pride,  
Then cast aside as a *girl's* !  
You used to wear it all askew  
On a mop of springing curls !

Baby Boy, you've gone away,—  
Dimples and curls and all !  
I'll never hear the cooing voice,  
Nor pattering footfall.  
I keep the cap, and the first wee shoes  
That round the garden ran,—  
Where do you think is the Baby Boy ?  
Baby has grown a man !

## EVENTIDE

THE day is folded in a shroud of peace,  
The world is still,  
The fiery hues of summer sunset burn  
O'er yonder hill.

The breeze is spent, or passed in calm away,  
No winds are roaming.

The day is folded in a shroud of peace,  
By quiet gloaming.

Tired, sleepy birds are nestling in the gloom ;  
The mustered kine  
Creep up the paddocks through the dust-blurred  
trees,  
A dawdling line.

Far in the bush the jackass mocking peals  
Loud laughter ringing,  
And magpies, joining in the wild refrain,  
Their songs are singing.

Shadows are hovering o'er the fading light,  
The dusk's dim hours  
Have come with urns of radiant dew to quench  
The parching flowers.

Like gems upon the amber of the west,  
Sweet stars are lying,  
While Dian's argent disk is brightening fast,  
And day is dying.

\* \* \* \* \*

The night is here ! O let us lay in calm  
Life's care away ;  
Letting the sorrows of the light withdrawn  
Sleep with the day.  
For all fair spirits, at this gentle hour,  
Seem round us roaming ;  
When day is folded in a shroud of peace,  
By quiet gloaming.

## OURS TO KEEP

MOTHER, did God lend you baby,  
Just a little time to stay,  
Like the tiny darling brother  
That He took last year away ?  
Is he only *borrowed*, mother,  
Will he stay to learn to creep ?  
Oh ! I 'd love to have him dearly,  
If he 's really ours to keep.

But we will not have him, mother,  
If he 's only borrowed so,  
For we missed our darling Teddy,  
When he went a year ago.  
How we cried to see him carried  
In the white box thro' the rain !  
Yet you said—"God only lent him,  
And could ask His own again."

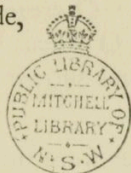
Don't you think it *safer*, dearie,  
Just in case he 's lent, you know,  
To send back this baby brother,  
Ere we learn to love him so ?

If he stays as long as Teddy,  
 And grows half so fair and sweet,  
 We should miss his broken prattle,  
 And the little pattering feet.

It is dreadful to remember,—  
 Though it is a year ago—  
 How Ted ran round the garden,  
 Never tiring, to and fro.  
 How he tried to tell you, mother,  
 As you pressed him to your side,  
 All about the new-born kittens,  
 Just a week before he died !

It is dreadful to remember,  
 After all the watching hours,  
 How we kissed the waxen features  
 In the coffin filled with flowers.  
 How we watched him slowly taken  
 Down the long road o'er the way,  
 Why does God give babies, mother,  
 If He will not let them stay ?

Oh, make sure of this one, mother ;  
 Say he must not go away.  
 We don't want a borrowed baby,  
 To be given back some day !  
 Oh, remember how we kissed *him*,  
 Lying in the flowers asleep ;  
 Let us have no baby, mother,  
 If he is not ours to keep !



## THE SHADOW OF THE CROSS

SORROW holds fast my hand : I hear her say  
“ O dreaming soul, 'tis late for thee to sleep !  
O joyous heart, 'tis time for thee to weep ! ”  
And Sorrow leads me by the hand away,

Far from the happy world of love and rest,  
To joyless tracks of bitterness and loss,  
Black with the shadow of a mighty cross,  
Its great arms stretched across the earth's dark  
breast.

There I lay weeping at pale Sorrow's feet,  
Close to the dank weeds where the dark shape  
lay ;  
And I to Sorrow had no word to say,  
Save “ Life is bitterness : death would be sweet.”

Then Sorrow answered, holding fast my hand :—  
“ I led thee early to the feet of pain,  
That tears may fall upon thy heart like rain,  
Making it one large blossom, fair and grand.

“ God’s fulness waits beyond our earthly loss ;  
 Drink thy Gethsemane in faith and prayer ;  
 The shadows of the Garden will grow fair,  
 And sweet will seem the story of the Cross.

“ No form so beautiful on earth low lies ;  
 Look thou with love upon the nail-pierced bars,  
 And turn in deepest midnight to the stars,  
 To see how clear the Cross shines in the skies.”

## ALDER-LIEVEST

### A Song

ALDER-LIEVEST ! Alder-Lievest !  
Hear me, O thou soul of mine !  
All the earth is sorrow-shadowed,  
Till I find thy face divine.  
Come, my life is one great longing !  
I am haunted with thy wraith.  
Love, I cannot live without thee ;  
Thou to me art hope and faith.

Alder-Lievest ! Alder-Lievest !  
I am like a child astray !  
Soul of mine, I dare not doubt thee ;  
Love me in the old wild way !  
Love, my love ! where is the sweetness  
Life once held for me and thee ?  
Alder-Lievest ! Alder-Lievest !  
Love should not be agony.

Alder-Lievest ! Memory's music  
In thy name itself enshrines  
All the passionate completeness,  
All my seeking soul divines !

Come ! and let the shadows gathered  
Dark between us all unroll.  
Alder-Lievest ! Alder-Lievest !  
I shall find thee, O my soul !

## NINE YEARS OLD

NINE years old to-day, laddie,  
What an age to grow !  
Quite a man you are, dearie,  
Very well I know.  
Knickerbockers soon, laddie,  
Must be laid away ;  
Far too young for you, dearie,  
Nine years old to-day !

I remember well, darling,  
When you used to lie,  
Baby eyes wide open  
To the sunny sky.  
How the sunbeams glinted  
O'er your golden hair.  
Ne'er was baby brother  
Half so sweet and fair !

And as summers gathered  
On that curly head,  
How you loved to frolic  
On the grass instead !

Scorned was baby's cradle,  
Scorned were baby's shoes.  
Oh, you were so ready  
Baby's days to lose.

Then one day, my darling,  
Golden curls were shorn.  
What a chubby head was left,  
Looking so forlorn !  
Baby boy no longer,  
How I watched you bound  
With those handsome, sturdy legs  
Flying o'er the ground !

Now with book and pencil  
To the school you go,  
Guarded by the brother  
That you worship so.  
Funny letters reach me,  
Round-eyed pothooks wide,  
Which I lay, with baby curls,  
Carefully aside.

Blotted, boyish letters,  
Sweetly incomplete !  
Never friend or lover  
Could with these compete !  
Clumsy "hooks" and "hangers"  
Falling all apart,  
Yet so cunning, darling,  
They can hold my heart.

Rupert, little brother,  
Baby boy no more,  
Every year has made you  
Dearer than before !  
Take this message, darling,  
From one far away  
Thinking of her laddie,  
Nine years old to-day !

## IN GLENMARIE ORCHARD

COME, let us wander through the orchard lanes !

I love the mass of leaves against the blue :  
The heavy-headed grass is rich with seeds,  
And pollen dust, and flowers of radiant hue.  
The rustling of the wind is in the trees,  
Its soothing murmur seems to fill the place ;  
Adown this leafy vista see the glimpse  
Of water, with a shadow on its face.

Mark the deep russet of those sorrel spikes,  
The shaded purple of yon thistle's head !  
The purest petal of the golden rose,  
Grown in its tended space of garden bed,  
Holds no tint richer than the yellow sheen  
Of those wild buttercups, on yonder rise !  
And could a rival dim the bluebell's cup,  
Which seems to steal its colour from the skies ?

Look at the play of shadows on the grass,  
Filled with deep ripples by the fitful breeze ;  
The softly changing tracery of shade  
Cast lightly by the tremulous-leaved trees.

Watch how the foliage is clustered close,  
Shielding the young fruit from the eager sun :  
How great, maternal Nature teaches us !  
Her love is round the frailest little one.

List to the breeze among the boughs ! How fair  
The sky looks, where the leaves will have it  
seen !

That exquisite, that tender, dreamy blue,  
Behind the lattice of sweet orchard green !  
Hush ! we have scared a brood of youngling birds ;  
Hear how the darlings flutter in the nest !  
The mother-bird has flown to seek their food ;  
Let's steal away, and leave her babes at rest.

\* \* \* \* \*

This pond is darkened with the willows, set  
About the water, shadowy and deep,  
Where reeds grow thick, and floating lily leaves,  
And mosses sweet, that round the rushes creep.  
See, glistening in the sun, a jewelled frog  
Luxuriously basks in warmth and light.  
A fish darts rarely at the bright-winged flies,  
Rippling the water as it glides from sight.

Here is a mass of clover at our feet—  
A bed of soft, cleft leaves and fragrant flowers.  
Friend, let us rest together for a space,  
Breathing the life of these November hours.

We need no poet to provoke full thoughts,  
So close the well-worn volume in your hand.  
Sweet lyric Nature sings her songs to us,  
That we may learn to love and understand.

## “GOD KNOWETH BEST”

“God knoweth best,”—He holds our hand  
And helps us to endure  
The misery we cannot understand,  
The grief we think past cure.  
Pain is the grand life-test,  
And God knows best.

“God knoweth best,”—His deep, full gaze  
Bends on our broken lives ;  
He sees the sorrow of the darkened days,  
And knows the spirit strives,  
O sad soul, care-opprest,—  
Still God knows best !

“God knoweth best,”—O take the healing hand  
And hold it trustful still !  
The sunbeams break across the darkened land,  
And shadow-valleys fill.  
Here is thy goal, thy quest ;  
And God knows best.

“God knoweth best,”—lift thy bewildered eyes,  
Thy sorely-smitten head,  
And see the truth that makes thee deeply wise,

And let thy soul be led.

Trust ! thou shalt find thy rest,  
And God knows best.

“God knoweth best,”—remembering this we wake  
To full-souled harmony ;

No spiritual discord more may shake

Our lives to agony.

Our souls have stood the test,  
And God knows best.

Father divine ! send forth Thy Truth, Thy Light !

Our empty lives refill !

Lift us in tender strength to reach the height

That soars above us still.

Our earth-sun 's in the west ;

Thou knoweth best.

“Stretch forth Thine everlasting arms,”

Our lifted heads above !

Our storms pass into Thy unfathomed calms,

Our darkness breaks in love.

The peace-dove 's in the breast ;

“God knoweth best.”

## IN THE FURROWS

(To F. M. S.)

IN the hush of the dusk we tarry,  
Tarry just for awhile ;  
Life's cloven furrows round us,  
Stretching many a mile.  
Just for awhile we linger,  
Looking with wistful eyes  
Up from the low earth-acres,  
Unto the radiant skies.

To me a voice has whispered  
Words for your weary ears ;  
Though thou hast wept in sorrow,  
Earth hath taken thy tears.  
Deep in life's fields they gather,  
Under the furrows low ;  
And where the tears are heaviest  
Richer the blossoms grow.

Over the Past's far valley  
Turn for a time thy gaze.  
The scars of many a ploughing  
Lie on the outlived ways.

Once they were open round thee,  
Freshly torn by the share,—  
There seemed to be no healing  
The dark earth, cleft and bare !

Yet now all closed are the furrows,  
And soft scars ripple the field ;  
With the clinging of deep grasses,  
The wounds of the soil are healed.  
So these keen tears of sorrow,  
Wept in bereavement's hour,  
Shall live thro' the gloom and the darkness,  
And fill the heart of a flower.

Endure thro' the time of shadows,  
The darkness shall soon be stirred ;  
Arrows of light will pierce them,—  
O, list to the voice I heard !—  
Grief is for us probation,  
Bringing consoling years,—  
When, in the flowers of the future,  
We'll gather again our tears !

## EVENING-TIME

“At evening-time it shall be light.”—ZECARIAH

A FOREST flushed with sunset to the core ;  
Brown marshes with the mists thick in the sedge ;  
A richly shadowed curve of sandy shore,  
Silvered with breakers at its shingled edge.  
Lost in swung branches sighs the mildest breeze  
That ever found its way to maiden's cheek ;—  
It sends the leaves a-lisping in the trees,  
And makes the flowers to one another speak.  
Mixt with its cadence come the lovely tones  
Of falling waves, muffled or warm-hued sands ;  
The little laugh of water crossing stones,  
Deep-hidden somewhere in the forest lands.  
And over all a great, calm, evening sky,  
Brooding, in peace, thro' soft, dissolving hours ;  
Divine serenities seem breathing nigh,  
The spirit of a purer sphere than ours.

\* \* \* \* \*

Dear evening-time ! there penetrates my soul  
A full, relieving sense of deepening rest !  
Large resignations seem to make me whole,  
And heal the wounds that ached within my breast !

All Nature whispers—"Peace ! to every year  
 Come days, profound with consolations high ;  
 Not ever does the earth in clouds appear,—  
 Her golden robes are only lying by !"  
 And thus our spirits, torn in throes supreme,—  
 Passing thro' anguish-fires that sere and blight,  
 Shall win the atoning palms of which they dream,  
 In the dark watches of the long, sad night.  
 So my drooped eyes uplift and wider grow,  
 Till Nature paints her faith on every sense ;  
 The colours will outlive this after-glow  
 That waxing darkness soon will hasten hence.  
 O wise and steadfast Nature ! keep me strong  
 In noble trusts, whatever else grow weak !  
 Thine old abiding truths will save from wrong,  
 Thy voice will tell however tongues may speak !  
 Keep me from faithless fears, from low despair,  
 From every shadow that can grow between  
 My spirit and the light, serene and fair !  
 That light, still there, tho' darkness intervene !  
 Hold me in touch with Truth, then shall no wraith  
 In mournful paths and weary ways stand more,—  
 Life's troubles breaking on the breast of Faith,  
 As billows on a strong, sustaining shore.

\*            \*            \*            \*            \*

The light-tide ebbs : the forest's burning heart  
 Drinks in the quenching shadows, falling low ;  
 Quick, shy-eyed stars irresolutely start  
 From primrose beds of evanescent glow.

The marsh is in its sleeping-robe of white,  
New-spun each eventide from fairy looms,  
And in its sedges, shrinking with the light,  
Curl myriad wilting cups of fragile blooms.  
The beaches darken, till the gathering surf  
Wreathes like a chain of pearls about the sand,  
While dew lies wet upon the shining turf,  
And silvers leaf and stem on every hand.  
Even the wind has found its way at last,  
Or fallen asleep while seeking still its quest !  
And so the whispers in the leaves die fast,  
And sleepy blossoms fold themselves in rest.  
Wrapt in the influence that holds the earth,  
I kneel in ecstasy too high for speech ;  
Infinite vague and yearning thoughts have birth,—  
Great longings for some good just out of reach !  
And in the deepening shadows of the night,  
My soul goes out in one beseeching prayer :  
“ God keep my spiritual eyes so bright,  
That, even in darkness, I may know Thee there ! ”

TO J. J. M.

(On his Wedding Day)

“The only gift is a portion of thyself . . .  
Therefore the poet brings his poem.”

EMERSON

THE birds are building in the freshening boughs ;  
The month is full of roses and of dreams !  
A brighter green is growing on the grass,  
A warmer light from deepening azure streams.  
Sweet Nature, in her soft, September mood,  
Fills all the world with fulness of the Spring ;  
A carol bursts from every small bird's throat ;  
The little wayside reeds are blossoming.

There's all the promise of the waiting-time,  
In roses, with their fragrant hearts aglow,  
The birds find all their tender hopes fulfilled,  
In those frail nests, the wind swings to and fro.  
And balmy Springtide, glad with sunlit days,  
Gives all we longed for in the rime and rain,  
Since breaking buds are blowing o'er the world,  
And birds are making song and nest again.

So may you see Love's promises fulfilled,  
And every hope find life in leaf and flower !  
May He who shields the nest from rain and storm,  
Hold you securely in the darkest hour.  
And may the sweetness of this marriage-month,  
Lengthen to one unending, lovely year,—  
And all Love's shadows be as noontide shades,  
Making Love's light more beautiful and clear !

## WHEN GOD SAYS "NO"

DOES God say "no," my child, to thy great "yea" ?  
And is thy pain so deep that thou must pray  
For strength to hide its anguish without cry,  
To face the-worst life holds without a sigh ?  
Yet not in vain for thee such bitterness,  
Griefs are our angels in a sombre dress.

When God says "no," denying what seems best,  
Taking our dearest hope among the rest,  
Were we but wise, His deep prophetic "yea"  
Would rise above each "no" He seems to say !  
For God's great "no" is "yea" misunderstood :  
All He withholds is for a deeper good.

When God says "no," how wrong looks all the  
right !  
How shadows grow between us and the light !  
How every mood of joy's exquisite sense  
Changes to feed an anguish more intense !  
O cup of pain ! thy potion is complete,  
When all proves bitter we believed so sweet !

Yet God says "no," nor alters, tho' we plead  
 For what seems vital in our deepest need.  
 Unmoved He drives the ploughshare thro' the way,  
 Unmindful of the flowers for which we pray.  
 O sad to wake some strange momentous morn,  
 And find our flowering earth up-turned and torn !

But God says "yea," although the furrows bear  
 A look of wounds behind the piercing share.  
 While we are wandering o'er the broken field,  
 Mourning for all the bloom it used to yield,  
 God sows with patient hand the future seed,  
 Providing harvest for a fuller need.

Our God says "yea," ev'n while we feel all loss,  
 And life lies on us with a weighted cross.  
 Ev'n when, for very weariness, we ask  
 A little rest from the unending task,  
 Yet know we must strive on, whate'er betide,  
 With all our prayers inexorably denied.

Still God says "yea," tho' in the darkened space  
 Death consecrates the best-beloved face.  
 Tho' soul be crying after soul, God's best  
 Will somehow answer its pathetic quest !  
 And for the sacred best-beloved dead,  
 We find an angel-influence instead.

\* \* \* \* \*

O, Father ! give us that deep trust which *knows!*  
 The unshaken courage of the soul's repose ;

The faith in Right that stays secure and strong,  
When even all life holds seems going wrong.  
Teach us to see Thy wise benignant "yea,"  
In that great "no" 'gainst which we blindly pray!

Give us the blended strength of heart and soul,  
The fulness of a perfect self-control;  
The power to hold the spirit pure and free  
From all the chains of our mortality.  
The spiritual vision seeing clear  
What seems a broken arc, a perfect sphere.

So shall God's "no" be deeply understood,  
As wise denial for our highest good.  
So shall we feel life's shadows come aright,  
Giving a dearer sweetness to its light;  
'Till need of faith is o'er, and souls rejoice,  
In one last "yea!" clear from the Father's voice!

“PEACE, PERFECT PEACE ”

“PEACE, perfect peace,” the slow-sung music  
swings,

And fills the church as if with seraph’s wings ;

“ Peace, perfect peace,” our suppliant voices rise,  
With all the soul’s deep anguish in the cries.

O peace ! O perfect peace ! descend, be ours,  
And bless for us these sacred Sabbath hours.

“ Peace, perfect peace,” the cadence sinks and  
swells,

From every singing heart the music wells ;

Rapt lifted faces soften to the strain,

And eyes grow wistful with mysterious pain.

O peace ! O perfect peace ! descend, be ours,  
And bless for us these sacred Sabbath hours.

“Peace, perfect peace !” O that the soul might  
rest,

For ever, hushed, on the Eternal breast !

No morrow hopes or fears to shake repose,

No grief to mourn for, and no grave to close.

O peace ! O perfect peace ! descend, be ours,  
And bless for us these sacred Sabbath hours.

“Peace, perfect peace !” thou givest me peace  
to-day,

This weight of striving days I cast away ;

My shut soul, like a blossom, falls apart,

And thou dost colour all its breaking heart.

O God of peace ! O perfect peace ! be ours,

And bless for us these sacred Sabbath hours.

## SHADOW AND SHINE

MEADOWS of ripe, golden grass, gently swaying  
Under the soft-flowing tides of the wind.  
Yellowing hill stretching on to the city,—  
Freshly-reaped fields in the valleys behind.  
Earth wears a hue of low monotone softness,  
Caught from the sheaves where the harvest is  
bound.

Hoar-headed thistles are pallidly blowing,  
Dusty-fleeced sheep roam the pale golden ground.

Dark heads of firs break the exquisite yellow,—  
Sweet, settled shadows relieving the light !  
A soft line of hedge climbs up from the valley,  
And clings, a bright wreath, to some sun-coloured  
height.

Maize-fields are green in the gold of the harvest,  
Waiting the fieriest kiss of the sun.  
Orchards lie massed in the heart of the valley,  
Fringed with dense green where the winding  
creeks run.

Mists hide the woods on the slopes of the ranges,  
 Heavy-hued clusters of cloud o'er them brood.  
 The hills have a look of mysterious sweetness,  
 The silence and depth of a mystical mood !  
 Nature has hidden her sacredest secrets,  
 Somewhere, I ween, near those mountains of grey ;  
 Sweet, lifted hills, softly shrouded in shadow,  
 Why so austere and so solemn to-day ?

\* \* \* \* \*

Look ! what a smile of brightness  
 Breaks on the valley low !  
 Arrows of woven sunbeams  
 Shot from a fairy bow !  
 Watch how they chase the shadow,  
 See how they pierce the mist !  
 They fly across the mountains,  
 And every curve is kist.

A lovely laugh of sunlight  
 Is radiant on the hills !  
 A lovely laugh of sunlight  
 The dimpling valley fills.  
 The brooding clouds are parting,  
 Their rims grow clear and white ;—  
 O dark and silent mountains,  
 Your mists have died in light !

O fickle Nature ! brightening  
 In one swift moment's space !  
 How could you wear so solemn  
 A shadow on your face ?

O woman-like, sweet Nature—  
 Changed by each vagrant mood !  
 Your mingling frowns and laughter  
 Are ne'er misunderstood !

In vain to take that shadow,  
 On yonder darkening height !  
 I catch a glimpse of valley,  
 Filled to the brim with light !  
 See how the glow spreads swiftly  
 Over the golden plain,—  
 Yon hill, a moment clouded,  
 Is radiant again !

Sweet earth ! your warm sun-lover  
 Tires never of the chase !  
 He snatches daring kisses  
 From that averted face !  
 Look mutinous or yielding,  
 Invite him or repel—  
 His ardent eye arrests you  
 With its alluring spell !

\* \* \* \* \*

Now the clouds darken, the sun steals behind them,  
 Teasing the earth with a lover's pretence ;  
 How Nature longs for her truant adorer,  
 Ready to pardon his dearest offence !  
 Dark rests the gloom on the slopes of the mountains ;  
 Pale lie the mists in the valley below ;  
 Winds gather voice in the golden-flowered grasses,  
 Swinging the crests of the firs to and fro.

The piles of thatched harvest grow pale in the  
shadow ;

Sheaves lose their light, softly heaped on the  
ground.

Spires, yearning up from the heart of the city,  
Seem to soar out from the mistiness round !

Wistful-eyed earth ! why so sad and so silent ?

True lovers' quarrels are ever in vain !

See the clouds break, and a faithful adorer

Kindles your face with his kisses again !

## LITTLE JIM

(In the Children's Hospital, Melbourne)

Poor little lean hands, locked in mine,  
How can I ease this life of thine?  
I would some spirit heard my song,  
And came to make thee hale and strong,—  
Little Jim!

Here in this weary bed to lie,  
While all the happy world goes by,  
Surely a fate so sad as thine  
Chides well this fretful heart of mine,  
Little Jim!

Thy thin misshapen body lies,  
Mute anguish in the wistful eyes!  
Sweet boyish eyes, worn dim with tears,  
Blurring the light of youthful years,  
Little Jim!

Thy mates are leaving every day,  
Careless to know that thou must stay,  
They seem so ready to forget  
The pain, with which thine eyes are wet,  
Little Jim!

Dear child, thy lot can never be,  
What all our hearts would wish for thee !  
The gentlest love can only tend  
And comfort thee until the end,  
Little Jim !

The bare ward walls that close thee round,  
Yon outside glimpse of grassy ground ;  
That upward arch of azure glow,  
Is all of this world thou wilt know,  
Little Jim !

Young eyes of restless suffering,  
What pity to our hearts they bring !  
Thy little wan and wasted face,  
Seems like a shadow in the place,  
Little Jim !

Yet still there comes the thought to me,  
As thro' my tears I look at thee,  
The fate we mourn as so unblest,  
May yet be, after all, the best,  
Little Jim !

If thou hast missed life's brightest things,  
Thou hast been spared its keenest stings ;  
Lying upon thy cripple bed,  
Atoning angels guard thy head,  
Little Jim !

Yes, take my hand so clingingly,  
If its strong clasp can comfort thee !  
But listen, darling, I must go,  
The other boys are calling so,  
Little Jim !

## TO AN URCHIN

“PLAY on the old tin-can, my laddie,  
Beat out the notes of a rusty strain ;  
March with a brave little air, my laddie,  
Treading the pathway again and again.  
Sing with that jubilant voice, my laddie,  
Keep good time to the measure gay ;  
And I will pause in my ramble, laddie,  
And gravely listen to hear you play.”

Solemnly strides he the pathway over,  
Stretching small legs to a martial tread,  
Crossing the green thro' the flowers and clover,  
The sundown glow on his bright young head.  
Cheery the strokes ring out thro' the gloaming,  
The gloaming sacred to westward hours ;  
But the little lad goes onward roaming,  
A mocking imp on the meadow flowers.

What cares he for the mute appealing  
Of day's last flame in the dreaming sky ?  
What knows he of the murmurs stealing  
From river-reeds as the tide goes by ?

Fine is the beaten path, and the ringing  
Echoes that start from the battered toy ;  
No other meaning the hour is bringing  
To the curly head of the soldier boy !

“ Play on the old tin-can, my laddie,  
Strike out the notes of a rusty strain ;  
I will forgive all the discord, laddie,  
Hearing the joy in thy glad refrain.  
Sing, little heart, in the sundown, laddie,  
Tread little feet to the carol gay ;  
That mimic march thro’ the world, my laddie,  
Begins in earnest for thee one day.”

## THE WOODEN LEGS

(Inscribed to G. K. R.)

“LOOK, grannie, they are safe beside  
My bed, and you shall see  
How sturdily, to-morrow-day,  
I'll make 'em walk for me,  
And you must stand beside me so,  
In case they are afraid to go.

“This is the leg I've christened, Jack,  
And t'other one is Jill,  
Although I do not mean to try,  
Just yet, to 'climb a hill.'  
And Jack will have the hardest work,  
So see he has no chance to shirk.

“‘Across the lawn and back again,'  
That's what the doctor said ;  
I wish he'd let me walk a mile  
About the place instead.  
You know, without the slightest doubt,  
There 's crowds of things to see about.

“Six months is such a while to lie  
 In bed from day to day,  
 With just the same old sights to see,  
 And just the same old play.  
 I wonder now what you would do,  
 If such a thing could happen you?

“‘ Across the lawn and back again,’—  
 I s’pose I’ll have to wait  
 A dreadful time before I’m let  
 To go beyond the gate?  
 I wish the new-built stables lay,  
 Just now, not quite so far away!

“ You’ll tell Old Joe to have the colt  
 That threw him, brought around;  
 And Queenie’s puppies, and, of course,  
 Old Percival, the hound.  
 And mention I should like to see  
 The goats that used to carry me.

“ I wonder if the big-horned ram  
 That butted Jack’s alive?  
 I s’pose it would not hardly do  
 To have *him* in the drive;  
 Old Joe, I’m sure, would die with fright,  
 To have so wild a beast in sight!

“ May be I’ll think of something else  
 Before to-morrow’s here,  
 But leave me both my wooden legs,  
 And tie them to me, near;

In case a fairy in should creep,  
And steal them from me while I sleep.

“ ‘Our Father !’ but I’ve said my prayers ;  
    May be an extra pray  
Might make God watch the wooden legs  
    That walk to-morrow-day,—  
I’m sure I shall not ask in vain,  
To cross the lawn, and back again !

“ You’ll tie them, grannie, tight and strong,  
    In case the cord should break ;  
And then they will be close to me,  
    However soon I wake,  
The doctor said—I heard it plain,—  
‘ Across the lawn . . . and back again ’ ”

## A NURSERY LULLABY

LULLABY, childie, night's shadows have rested  
An hour ago o'er the world,  
The tiny birds with their mothers are nested,  
The bunnies in burrows are curled.  
The soft clover-flowers, and the daisies, dearie,  
Are sleeping soundly, I know ;  
Dear little heads at the dusk become weary,—  
Lullaby, lullaby, low !

Lullaby, darling, the cradle is ready,  
The gown on the bright fender lies,  
Rosiest lips in the world are unsteady,  
The "dust"'s in somebody's eyes !  
Dear little eyes, ye have sparkled so bravely  
From dawning till sunset glow !  
Look not, my own, at the cradle so gravely,  
Lullaby, lullaby, low !

Lullaby, sweetheart, your treasures are lying  
Under your pillow away ;—  
The wee white lamb for its playmate is crying,  
The dog has something to say.

Three little dolls will be weeping so sadly  
If somebody stays, I know,—  
And bare little toes can be burnt so badly,—  
Lullaby, lullaby, low !

Lullaby, little one, mother is weary,  
Caring for darling all day !  
Hark to the crickets all chirping so cheery,  
Out in the garden away.  
Little fat frogs from the marshes are calling,—  
“Baby is sleepy, I trow !”  
Somebody's head on my shoulder is falling,—  
Lullaby, lullaby, low !

Lullaby, lullaby, sweetest and nearest,  
God guard my childie to-night !  
Clasp me with warm, little languid arms, dearest,  
Breathing good-bye to the light.  
Under your cheek all your treasures are sleeping,  
Meekly laid out in a row ;  
They will be safe till the morning comes peeping,—  
Lullaby, lullaby, low !

## AT THE LAST

O DEAR love, at last ! I have grown so weary  
Of waiting so long in the fading light.  
I could not pass to the darkness, dearie,—  
I longed so sorely to say good-night.  
I felt my heart would be well-nigh broken,  
In spite of the shadow between us grown,  
If never a farewell word were spoken  
Ere I pass out to the great unknown.

How long ago it is since we parted—  
That cruel hour in the bright spring day !  
O love, my love ! I was broken-hearted,—  
I did not mean you to go away.  
How strange to speak of the Past—'tis over,  
And I'm too tired for grief or pain . . .  
We'll roam no more thro' the scented clover,  
Nor gather its sweet grey flowers again !

Darling, your poor little girl is dying !  
Gather me closely before we part.  
Your warm brown cheek on my own is lying,  
I feel the throb of your great man's heart.

Dearest, how much of our life we have wasted,  
 Losing the light for the shadow's sake !  
 Love's passionate cup we have hardly tasted,  
 And all was given for us to take !

We have wasted life—now I see it clearly,  
 Yet how I prayed it might all come right !  
 For, love, all the while I loved you dearly,—  
 I don't mind telling the truth to-night.  
 I can say it now with my arms about you,  
 Your dearest face prest against my cheek ;  
 I have forgotten to fear or doubt you,  
 Now nothing is left to hope or seek.

\* \* \* \* \*

Beloved mine ! How the shadows are growing !  
 . . . . The windows give us light to the West :  
 Do I hear the wind thro' the wattles blowing ?—  
 Will it shake the young birds out of the nest ?  
 . . . . Poor little fledglings ! left cold to the  
 weather,  
 Dying alone in the gathering night :  
 We are cast from the warm earth-nest together,  
 And all we clung to is out of sight.

Yet I feel that the shadowy darkness alters  
 To warmth and light in a moment's space ;  
 On the last sharp height, where the spirit falters,  
 We meet the glow of our Father's face. . . .

O whisper good-bye ! This measureless sorrow  
Will change to a peace secure from pain ;  
And, maybe, Beloved, in God's great To-morrow,  
Night's hidden meaning shall be made plain.

## RENUNCIATION

TAKE all, my Father ! I'll not strive nor pray,  
Trusting Thy wise demands.  
My yearning life I yield to Thee to-day,  
And leave all in Thy hands.  
Strengthen my purpose, help me to be brave,  
Nor longer grieve and crave.

Take all, my Father ! every lovely gift,  
Prized for its deepest worth :  
Love's dearest promises, the hopes that lift,  
The joys that gladden earth.  
Low at Thine altar let me kneel and wait :  
Accept, and consecrate !

Not with reluctant heart, but cheerfully,  
I answer to thy claim ;  
Help me to do the duty set for me,  
To hold it without blame.  
O Father ! I am weak, but Thou art strong,  
Help me to conquer wrong !

Clear my ideals from the mist, and make  
My heart see true again ;  
Let no unworthy tone life's music break,  
But Love be all its strain !

Teach me the secret of ascendant song,  
Harmonious and strong !

O Father ! keep my life—no longer mine—  
    Tested, and true at last !  
Fill with deep beauty days that shall be Thine,  
    Flowering from out the Past ;  
I only ask that eyes may be unwet  
By memories of regret.

No broken faith to come with its reproach,  
    And haunt me as I stand,  
Watching the deep, unsounded tides approach  
    That cut me off from land.  
No hidden wrong to suddenly arise,  
And wound me with its eyes.

No spectral lips to whisper in my ears—  
    “ Remember, here you failed :  
Not all your sorrowing, not all your tears  
    And anguish have availed ;—  
You could not make the one great sacrifice,  
And you must pay its price ! ”

O God! to stand upon life's outmost rim,  
    Seeing the end at last ;  
Learning, with stricken heart and vision dim,  
    The blunders of the Past !  
How clear each failure, every sad mischance,  
Must be to that last glance !

Ah, me ! it seems as if all else may go  
 Beneath the storm and blight,  
 So that we never yield to aught below  
 Our knowledge of the right ;  
 So that, tho' heart grow sick and spirit quail,  
 None whisper, " Here you fail ! "

\* \* \* \* \*

Father ! I pray for the sustaining strength  
 To combat lesser needs,  
 Till heavenly aspiration blooms at length  
 In pure and human deeds.  
 While all for which our highest yearns and  
 strives,  
 Hallows our daily lives.

Father ! I take my life and lay it down,  
 Torn by no longings now ;  
 Only to feel one day the olive-crown  
 Wreathe my transfigured brow ;  
 Only to know that, when the sands have run,  
 Most I could do was done.

So guide and keep us, Father, till the task,  
 Called living, has been learned ;  
 No shortening of the lesson do we ask.  
 But when Thy hand has turned  
 The leaves, and closed the book for ever fast,  
 Make clear the whole at last !

## A BUSH NOONTIDE, AND THOUGHTS

DEAR faithful trees, I find you steadfast still,  
    In spite of time and change !  
With musing eyes I roam the rock-strewn hill,  
    And look out towards the range.  
Soft sun-spied arrows pierce the forest thro',  
    In long, clear lanes of light,  
They melt and mingle in a mist of blue,  
    Where shadow steals in sight.

The land is full of mellow noontide tones,  
    And Summer sleep profound ;  
The lizards bask upon the warm, grey stones ;  
    There's neither stir nor sound  
In all the great bush-garden where I stand.  
    A white-winged moth floats near,  
Roused from the fern by my forgetful hand,  
    And yet too wild for fear.

A sea-blown wind is rising from the cool  
    Of breezy ocean ways,  
And stirs the waters of yon shallowing pool,  
    That wastes in Summer days.

I watch the amber water shining out  
 So bravely from the reeds,—  
 The hard, hoof-trodden margins set about  
 With fringe of withering weeds.

Each soaring eucalyptus, lifted high,  
 The wandering wind receives ;  
 I watch the great boughs drawn against the sky,  
 Laden with trembling leaves.  
 A soft, harmonious music, full and rare,  
 Murmurs the boughs along—  
 The voice of Nature's God is solemn there,  
 In that deep undersong.

O trees, your melodies seem passing sweet !  
 How changing years have sped,  
 Since last I saw the roots about my feet,  
 The leaves above my head !  
 No childish form your shadow shields to-day,  
 Cast on the grasses low,—  
 But wandered far from your kind arms away,  
 The child you used to know.

Fill me again with that unfailing love,  
 Unvext by hopes or fears ;  
 Your lifted branches kept my eyes above,  
 In those sweet, untried years.  
 Give me the old brave trust and steadfast faith,  
 The large and high belief  
 In noblest things, unshadowed by a wraith  
 Of falsehood or of grief !

Take from my life the burden of the years ;  
 My tired soul craves rest !  
 Make me again the child that Nature rears,  
 Gathered against her breast.  
 I would be wise in earth's sweet meanings, taught  
 By angels of my youth ;  
 Their deep and serious lessons came unsought,  
 And never failed in truth.

Speak, whispering trees ! unchanged thro' all the  
 storm  
 That beat my young life low :  
 You've grown thro' wind, and rain, and sunbeams  
 warm,  
 Careless of all, I know !  
 Yet gladly I rejoice, since I have found  
 The staunch old friends I knew,—  
 Your roots firm in the dear, familiar ground,  
 Your heads high in the blue !

I am content to satisfy the need  
 Of deeper being here,  
 Learning all secrets from the frailest weed,  
 Flowering a moment near,  
 Trusting that Nature, with her pure refrains,  
 Will lead me to the light :—  
 Keeping within my heart earth's faithful strains,  
 To hold me to the right !

## A BIRD'S NEST

COME, weary birds, and fill the waiting nests ;  
Hidden among the leaves.

The fledglings shiver for the mother breasts,  
High underneath the eaves.

The sunset-coloured crowns of garden firs  
Drink their last draughts of light,  
And daisies in the grass, the cricket stirs,  
Curl white discs from the night.

I know a nest, hung in the midst of bowers,  
The deep pond dips below ;  
An ideal home to seek in gloaming hours,  
When day's strong pulse beats slow.  
Above it hang the dainty clusters, grey,  
Of sweet acacia flowers,  
And every tremble of the wind-swept spray  
Sends down the bloom in showers.

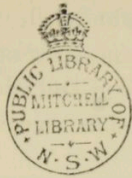
Below the lusty grasses, never mown,  
Are drenched with rains of spring,—  
Above the azure evening skies are sown  
With white mists on the wing ;

And everywhere the floating, fading dyes  
Of sunset paint the scene,  
While soft resound the myriad wild cries  
Of callow things unseen.

Come, little bird—nor fear me—to thy nest,  
Thy little ones are cold ;  
Give them the warmth of thy maternal breast,  
Thy pinions round them fold.  
Fly to the flowery refuge in the tree,—  
For them thou shouldst be brave,—  
Indeed thou needst not wait for fear of me,  
Nor watch with eyes so grave.

Nay, I'll not keep thee longer from thy brood,  
My timid mother bird ;  
I see within thy beak the nestlings' food :  
Thy voiceless prayer is heard.  
Now swift the grey wings dart into the nest,  
While bird babes twitter fast,  
As, drawn beneath the downy mother breast,  
They are secure at last.

Dear little nested birdlings, sleep ye long,  
While God's wide night is spread,  
With benedictive pinions, sure and strong,  
Above each guileless head.  
Ye have no fear, safe in the airy bed,  
Lulled by the cool night wind :—  
O, lucky birds ! thus to be warmed and fed ;  
Would I a nest could find !



## A CHRISTMAS MORNING SOLILOQUY

WE'RE up, old horse, with this Christmas dawning,  
The sun 's just seen thro' the gold and red ;  
The blue sky's drawn like an azure awning  
Painted with myriad hues o'erhead.  
We'll take our pace at an easy amble,  
And follow the road the whole of the way.  
'Tis just the time for a riding ramble,—  
We've roamed together before to-day.

You're curving that neck of yours, my beauty !  
'Tis not as sleek as in other years ;  
Not long ago 'twas a loving duty  
To keep you polished from hoofs to ears.  
Then a girl's light hand was on your bridle,  
A soft, dark robe swept against your side ;  
Her saddle at home is lying idle,—  
There's somebody else's horse to ride !

Ah, well ! we had our good days together,  
It's time to lay the ghosts of the past ;  
It cannot always be summer weather,  
Those golden hours were too sweet to last !

So we were left in the lurch, old fellow,  
 And you will never carry again  
 The lithe young form, and the tresses yellow,  
 The eyes like a violet swept with rain.

I wonder if it was worth the worry—  
 To break one's heart for a season's bliss !  
 —Steady there, Rover !—you need not hurry,  
 No pace will suit me so well as this.  
 Had the sweetness of love a joy outweighing  
 The curse of anguish that followed fast ?  
 The bliss has gone, but the bane is staying,  
 I often fear that it means to last.

The sun rides up from the low hills, bounding  
 The level paddocks that check the plain,  
 And splendid spaces of sky surrounding  
 The gorgeous dyes of the dawning stain.  
 How *she* used to love the sunset splendour  
 Wandering home thro' the flushed Bush ways !  
 Her eyes had a beauty almost tender,  
 You'd think a soul lay behind her gaze !

But God, who lent her an airy sweetness,  
 A subtle charm of colour and mould,  
 Forgot to give her a soul's completeness,—  
 Her looks were warm as her heart was cold.  
 No curse of mine to her head is clinging,—  
 The soft, curled head I had died to win.  
 Can the shining shape of the snake help stinging,  
 In spite of the hues on its painted skin ?—

'Twas not her fault that her glamour slew me,  
Killing the best, as a woman may ;  
And yet, God knows, 'twas her best that drew me,  
Her best that won me that summer day.  
I dreamed her an angel, far too holy  
E'en to be held by a man's rough grasp ;  
Did she cross my path to teach me solely  
How vague and void are the dreams we clasp ?

\* \* \* \* \*

The morning sunshine is growing mellow,  
The last mists melt in the cloudless blue ;  
It's time to be turning home, old fellow,  
There's work that's waiting for us to do.  
No ringing of Christmas chime comes calling,—  
The nearest steeple is miles away !  
I'll mend that wall where the stones are falling,  
And take the pair for a spin to-day.

A SPRAY OF GIPPSLAND WATTLE-  
BLOSSOM

OH ! give to me the little spray  
Of wattle, grown so far away !  
I'll hold it with a loving hand,  
Indeed thou canst not understand  
All it will speak to me !

Only a spray of wattle-bloom,  
Looking at me amid the gloom  
Of city smoke, and dust, and glare,—  
Drooping in uncongenial air,—  
A spray of wattle-bloom.

Friend of the city, not to thee  
Speaketh the blossom as to me ;  
Thou canst admire its buds of gold,  
Its feathered leaflets manifold,  
Its subtle perfume rare.

But every tiny bud and leaf  
Whispers to me in tender grief,—  
“ Sweet soul that loved the forest so,  
Wherein our myriad blossoms blow,  
What has become of thee ?

“Dost thou remember as of old  
The wattle wears its garb of gold?  
The grasses and the flowers are there,  
All that to thee was once so fair,  
So short a time ago?”

“The same deep winds, from o’er the leas,  
Swing their fresh music thro’ the trees,  
The same swift depths of river glide  
From out the snowy mountain side,  
And flow on to the sea.

“The sough of branches softly stirred,—  
The wild sweet note of forest bird,  
The browsing herd upon the plain,—  
Surely thy soul is sick with pain,  
As thus I speak to thee!”

Ah! little flower I loved of old,  
Dear little downy heads of gold!  
Truly, mine eyes are full of tears,  
As, o’er the long dividing years,  
The past comes back to me.

Surely thou knowest not from home,—  
Thy home and mine,—I willing roam?  
Ah! couldst thou guess how fancy flies  
To far bush shades and forest skies,  
Amid the city stones.

I ween not so reproachfully  
 Thy budded leaves would speak to me ;  
 But thou wouldst ask a kindly fate,  
 To send thy blossom, ere too late,  
     To tell the truth of me.

Not for a day can I forget  
 The haunts, resigned with such regret.  
 No season to its grave is led,  
 With all the dear ghosts of its dead,  
     Without me there to see.

And when the sunset, rich and still,  
 Swims on that river from the hill,  
 With it my spirit downward glides  
 Among the drift upon its tides,  
     And follows to the sea.

And all the long-drawn winds that fly,—  
 The pure, strong currents of the sky,—  
 Imagination brings them back,  
 And leads me o'er a golden track,  
     Beset with memories !

I see the far, old forest still,  
 And my worn spirit drinks its fill.  
 Soft recollections bring to me  
 The silence and the harmony,  
     The solitude and peace !

And all the strange weird notes that ring  
With flutters of a passing wing ;  
The sweet, wild wilfulness of song,  
That taunts us as we steal along,  
    Where nestlings chirp unseen.

All is as beautiful to-day,  
As if again I roamed that way ;  
The head once laid on Nature's heart,  
Needeth no messenger to start,  
    The strains of memory !

And yet I thank thee, dearest flower,  
Thou comest in a troubled hour,  
To whisper 'mid the city's roar,—  
“ Its noise is not for evermore,  
    The bush-wilds wait for thee ! ”

## LATE LAURELS

(At the Grave of A. L. Gordon, Poet)

WREATHE the cold laurels o'er the buried head,  
The surest garland for a poet dead,  
    The wreath that comes too late !  
O, well to mourn him in this solemn scene,  
O, well to crown him when his grave is green ;  
    This is the singer's fate !

There was no laurel for the living brow,  
Tho' carven bays cling 'gainst the pillar now,  
    Low in God's acre set,  
O poet mine ! thinking of thy wild years,  
So sad the marble wreath to me appears  
    That my dim eyes are wet.

The winds that come a-moaning from the shore,  
Shake the dark cypresses, and ripple o'er  
    The graveyard grasses deep.  
The sunlight dances on the column grey,  
And warms the marble with its golden ray,—  
    And thou art fast asleep !

Dost thou not hear the cadence of the breeze,  
Dost thou not see the shadows of the trees,  
    Gathered about thee here ?

Sweet Nature, surely, is not mute to *thee* !  
I ween the calling voices of yon sea  
Have reached thy listening ear.

Somewhere thine eyes are open, and thy hands  
Quiver on perfect keys : on mystic strands  
Thy music sways and swings.

O, may there be no grief in that refrain,  
No minor measures slipping into pain,  
Nor jar of broken strings.

But all our discords harmonised, no note  
Dying sob-silenced in the singing throat,  
In broken melodies.

But music into passionate fulness grown,  
Rounding the stammering numbers we have known  
In earthly minstrelsies.

I, singing in the underworld of song,  
Hear haunting lilt of metres tense and strong,  
That to the spirit cling ;  
Thy mournful note has lingered in the land,  
Our songs are sad before we understand  
The sadness that we sing !

O, dead, cold laurels on the column grey,  
Thro' tears I see thy marble flowers to-day,  
—The wreath that comes too late !

O, well to crown him in this solemn scene,  
O, well to mourn him when his grave is green,—  
This is the singer's fate !

## A BUSH GLOAMING

O NATIVE bush ! my heart, amidst thy vastness,  
    Grows full with perfect rest.  
Around me is a growing sense of darkness,  
    The light wanes in the west.  
Mists gather slowly in the low, brown marshes,  
    The shadows darken fast,  
And night, good angel of day-wearied nature,  
    Comes to the world at last.

Bright dews are falling on the murmurous branches,  
    And sinking softly down,  
Reach the parched petals of the forest blossoms,  
    And forest grasses brown.  
Thro' the dim skies the throbbing stars are shining,  
    And in the orient clouds  
The harvest moon a golden track is making,  
    Parting the fleecy shrouds.

Come, Night, with calm upon thy ebon pinions,  
    Sweep restful shadows here ;  
The sun-tanned land is waiting for the darkness,  
    The moon and stars shine clear.

Come night ! blot out the dazzle and the glaring  
Of tired sultry hours ;  
The jackass laughs among the clustered wattles,  
The bees have left the flowers.

Fresh winds are wandering thro' the bush recesses,  
Making low music sweet ;  
The waters, that grow mute among the marshes,  
Are babbling at my feet.  
Dark thro' the deepening blue the swans are flying,  
Weird harbingers of night ;  
The world is dreaming in delicious languor,  
With eyes closed from the light.

And I, too, rest amid the peace of Nature,  
And feel the mystic balm  
Of slow winds, stealing over sealèd eyelids,  
Steeping the soul in calm ;  
And listen to the gurgling of the creeklet,  
The singing of a bird,  
The summer melodies of subtlest cadence,  
From myriad branches stirred.

Shine down, familiar stars, upon the silence,  
In radiance pure and bright,  
Mingle with moonbeams on the braiding waters,  
To glorify the night !  
Gleam through the dusky boughs of this broad wattle,  
Cradling the nested birds,  
And stream sweet rays of light upon the distance,  
Where couch the clustered herds.

The warm crisp grass, and lavish blossoms, pillow  
The head that loves to lie  
With ear close to the breathing breast of Nature,  
Beneath her placid sky.  
Where never may be heard the faintest echo  
Of life's persisting pain.  
Bathed in the balmy stillness of the evening,  
The sere soul blooms again !

## A CITY SPARROW

AH ! hast thou found a bower of green,  
    Within my garden narrow,  
To nestle that small, hardy head,  
    My little city sparrow ?  
With those brown, fluttering wings of thine,  
    Why dost thou wait to travel,—  
And choose, before the Austral wilds,  
    The city stones and gravel ?

I would I had thy pinions strong,  
    To cleave the sunny spaces ;  
I ween they soon would bear me on  
    To all the forest places !  
How canst thou be so well content,  
    And deem it not a pity,  
To nest among the dusty eaves  
    Within the noisy city ?

And yet I do rejoice to hear  
    Thee in the branches singing ;  
And see thy little, cheery form  
    Above the houses winging.

It brings to me the sister strains  
That purer throats are giving,  
In lands where all the things of life  
Seem steeped in bliss of living.

Thy chirpy carol memory stirs,  
And almost I can listen  
To low, delicious laughter-notes,  
Where mornings gleam and glisten.  
And hear again, thro' lingering dusks,  
The curlew's weird complaining,  
Or note of calling swans that flock  
When all the hills are raining.

I wonder dost thou know the haunts  
Of all those country creatures ;  
Thou, with thy restless shining eyes,  
So used to city features !  
Dost know the friendliest tree to seek,  
When tempest's clouds are growing ?  
Or learn which dappled bole is best,  
When all its gales are blowing ?

Nay, thou hast not been nursed with them,  
In cradles of the woodland ;  
Nor knowest the poetry of that home  
Of native bush and moorland.  
The music of its mossy ways,  
Would have for thee no meanings,—  
Thou'rt happy with thy smoky trees,  
And scanty city gleanings.

So, little sparrow, fare thee well ;  
    We've spent an hour together,  
And thou hast brought me memory gems,  
    Set in this golden weather.  
Thou hadst thy mission here to-day,  
    If only to remind me  
Of yesterdays, among the birds,  
    That lie so far behind me !

## TOMBOY

- O FOR a swim thro' the running river,  
And one long pull with the boys at dawn !  
O for a ride on my dear old Rover,  
One tennis-round on the grassy lawn.  
O could I watch the sun on the wide sea,  
And feel the cool foam around my feet !  
O breezes wild, come blowing about me,  
And fill the bush with your music sweet !

Is it a week since we crossed the river,  
(Shallow and clear for the time of the year ;)  
And found the wattles and tall red clover,  
Scenting the air from afar and near ?  
Is it a week since we all went playing  
On the bent arm of the creaking gum ?  
Who would have thought that the old limb, swaying,  
Would lay the Tomboy crippled and dumb ?

Fred, were you frightened to see me lying,  
Silent and still in the dazzling sun ?  
Poor little lad ! did you think me dying ?  
That was an end to our day of fun !

Did you grow tired of the journey weary,  
Home thro' the trees and the long Spring grass,  
I heard you say at the river, dearie,—  
“ We'll bathe her face in the stream as we pass.”

I slept till the wind aroused me, sighing  
Just like the voice of a lonely child !  
A strange man's hand on my own was lying,  
His eyes had a look that was soft and mild.  
He did not know I could hear him saying,  
“ She may live on till the season turns,  
But ne'er again will she share in the playing  
Of children, out in the flowers and ferns.”

“ Till the season turns ! ” and to miss the wild vine,  
Climbing, all flowers, round the Station doors !  
Never to see, in the radiant sunshine,  
The cattle out on the rushy moors !  
How can I live under walls and ceiling,  
After a life in the sun and breeze ?  
Whene'er the bells of the birds are pealing,  
I pine and long to be under the trees !

O Auntie, dear, draw the blinds ! they're hiding  
The sunshine, flooding the bloomy eaves,  
O see the clouds o'er the deep blue gliding,  
O hear the birds in the lightwood's leaves !  
And Fred, my darling, your hand I'm holding,  
With its hard, boyish, familiar palm ;—  
Hand I shall miss in the world, unfolding,  
Where Tomboy Madge will be safe from harm.

May, with the gentle eyes, sadly shining,  
Come nearer, dearest, and smooth my hair ;  
Fondle me close in your arms entwining,  
And tell me the tale of the Infant fair.  
Not long ago these same " Good Tidings,"  
That lit the blue of your faithful eyes,  
Would seem to me but as wearisome chidings,  
Heavy as clouds in Autumnal skies.

But I must lie here, far from the bright wave,  
Far from the sounds and the scenes I love.  
Nothing before me but pain, and a green grave ;—  
Nothing to seek but the Hope from above.  
No gallop home through the dusk Bush threading,  
No long-drawn swim in the river or sea,—  
No way to seek but the one I am treading,  
Towards a lonely grave that is waiting me.

" When the season turns,"—you will find the grasses,  
Out in the paddocks, yellow and deep.  
Bury me near where the river passes,  
And let them cover me while I sleep.  
The boys, when they swing on the blue-gums,  
bending,  
And hear the waves on the shingled sand,  
Will sometimes think of poor Tomboy's ending,  
Who waits for them in another Land.

## IN THE NURSERY

THREE little heads in the firelight,  
Six little feet in a row ;  
Three pairs of eyes all shining,  
In the red of the firelight glow.  
Three little night-robed figures,  
Rosy and glowing, and gay,  
For the bath still steams in the corner,  
That heralds the end of the day.

Three little rounded faces,  
Looking so solemn and bright ;  
For sister is telling a story,  
Before they must say good-night.  
Three little pillows are waiting,  
On three little cots in a row ;  
Waiting for three little figures,  
In the red of the firelight glow.

Two little mouths are yawning,  
Four little eyelids blink ;  
But Rupert remains unconquered,  
And sits with never a wink.

Two little palms are pressing,  
Deeper in each small cheek;  
"The spirit, indeed, is willing,  
But the flesh," as we know, "is weak!"

Three little pillows no longer,  
Wait for three little heads;  
Six little feet are nestled,  
Warm in three little beds.  
Redly the firelight flickers,  
Fitfully thro' the gloom;  
And only the fall of the ashes,  
Is heard in the silent room.

Two battered dolls by the fender,  
Three little wooden ships;  
The sister has lifted them gently,  
Pressing them to her lips.  
Three little shirts are lying,  
Warm from three little breasts,  
And the sister's eyes are gentle,  
As she looks at the three white nests.

Three baby souls in slumber,  
One woman-soul in thought;  
The wind begins to whisper,  
By the window-creepers caught.  
Infantile eyes sleep-captive,  
Womanly eyes that wait,  
Watching the whitening embers,  
Die in the nursery grate!

## TO THE LITTLE ONES

I SEE in the twilight of memory,  
Just as in years ago,—  
The “three little heads in the firelight,”  
The “six little feet in a row !”  
I can almost repeat the story  
I told to them in the gloom ;  
While the wind was shaking the windows,  
And fire-flames reddened the room.

I can see the ruddy reflections  
On the laddie's chestnut curls ;  
And the shadowy changes 'circling  
The forms of the tiny girls.  
I can feel a soft head nestling,  
Closely against my heart,  
With brown eyes wide to the firelight,  
And red baby lips apart.

Ah ! dear little heads, I wonder,  
As the swift years onward go,  
If ever again together  
We'll sit in the nursery so !

If ever again we shall gather  
    Together, close from the cold ;  
Grouped in the glow of the firelight,  
    Just as in nights of old !

God's blessing be yours, my darlings !  
    In the young year now begun ;  
Another turn of the journey  
    The dear little feet must run.

God's blessing be yours, my dear ones,—  
    The season of Christ is here,  
And with pen that will falter I write you,  
    Glad Christmas and happy New Year.

## IN THE BUSH—AFTERNOON

AROUND lie the limitless acres of forests Australian,  
Infinite solitudes, scarcely disturbed by a sound ;  
Only the keen, tireless tinklings of bell-birds, leaf-  
hidden,  
Break like a monotone chord on a silence pro-  
found.

Stately and tall, and but rarely in varying foliage,  
Range the bush monarchs, with branches just  
rocked by the wind ;  
Low at their feet cluster saplings and giant-leaved  
tree-ferns,  
Anchored in mosses, with creepers caressingly  
twined.

Rarely the sad, sombre foliage brightens with colour,  
Save by the clematis stars, and the glory-pea bine ;  
Or, 'gainst the branch-trellised verge of the long-  
stretching forest,  
Dagger-leaved lightwoods and gold-blossomed  
wattle trees shine.

Strewn 'mid the tawny bush-grasses, where dead  
leaves lie scattered,

Myriads of daisies, and fawn-coloured violets blow ;  
Green-hearted orchids up spring where the maiden-  
fern clusters,

While thro' the boulders the twin creeks in melody  
flow.

Seen through a clearing of bush, soft with velvety  
verdure,

The plain's fertile acreage lies 'neath the wester-  
ing sun ;

Down to the flat rolls the marsh-margined fringe of  
the forest,

And red cattle graze on the grass of the wide  
Station run.

Vaulted in crystalline purity glistens the heavens,  
Never the breath of a cloud on its measureless blue ;  
Deeper the purple tints glow on the close-wooded  
mountains,

Finer the "shadow and shine" blend in dreamiest  
hue.

Those were the days when the soul, with its yearn-  
ing disquiet,

Could for a moment be eased of its burdening  
pain.

O, thus to roam in the changeless quiescence of  
Nature !

O to be back in the heart of the forest again !

## LAUGHING JACKASSES\*

LAUGH, lusty-throated birds upon the trees,

Ye cannot laugh too long !

I love the throbbing melodies outpoured,

Impetuous and strong.

Laugh till the hushed bush rings with notes of  
joy,

Over the dark hill's crest ;—

We need all music in this world of ours,

So sing your best !

Laugh, happy birds, your laughter is so sweet,

Such joy is in your song !

Each heart outpour its music from the trees,

Re-echoed by the throng !

Carry the carol on, ye feathered sprites,

And thrill it high and low ;

O ! tell me all the rapture of your strain,—

I love it so !

\* My friend, Mr. George Gordon McCrae, tells me this apparently bizarre word, "Jackass," is derived from the French verb "jacasser," to gabble, and it was one of the members of La Perouse's Expedition that conferred the title "jackasse" upon the bird.

On the bare branches quivering heads I see,  
And lifted, shaken throats ;  
How glad the birds seem as they chuckle forth  
Their full delicious notes !  
How joyous, perched upon the naked boughs,  
High in yon dead bush tree !  
Are they exulting in the pathless woods,  
Where roam they free ?

O happy birds, let's hear you while we may,—  
Dear laughing birds, sing on !  
A morn may dawn when we shall wait in vain  
For voices that are gone !  
Sing, dearest birds ! No cruel hand is here  
To still your strenuous lay ;  
Only a heart that loves you tarries nigh  
Your nests to-day !

## FROM THE POMEGRANATES

BOUGHS are massed in golden glory,  
In the autumn garden sere.  
Close our books, and read the story  
On the pages of the year !  
Life with dissolution mingles  
In the many coloured leaves ;  
Lighter shadows fleck the shingles,  
And the quiet eaves.

All the willows by the river  
Wave their lithe arms in the breeze,  
On their leaves the sunbeams ever  
Drive their arrows thro' the trees.  
Ripe leaves fill the shining reaches  
Of the stream, that hurries down  
To the tides and silver beaches,  
Out beyond the town.

Red pomegranates, warm with flushes  
Of the suns, that made them prime ;  
Flaming where the leafage blushes,  
In the passionate autumn time.

“Down of hoary quinces” lying  
’Gainst the mellow orchard leaves ;—  
Spiritual hands are tying  
All the garden sheaves !

Sing, ye birds, among the spaces,  
Fill the air with throbbing wings !  
Earth is rich with passing graces,  
And the sense of dying things.  
Fill the trees, O wind ! blow westward !  
Sweet thy full sonorous sound !  
Dead-year music sinking restward,  
Into silence bound.

## THE SOUTHERN BREEZE

BEAUTIFUL forest in grand unrest,  
Now as I see thee, I love thee best !  
Full-spreading arms to the breezes wide,  
Tossing aloft in the airy tide.  
O ! what a mingling of murmurs greet  
Ears that are open for speech so sweet !  
O ! what an infinite vision lies  
Out in the sunlight for seeing eyes !  
Never a leaf in the land is still,  
Melodies ring in the meanest rill !  
Delicate airs and harmonies pass,  
Subtle and swift, thro' the bowing grass.  
Surely no heaven looked half so blue,  
Tremblingly breaking the tree-tops thro' !  
Truly no sunlight had half the gold,  
Glowing so gay o'er the windy wold !  
Wonderful wind from the South seas blown,  
Magic has out from thy pinions flown.  
Trees that were voiceless an hour ago,  
Tremble with language in ebb and flow ;  
Lands that were mute in the breezeless air,  
Laugh with the shadows now chasing there !

And, while the jubilant spirit leaps,  
Joyous and strong, thro' the forest dēeps,  
Something akin is within my breast,  
Born of the bush in its wild unrest ;  
Something that lifts, from the low control  
Of body and sense, the exultant soul !  
Onward and upward the spirit leads,  
Drawn by the yearning of mystic needs,  
Till swept and stirred like the crying trees,  
I, too, find voice in the Southern breeze !  
Beautiful forest in grand unrest,  
Now as I see thee I love thee best !  
O let the bough, which the great gale heaves,  
Ever be full of the clustered leaves.  
Over the place, where the air tides flow,  
Aye let the grasses be gathered so ;  
Else, when the winds from the southward  
    come,  
Pipes of the forest be stricken dumb ;  
For ever so sweet the blowing breeze,  
Moans it full sad thro' the leafless trees !  
And soul ! Be lovely in bloom and leaf,  
Else, too, for thee will be plaints of grief,  
When breath of the spirit within thee sways,  
Like wild South winds in the forest ways.

## AN AUTUMN MOOD

BURY me, Autumn, with thy faded leaves,  
For I am old as they ;  
Bind me together with the new-mown sheaves,  
Gathered so fast to-day.  
O ! Autumn spirit, wan throughout the land,  
Wilt thou not understand ?

Gather me, Autumn, like thy foliage sere  
That hangs from stem and tree.  
O let me share the burial of the year,  
Its doom is dear to me !  
As leaves autumnal float beneath thy breath,  
Give me their slow, sweet death !

Touch me with ripe-hued wings, O spirit grave !  
And, with earth's leaves and flowers,  
Lay me to sleep in silence that I crave,  
From life's uneasy hours.  
When swings the sickle near some drooping head,  
Let it reap mine instead !

Dear Autumn, ere thy garments, sadly gay,  
Sweep the last leaflet low,  
Find a tired spirit on thy onward way,  
So glad with thee to go.  
So glad to end the long years' trying hours,  
And rest with leaves and flowers !

But Autumn's yellow-coloured tresses pass,  
The rich wings rise o'erhead ;  
As if in mockery, dyed leaves hide the grass,  
The shrunk flowers muster dead ;  
No space for me within the lovely shroud,  
Where outworn garlands crowd !

Farewell, sweet Autumn ! Mournfully I cry,  
And watch the last leaves fall,  
While ghostly pinions of the year throb by,  
And pass beyond recall.  
O, why,—keen scythes of Autumn tempered true,  
Could ye not reap me too ?

## TO IVY

BREAKING thy heart, my dearie,  
    Away in the dark and cold ?  
Ah ! hush, for the sound of weeping  
    Is sad enough in the old,—  
Sad enough for the weary,  
    For the worn, and the tired, and the grey ;  
But laughter for thee, my dearie,  
    Young eyes should ever be gay !

“Crying for mother,” she whispers,  
    Choked by the sobs that rise  
Deep from the childish bosom,  
    Filling the childish eyes.  
“Ivy is weary for mother,  
    For mother so far away !”  
The grief grows big in the darkness,  
    That dies in the time of play.

Ah, girlie, many are weary  
    With heavier woes than thine ;  
Night closes in on the grieving,  
    However the sun may shine.

And could we together wander  
    Away thro' the lands of sleep,  
So many sorrows would greet us,  
    That thou wouldst forget to weep !

So cry not, dearie, for trouble  
    The daylight will set aright ;  
My arms are nearer than mother's,  
    And gather thee close to-night.  
'Tis sad enough for the weary  
    To weep, and the old, and the grey ;  
But laughter for thee, my darling,  
    Young eyes should ever be gay !

## A WOODEN DOLL\*

You laugh, but my dim eyes are full ;  
    “Only a doll,” you say,  
A little painted wooden doll,  
    Laid in a drawer away !  
The poorest child upon the street,  
    Would scorn its battered face,  
And yet, among my treasured things,  
    The little gift has place.

For it has charm to bring again  
    A memory of past days ;  
The echo of a boyish voice,  
    The noise of boyish plays.  
And warm fond arms are round me fast,  
    A soft cheek crushes mine,  
While childhood's faithful love looks out  
    The blue eyes all ashine.

\* “Bluey” was a parting gift from an old private patient of mine—a little boy, who, through years of illness, took the liveliest interest in the working of his father's station. He had a number of dolls, christened

"You'll always keep the doll to 'mind  
 You of myself," he said ;  
 "I'd like to give a better doll,  
 One with a steady head.  
 But Bluey is the only man  
 I'd spare ; he's no great hand  
 When there are any sheep to shear,  
 Or any calves to brand.

"So you may keep him till you die ;  
 Mind, give him lots to do,  
 For he's the laziest chap I know,—  
 You'll find he's cheeky too.  
 See to his legs, they're loose a bit ;  
 His arms will need some glue ;  
 I meant to fix his head before  
 I gave him up to you."

And so I took the cast-off doll,  
 While promising to give  
 Poor Bluey all my love and care,  
 As long as I should live.  
 So in the drawer he lies to-day,  
 Naked but not despised ;  
 No treasure that I hold is more  
 Affectionately prized.

after the different "hands," and these small lay-figures were supposed to do the work of the originals. This little laddie is the hero of "The Wooden Legs."

And every time the bald blue head  
And wooden legs I see,  
A passionate regretful sense  
Of loss comes over me.  
And so I beg you not to mock  
At my wet eyes to-day,  
Nor to disdain the wooden doll,  
Laid in a drawer away.

## BABY

“TIRE<sup>D</sup> of the sunshine, Baby,  
Tired of your toys, you say?  
What is the matter, darling,  
That you no longer play?  
Wee limbs should not grow weary,  
Sweet little voices fail;  
Nor small, fair heads grow heavy,  
Nor rosy cheeks grow pale!

Look, there is doggie playing,  
Trying your ball to catch;  
I'm sure he is longing for baby,  
To chase him,—just you watch!  
And the naughty kitten yonder,  
Has stolen your shoe away;  
And here is the hoop, my darling,  
I brought you yesterday.”

“Baby is sick!” he whispers,  
His cheek pressed on my hand;  
Then a great fear smites my heart-strings,  
I dare not understand.

“Baby is sick,”—so gently ;—  
 And with sudden dread opprest,  
 Close in my arms I hold him,  
 The dear face on my breast.

And the golden world before us,  
 Looks dark 'neath the sunny skies ;  
 I only see great shadows  
 Thro' the tears that fill my eyes.  
 The silent home is round me,  
 And a silence there seems meet,  
 For the hush of a baby's laughter,  
 And a baby's pattering feet.

\* \* \* \* \*

“Only the grave of a baby,  
 What is that in a life ?  
 In anguish for larger sorrow,  
 In the stab of a deeper knife? ”  
 Only the grave of a baby,  
 Thro' memory's vistas seen !  
 Yet o'er all the days that divide us,  
 The tiny grave looks green.

## AN OLD BUSH ROAD

DEAR old road, wheel-worn and broken,  
Winding thro' the forest green,  
Barred with shadow, and with sunshine,  
Misty vistas drawn between.  
Grim, scarred bluegums ranged austere,  
Lifting blackened columns each  
To the large, fair fields of azure,  
Stretching ever out of reach.

See the hardy bracken growing  
Round the fallen limbs of trees ;  
And the sharp reeds from the marshes,  
Washed across the flooded leas ;  
And the olive rushes, leaning  
All their pointed spears to cast  
Slender shadows on the roadway,  
While the faint, slow wind creeps past.

Ancient ruts grown round with grasses,  
Soft old hollows filled with rain ;  
Rough, gnarled roots all twisting queerly,  
Dark with many a weather-stain.

Lichens moist upon the fences,  
Twining close against the logs ;  
Yellow fungus in the thickets,  
Vivid mosses in the bogs.

Dear old road, wheel-worn and broken,  
What delights in thee I find !  
Subtle charm and tender fancy,  
Like a fragrance in the mind.  
Thy old ways have set me dreaming,  
And out-lived illusions rise,  
And the soft leaves of the landscape  
Open on my thoughtful eyes.

See the clump of wattles, standing  
Dead and sapless on the rise ;  
When their boughs were full of beauty,  
Even to uncaring eyes,  
I was ever first to rifle  
The soft branches of their store.  
O the golden wealth of blossom  
I shall gather there no more !

Now we reach the dun morasses,  
Where the red moss used to grow,  
Ruby-bright upon the water,  
Floating on the weeds below.  
Once the swan and wild-fowl glided  
By those sedges, green and tall ;  
Here the booming bitterns nested ;  
Here we heard the curlews call.

## AN OLD BUSH ROAD

Climb this hill and we have rambled  
To the last turn of the way ;  
Here is where the bell-birds tinkled  
Fairy chimes for me all day.  
These were bells that never wearied,  
Swung by ringers on the wing ;  
List ! the elfin strains are waking,  
Memory sets the bells a-ring !

Dear old road, no wonder, surely,  
That I love thee like a friend !  
And I grieve to think how surely  
All thy loveliness will end.  
For thy simple charm is passing,  
And the turmoil of the street  
Soon will mar thy sylvan silence  
With the tramp of careless feet.

And for this I look more fondly  
On the sunny landscape, seen  
From the road, wheel-worn and broken,  
Winding thro' the forest green.  
Something still remains of Nature,  
Thoughts of other days to bring :—  
For the staunch old trees are standing,  
And I hear the wild birds sing !

## WILL YOU REMEMBER ?

WHEN other footsteps tarry at your threshold,  
When other hands with these dear hands have  
met,  
When other faces bend for your caresses,—  
Will you remember. or will you forget ?  
If other voices sing my songs at gloaming  
In careless accents, —will your eyes be wet ?  
O, love ! I'm weeping, and in weeping yonder  
Will you remember, or will you forget ?

Should words of mine fall from new lips some  
morning,  
Should strange eyes take a look mine used to  
wear ;  
If some bright head, a-dazzle in the sunshine,  
Borrow the glamour of my golden hair :—  
Will your man's heart go out with love and  
longing ?  
On that morn's sunlight will grief's shadow  
set ?  
O love ! I'm weeping, and in weeping wonder  
Will you remember, or will you forget ?

Should some fair woman's face enslave your senses,  
Rousing your widowed heart to warmest life ;  
If you should clasp her to the breast I cling to,  
And take the crown, dear to the buried wife ;  
Will you neglect my grave amongst the grasses,  
And leave the careless winds alone to fret ?  
O love ! I'm weeping, and in weeping wonder  
Will you remember, or will you forget ?

May be my chair will soon be empty standing,—  
Dear, will it e'er again be filled for you ?  
It may be that a lovelier face will offer,  
Sweet wifely kisses to the lips I knew.  
I am so frail and weak,—and oh, so weary !—  
A pallid blossom on your hearthstone set :  
Why should I weep, and in my weeping wonder  
Will you remember, or will you forget ?

Ah ! hold me close, dear love, and quell the aching  
Of this young heart—it soon will be at rest !  
Forgive me, dear, the shadow-doubt is passing,  
Claspt to the shelter of your faithful breast.  
What matter whether love prove brief or lasting ?  
Your arms have shielded me, and claspt me yet ;  
I'll weep no longer, love, nor will I wonder  
Will you remember, or will you forget ?

## A REMONSTRANCE

FORBEAR—our bitter words were best unsaid ;  
    We have been friends ;—grown foes,  
    Another flower must close  
In love's great garland: all will soon be dead.

Thou shalt go free of blame or praise of mine.  
    The new heart drawn to thee  
    Shall love no less for me,  
I wish no cloud on any heaven of thine.

Be thou as generous foe as loving friend,  
    Remembering in thy hate  
    How well we loved of late,—  
For old time's sake be loyal to the end!

What is the loss of thy dear love to me ?  
    A little deeper breath  
    Of the chill airs of death,  
A little lonelier way upon life's sea.

May be I dreamed that friendship would outlast  
    This petty life of ours,  
    Between the stars and flowers,—  
But thou hast failed, and so the dream has past.

What matters one more drop of bitterness  
    In the deep cup we drink,  
    From which no lip may shrink ?  
What recks it whether thou dost curse or bless ?

I ween the strongest hate in time grows weak,  
    When life's last leaf is read,  
    And life's last dream is dead,  
And we no more may "hear each other speak."

So let no malice the old love defile,  
    O enemy of mine !  
    The nobler faith is thine,  
That all revenge is never worth the while

## THE CHIME OF BELLS

(Christmas 1887)

CHIME, Christmas bells, across our morning lands,  
Reverberant and long :  
And round our sunny, sea-wreathed island-home  
A garland weave of song !

Ring through the radiant air those "tidings glad"  
Of ages past away !  
Ring out the music of the centuries,  
And fill our hearts to-day !

Listen, O hearts Australian ! Ye that beat  
In pulses fresh and young,  
Hearken to echoes from the elder world,  
Whose songs of youth are sung.

O welcome, bells of Christmas, sweet your strife  
Of joyous rivalry !  
Bringing the slow heart of the failing year  
Its crowning jubilee !

O! tell us of the olden message sent  
    Upon the Eastern night,  
When vigil-wearied shepherds lifted eyes  
    To meet the dawn of light.

For we that linger in the deepening gloom,  
    Tire with the watch of care,  
O, come, sweet angels! come and let us see  
    Our clouded East grow fair!

## GRANNY

“SING to me, childie darling,  
Or some soft music play ;  
I dream by the window, darling,  
Watching the dying day.  
Granny has grown so weary,  
My tired old eyes are dim ;  
Shadows creep in from the garden,  
But sunbeams thro' them swim.

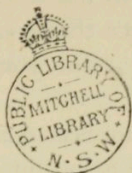
“Sing to me, childie darling,  
In vague, sweet minor lays ;  
The tender tone of the music  
Brings the dream of other days,  
And the sweet ghost-world of memory,  
Is stirred by the plaintive strain.  
Old thoughts, I deemed forgotten,  
Come back to my heart again.

“The deep full hours of sunset,  
Solemnly, slowly pass ;  
I hear the chirping of crickets,  
Muffled in moistening grass.

The sough of leaves in the lightwoods,  
Out in the darkening space ;—  
Shadows ! come in from the garden,  
And rest on my tired old face !

“Sing to me, childie darling,  
Granny is worn and grey ;  
My life is low as the light-tide  
That ebbs from the shores of day.  
My wrinkled hands are folded,  
And closed my faded eyes ;—  
Sing to me, child belovéd,  
While the stars glow thro’ the skies.

“O childie, childie ! singing  
In deep, soft dusky hours.  
The dews slip into the lilies,  
Wooing the scent from the flowers.  
Music, mysterious, tender,  
Filling the peaceful place !—  
O shadow, come from the garden,  
And rest on my tired old face !”



## FOR SOME ONE'S SAKE

(Written on behalf of the Melbourne Hospital  
for Sick Children)

LISTEN, mothers ! to the voices " of the children ; "  
Hearken, fathers ! to the pathos of their cry ;  
Can you bear to hear their pitiful appealing,  
Have you heart to pass the little creatures by ?  
O ! if ever childish arms have clung about you,  
O ! if ever baby eyes in yours have smiled,  
Pause and listen to the story of the helpless,  
Pause in pity for the sorrow of a child !

O ! if ever you have seen, with eyes adoring,  
Your wee dimpled babies tumbling in the  
sun ;—  
If ever you have watched your lusty laddies  
Racing homeward when the tasks of school are  
done :—  
For the sake of *these* remember the afflicted ;  
Let the rosy faces plead now for the pale !  
For we know how soon the little face can alter,  
And how easily the sturdy limbs can fail.

Surely somewhere, in the world of little children,  
There's a tiny face that meets your loving eye?  
There's a childish form you'd shelter from all  
sorrow,

Ah! you could not bear *that* little creature's cry!  
For the sake of one be pitiful and tender,  
Helping all who pine in anguish and in woe;  
For we never know how sorely they were stricken,  
Nor how soon our dear ones may be crying so!

Listen, happy parents, God has spared in mercy!  
On whose sunny home no darkening shadows  
fall,—

Pause a moment, with your rosy band about you,  
Just to hear how sad these childish voices call!  
Picture one of those you guard, with care unresting,  
Pining, helpless, on a dying cripple's bed!  
Free the bandaged form of some wee, wan-eyed baby,  
And then bind them on your darling's limbs  
instead!

O! for some one's sake be full of true compassion,  
For themselves the little sufferers may not plead!  
Let the memory of those we lost in sorrow,  
Waken pity for the children in their need.  
Little chairs are standing empty in the nursery,—  
Childless mothers! I can hear your grief's low  
moan!

For the sake of *these* reach out your hands in kind-  
ness,  
Make the story of these little ones your own.

Hearken, fathers ! to the voices of the children ;  
Listen, mothers ! to the pathos of their cry.  
Be not deaf to childish misery and sorrow,—  
There is anguish that we must not hurry by !  
Stretch your loving, open arms a little wider,  
To your heart the world of little children take,  
In remembering those you love may yet be calling  
For the aid, you give to-day, for some one's sake !

## “IN THE COOL OF THE DAY”

“And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day.”—GENESIS.

FEEL'ST thou the urgent up-springing of grass ?  
The quickening of sap in the trees ?  
Lift reverent brows as the warm winds pass,—  
God's voice is here in the breeze.  
Kneel on this altar of innocent flowers,  
Barely a yesterday old ;  
The beautiful Spring, with its sunlit showers,  
Is blossoming Winter's mould.

Ah! hear'st thou, my soul, this sweet thrill thro'  
the sods,  
Restless with resolute seeds ?  
See'st thou the glory above the dark clods,  
Where blossoms break thro' the weeds ?  
O! sparkle and leap in your flow, slow veins,  
Be filled with the season's power ;  
Open, my soul, as a bud to the rains,  
Unfolding to perfect flower !

Unbind the rose of my being, O Spring,  
O reach thou its hidden core !  
Pour all thy hues on its petals, to cling  
Glowing and glad evermore !  
Lift me with thine irresistible light,  
Up from humanity's clay ;  
No seed can long as I long for the sight  
Of the great Sun shining away !

Pale buried roots, set so fast in the soil,  
The dark soil, heavy and cold,—  
Your fibres push with unwearying toil  
Out into the sunlight's gold.  
And maybe I, with this embryo soul,  
Buried, like roots from the light,  
May reach, when life's full meanings unroll,  
A flowering time out of sight.

Sweet roses ripen and redden apace,  
The blanched root-fibres above,  
Fresh, new-born blooms press a kiss on my face,  
Thrilling as kisses of love.  
Fly, ye glad birds, in the crystalline sky,  
Spread your bright wings to the blue !  
So swift ye answer the young nestlings' cry,  
All calling for food from you.

Teach me, my Father, the story of Spring,  
Thy lesson which underlies  
The birth of blossom, the whirring of wing,  
The young birds' tremulous cries.

So make me willing to tarry in peace,  
 Like roots in the unsunned sod.  
 I shall find for my spirit a sure release,  
 In a Springtide hid with God.

\* \* \* \* \*

The dark, soaring spires of the pines are sharp  
 In daffodil depths of sky;  
 Voices of night-zephyrs wail like a harp,  
 Day's whispering low lullaby.  
 A film of dew-mist is chill in the air,  
 The star of the Dusk has birth :  
 O, Father of Light, let me have some share  
 In the glory of sky and earth !

I whisper " Amen " to the prayerful sense,  
 Haunting each blossom and tree,  
 I sing with the birds full of hope intense,  
 While waiting a sign from Thee.  
 Father, the young one calls out from the nest,  
 The parent pities its cry,—  
 I am thy nestling, O shelter me, lest  
 I fall in the dark, and die !

The fast-waning Westward is dimmer for tears  
 That well in my wistful eyes ;  
 The silence of earth flows in at my ears,  
 And hushes my yearning cries.  
 Why call I loud for my God ? He is *here*,—  
 List ! " Nearer than hands and feet, . . . .  
 Closer than breathing." My clouded eyes clear,  
 Remembering words so sweet.

I'll kneel in the shadows with large calm gaze,  
    Meek lifted from earth afar,  
To measureless heaven's mysterious ways,  
    Beyond its uttermost star !  
Endow my Spirit with vision of eyes,  
    That so it may find its way,  
E'en to the end of the infinite skies,  
    To the Light for which we pray !

So ask I the lesson of Spring to-night,  
    The story of flower and tree,  
Waiting in hope thro' the shadowing night,  
    For morn that shall surely be.  
The birds are secure in the wind-shaken nest,  
    Roses have fallen asleep ;  
The daisies that grow in the grass are at rest,  
    The shadows over them creep.

Good-night ! O beautiful, shadowful land,  
    O faithful blossom and bird !  
Ye have brought the touch of our Father's hand,  
    His voice divine we have heard.  
Dear Earth, not vainly I'm kneeling to pray  
    In solemn, wonderful hours !  
God walked, I know, in His garden to-day,  
    And taught me with birds and flowers.

## A WOMAN'S MOOD

I THINK to-night I could bear it all,  
Even the arrow that cleft the core,—  
Could I wait again for your swift footfall,  
And your sunny face coming in at the door.  
With the old frank look and the gay young smile,  
And the ring of the words you used to say ;  
I could almost deem the pain worth while,  
To greet you again in the olden way !

But you stand without in the dark and cold,  
And I may not open the long closed door,  
Nor call thro' the night, with the love of old,—  
“Come into the warmth, as in nights of yore !”  
I kneel alone in the red fire-glow,  
And hear the wings of the wind sweep by ;  
You are out afar in the night, I know,  
And the sough of the wind is like a cry.

You are out afar—and I wait within,  
A grave-eyed woman whose pulse is slow ;  
The flames round the red coals softly spin,  
And the lonely room 's in a rosy glow.

The firelight falls on your vacant chair,  
And the soft brown rug where you used to stand;  
Dear, never again shall I see you there,  
Nor lift my head for your seeking hand.

Yet sometimes still, and in spite of all,  
I wistful look at the fastened door,  
And wait again for the swift footfall,  
And the gay young voice as in hours of yore.  
It still seems strange to be here alone,  
With the rising sob of the wind without;  
The sound takes a deep, insisting tone,  
Where the trees are swinging their arms about.

Its moaning reaches the sheltered room,  
And thrills my heart with a sense of pain;  
I walk to the window, and pierce the gloom,  
With a yearning look that is all in vain.  
You are out in a night of depths that hold  
No promise of dawning for you and me,  
And only a ghost from the life of old  
Has come from the world of memory!

You are out evermore! God wills it so!  
But ah! my spirit is yearning yet!  
As I kneel alone by the red fire-glow,  
My eyes grow dim with the old regret.  
O when shall the aching throb grow still,  
The warm love-life turn cold at the core!  
Must I be watching, against my will,  
For your banished face in the opening door?

It may be, dear, when the sequel's told  
Of the story, read to its bitter close;  
When the inner meanings of life unfold,  
And the under-side of our being shows.—  
It may be then, in that truer light,  
When all our knowledge has larger grown,  
I may understand why you stray to-night,  
And I am left, with the past, alone.

## BEAUTIFUL LIFE

O BEAUTIFUL, wonderful life ! for me  
The tide of being flows swift and free !  
Only to live is enough delight,  
Thro' the linking hours of dawn and night !  
Only to be in the deep full sense  
Of loving all things with love intense :  
Only to look with seeing eyes  
On the world of beauty that round me lies.

O beautiful, wonderful life ! I pray  
That I may live as I live to-day ;  
That I may feel the earnest glow,  
The heart's deep faith in its overflow !  
And Time's sweet music is in my ears,  
With all its laughter, and all its tears !  
I feel in my heart life's bubbling wine,  
Quickening my pulse with a joy divine !

O beautiful, wonderful life ! Ah me !  
I face the future for love of thee.  
I bear the cross with its galling bars,  
The grief that crushes, the blow that scars !

All sting is drawn from the keenest pain ;  
Life's light breaks in thro' the bitter rain,  
And, somehow, still it is good to live,  
Whatever the arrows of Fate may give !

O beautiful, wonderful life ! I pray  
That I may live as I live to-day !

## LET THERE BE NO TO-MORROW

LET there be no to-morrow,  
But one long fair to-day,—  
To-day of the ripened Autumn,  
To-day of the pensive May.  
Let there be no to-morrow—  
Swiftly the moments fly,  
While the sun shines o'er the valley,  
And the calm stream idles by.

Let there be no to-morrow,  
But here for a little space,  
Let only the day's completeness,  
Be felt in its fleeting grace!  
Tho' Autumn thoughts are round us!  
Colouring vale and hill,  
Yet dreams of the Summer are with us,  
In all their sweetness still.

Let there be no to-morrow,  
Skies of transcendent blue!  
Let there be no to-morrow,  
Leaves of Autumnal hue!

So sky, and leafage, and valley,  
Ripe in the season's prime,  
May hold for ever a picture  
In the golden frame of Time !

Let there be no to-morrow  
Into our sunlight cast,  
Changing the glowing present,  
Into the faded Past.

Let there be no to-morrow,  
Bearing our wealth away,  
So sweet is the picture painted,  
By the thoughts that are mine to-day !

## THE THEME

“We need all music in this world of ours ;  
To sing our *best*.”

Faint-hearted singers of our “Sorrow-Star”

Too long our songs are sad !

Strike out life’s music on a truer bar,

The angels’ psalms are glad !

Linger no more on wistful minors, strung

In Time’s unreal keys ;

There are so many joyous tunes unsung

In life’s great harmonies !

Faint-hearted singers of reluctant notes,

Joy should be all our strain !

Silence the sobbing cry within our throats,—

There’s nothing deep in pain.

God’s perfect music full and glorious,

Is all that will endure ;

O, echoes catch from tones victorious,

Till song is purged and pure.

Faint-hearted minstrel, draw a firmer bow

Across life’s violin ;

Too long our sad-pitched chords have deepened woe ;

A truer strain begin.

Sing of the Truth, outlasting all the pain,  
In grief's mistaken song ;—  
The broken faith, the loss we held as gain,  
The thousand themes of wrong.

Sing LOVE,—the keynote of the Universe,  
Love infinite and strong !  
Breathe Love into the poet's halting verse,  
The singer's faltering song !  
Sing Love ! encompassing and crowning life,  
This is the theme we need  
To set God's silence on our mortal strife,  
And give us songs indeed.

Sing Love ! and all unreal things will seem  
No more Truth's guise to take ;  
For sin and pain are but an evil dream,  
From which we all shall wake.  
“In God we live and move,” and “God is  
LOVE ;”  
How can true Life be sad ?  
Faint-hearted singers, hear the strains above,—  
The angels' psalms are glad !

## AUTUMN

THE Summer, with its long, bright days,  
Has past ; and o'er the changing hill  
The grass is yellowing ;—calm suns  
Set on wide cornfields, ripe and still,—  
The brown marsh winds around the Bush,  
And flooding creeks its reaches fill.

Children are laughing 'neath the boughs  
Of orchard-monarchs ; vineyards glow  
Under the smiling of the sun,—  
Summer full loth dons weeds of woe,  
Chill snows enwrap the far-off hills,  
And winds, keen Winter's prelude, blow.

The path we walked together, friend,  
Is buried in the fallen leaves ;  
The petals of the summer's flowers  
Autumn has garnered in his sheaves ;—  
And dusk's sweet hours we valued so,  
Swift-falling gloom of night receives !

The time suits sorrow's mood,—and meet  
It seems to see the year in weeds ;  
Autumn in sympathy enshrouds  
With leaves the path that hither leads,  
A path oft trod in tears—for here  
Grief plants in hope the future's seeds.

## THE NEGLECTED GARDEN

A LOVELY wilderness of wasting bloom,  
Rosemary with sweetpea growing,  
Passion-flowers with woodbine blowing,  
Pansies through the jonquils glowing,  
And overshadowing all a box-tree's gloom.

Sunshine but rarely finds this garden fair ;  
Where branches cluster overhead,  
And creepers with each other wed,  
Ivy and roses white and red,  
Their perfumes floating on the summer air.

A spot so beautiful with all things sweet !  
Arum lilies by the edges  
Of a fountain's matted sedges,  
Wallflowers growing 'gainst the hedges,  
And growing mosses crost by shadows fleet.

The harp-strings of the wind begin to play,  
And there is stir among the grass,  
The fountain breaks its mirrored glass,  
The flowers sway as the zephyrs pass,  
And softly echo what the breezes say.

What is the secret of this garden old ?  
Did children ever wander here,  
Plucking the blossoms year by year,  
From budded spring to autumn sere ?  
What story doth this solitude enfold ?

Was youthful love and crownèd hope here known  
In other days, when rosemary  
Was never blent with creeping pea,  
And passion-flower from bine was free,  
And these enlatticed creepers all ungrown ?

We long to know, for see how fast  
The place is falling to decay,  
With weeds and briers in every way  
And shadow shutting out the day,  
And no voice speaking but the ghostly Past.

Old garden, thou art lovely in thy weeds,  
In spite of all the leafy tangle,  
In spite of all the briery bramble,  
I love among thy blooms to ramble,  
In this wild harvest of neglected seeds.

## OLD MANUSCRIPTS

How changed now seem the written lines  
    I penned in days ago !  
How little of the mood remains  
    Of their first overflow !  
Unfinished poems, half-writ tales,  
    Stray leaves all incomplete,  
Fall round me from the long-closed drawer,  
    And rustle to my feet.

There is a sadness clinging round  
    These fragment thoughts of mine ;  
They bring to me youth's earnest days,  
    Their spirit haunts each line.  
Outworn enthusiasms speak  
    From every faded leaf,—  
I read with soft regretful eyes,  
    Dim with a mist of grief.

The ghost of a forgotten day  
    Lurks in between each word ;  
A hundred dreams too wild for speech,  
    A thousand thoughts unheard ;

Conceptions all astir for birth,  
    Young buds in burst for flower,  
Now all too dead for memory  
    To make them live with power !

I ponder over scenes that lay  
    About me as I wrote,  
So many tender hopes and fears  
    And faiths around me float.  
I smell the perfume of a flower,  
    See sunlight on the hills,  
Roam eucalypt and wattle wilds  
    By bush-born summer rills.

Something of each and all is here  
    Pressed in between the leaves ;  
A soft association sweet  
    To the dim paper cleaves ;  
And there is something closer still  
    A subtler pain to lend,—  
The memory of an outlived trust,  
    And a forgiven friend.

For thou wast with me in those days  
    Of early vision keen,  
When life was all so rich and full,  
    And light so clearly seen ;  
Ere Fate had weakened nerve and brain  
    And uncongenial years  
Blurred all the bright horizon lines  
    Thro' disappointment's tears.

Old manuscripts, of long ago,  
My callow thoughts hide fast ;  
I'll never dream the dreams again,  
Of that warm fervid Past.  
My yearning youth lies mirrored here,  
In phases swift and sweet ;  
O, beautiful the pages seem,  
Tho' cast beneath my feet !

## THE PRODIGAL

COME to me, friend, with the scars of thy sorrow  
upon thee ;

Come, O beloved ! with the brand of thy sin on  
thy brow.

Think not that I shall withdraw, tho' a hard world  
has judged thee,—

Nay, closer I clasp thee, closer I cling to thee now.

Come to me, friend, with thy face in the gloom of  
life's shadows,

Shadows that never will lift for the sunshine of old ;

Come, with thy penitent anguish, and sorrow des-  
pairing,

Come to the warmth of a love than can never grow  
cold.

Never so lost, that affection and faith cannot reach  
thee,

Never so stained that I clasp not thy hand as of yore ;  
Seeing thee desolate, shorn of all hope and all  
honour,

What is my love, if it grow not more strong than  
before ?

Loyal as sunlight that shines on the head of the  
lily,

Cherishing still, tho' the beautiful blossom has  
died ;—

Free as the welcoming breast of the generous ocean,  
Meeting the river, however polluted the tide !

So to my heart, dear, this deep-yearning tenderness  
draws thee ;

So, on the flower of thy life, is my love-light aglow ;  
Ne'er had we loved, dearest, never had friendship  
its glory,

Failed my affection to clasp thee, and cleave to thee  
so !

## WATTLE-TIME

CEASE, chill breeze, nor wildly blow  
O'er my snowdrops bending low ;  
In thy wind-vaults pented be,  
By the billow-beaten sea,  
Only spare the springtide's prime  
In the golden wattle-time !

Cease, rude rains, nor sully so,  
All our bright September glow ;  
In the arching heavens pure,  
Let thy waters be secure ;  
Only spare the vernal prime  
Of a world in wattle-time.

Ope, ye skies of rayless grey,  
Let the buried sun have sway !  
Fainting are the new-born flowers,  
Pining for the summer's hours :—  
Shall they meet a cruel clime,  
Blowing buds of wattle-time ?

Summer noons are drawing nigh,  
Spaces far of radiant sky ;

Summer dawns that may unclose  
Petals of a redder rose ;  
But, tho' touched with lingering rime,  
Sweet are buds of wattle-time.

So, ye stormy winds, sink low ;  
Heavy floods no longer flow :  
Smile, fair heaven, thro' the shrouds,  
Chase the darkling, lowering clouds.  
Cherish ye the springtide prime,—  
'Tis not always wattle-time !

## SUNSET IN THE CITY

WHEN the sunset glows on the city roofs,  
And the weary daylight dies ;  
When shadow falls on the lamp-lit streets,  
From the darkening city skies ;  
A vision comes of the dearer stars,  
Alight in a fairer dome,  
And my heart is sore for the sunset far,  
That kisses the eaves of home !

For there,—while the noisy city dusk  
Is shadowing brow and brain,  
And the faces of men pass quickly by  
With ceaseless hurry and strain,—  
The day sinks into the glorified west,  
And the clear-orbed planets glow  
Over the measureless leagues of bush,  
And the curving river flow.

Sweet is the breath of the tender eve,  
In the cool of the dewy hours,  
When birds, wing-folded, are in the trees,  
In the odorous, bosky bowers.—

When swans sweep over the gloaming moors,  
With sun-flushed plumes outspread,  
While zephyrs, flown from the western shores,  
Rock the myriad boughs o'erhead.

Here sounds only the clamour and fret  
Of painful, passionate strife,  
In the ever beaten and throngèd street,  
Where the storied leaves of life  
Lie more than open, for blanching lips  
Cry out their tale of despair,  
And the sunset falls on the drooping heads,  
And the clouded eyes of care.

Give me, ah! give me the sylvan calm  
Of gloaming woodlands green,  
Where the arrowy beams of the sunlight shine,  
With the dusking shade between.  
Let me hear again the music deep,  
When the winds of the even roam,—  
Give me, ah! give me the sunset far  
That kisses the eaves of home!

## IN THE TWILIGHT

MOTHER, it is so dark and cold,  
I like to hold your hand;  
For now the sun, you bade me watch,  
Has sunk behind the land.  
High in the skies, so far away!  
Stars have begun to shine;  
And mother, darling, I am glad  
To have your hand in mine.

Your fingers are so soft and cool  
Upon my burning palm;  
The pain seems less when I am held  
Within your clasping arm.  
For, mother, I was sad to-night,  
To see the shadows fall  
Where such a little time before  
The sunset covered all.

And I grew sadder still to watch  
Out in the garden bright,  
The roses climbing on the wall,  
Red in the golden light.

Mother, I nearly cried, although  
I could not understand;—  
It seemed so very sad to see  
The sunlight on the land!

But starlight in the sky was sweet  
When sunshine ceased to fall  
Upon the roses, white and red,  
That climb against the wall.  
Mother, I could not bear to watch  
The darkness grow so fast!  
For something seemed to say to me,—  
This sunset is my last.

How close you have your fingers prest,  
Dear mother, in my own,  
But not too close,—I love to feel  
That I am not alone.  
I could not bear to have your face  
Far from my failing sight;  
I never felt so cold before,  
Nor knew so dark a night.

Just now, before the shadows came,  
Before the sun went down,  
I saw the boys upon the road,  
Returning from the town.  
Jim Hayes was there, and Teddy Bell,  
I hit a month ago;  
You tell him, mother, that I say  
I'm sorry for the blow.

I hope you've not forgotten all  
I told you about Syd,  
And did you give him back the kite  
And the marbles that I hid?  
How wicked seems the past to me,  
As wearily I lie,  
With my head upon your bosom,  
And the shadow in the sky.

You mourn, my mother, well I know,  
To see my empty chair,  
And grieve to watch the other boys  
At games I used to share.  
Maybe because I vex you so,  
God's taking me away.  
Dear mother, I would be so good,  
If He would let me stay!

You'll tell the boys, and Uncle Bob,  
And little Cousin Fan,  
Who promised she would marry me  
When I should grow a man:—  
You'll tell them all,—but, mother, I  
Forget what I would say;—  
The room has grown so beautiful,  
It seems as bright as day!

You'll tell them . . . . hold me, mother dear!  
My eyes begin to swim;  
The lovely glory fades away,  
The far-off stars grow dim.

Now I know, as in the darkness . . . .

I grasp your clinging hand, . . . .

Why the stars are lit . . . . in heaven,

When the light . . . . dies on the land.

To C. F. R.

(New Year, 1892)

FAREWELL, old year! Yet this is not good-bye,  
Although we greet a year, new-born to-day;  
The old year's hopes and fears around us lie,  
And thoughts, like leaves in autumn, strew the  
way.

The old year's griefs are fresh, and wounds are  
wide

In hearts at peace a yesterday ago!  
Ah me! so much glides from us with its tide,  
That we can hardly let the old year go!

We miss the pressure of familiar hands,  
Our lips are trembling for the kiss of years,  
A wistful shadow on the threshold stands,  
We see it, dimly, thro' our quickening tears!

The face is vanished that was first to smile,  
The voice is silent that was last to chide;  
We pause and listen, ere we speak awhile,  
And almost hear a footfall at our side.

\* \* \* \* \*

Old year ! Thou art keen-crossed with lines of  
pain,

And in the future we shall pause and say,  
When Time has reaped the years, like scythes the  
grain,—

“ Here’s where a furrow went too deep one  
day ! ”

## PASSION AND POPPIES

MY love, the poppies are dead and cold  
In the garden beds to-day,—  
O, think of the white and scarlet and gold,  
That bloomed so yesterday !  
White and gold—tho' the red were the best,  
You used to nestle them in your breast.

My love, the poppies have burnt away  
On lawn and garden bed,  
I gather no delicate flower to-day  
To flame on a dusky head ;  
I pray in vain for the trysting night,  
To bring you back with your poppies bright !

Passion and poppies !—the seeds are thick,  
And fall in the passing wind,  
The earth with blossom unborn is quick,—  
Morrrows will surely find  
Again the gold and the white and red,  
As pure and sweet as those that are dead.

Ah me ! for passion and poppy flowers,  
The scarlet, white, and gold !  
I hate the sight of the wind-swept showers  
Of leaves, that fall to the mould :  
For they—they die not among the rest,  
The poppies red you wore on your breast !

## A MINOR KEY

FLOW into my soul ! O song !  
In music sweet and low ;  
Flow into my soul, O song !  
With cadence sad and slow.  
Meet it is that eventide,  
Should come with melodies,  
While the sun sinks, and the birds  
Are chanting litanies.

Wistful eyes look out, and see  
Horizons vast and grey,  
Ere the solemn stars adorn  
The sackcloth of the day.  
Harkening ears can only list  
To faltering sobs of song,—  
Masses for the unshriven light,  
By echoes borne along.

Flow into my soul, O song !  
While earth with dusk is dight ;  
Human words to music wed,  
Are strangely sweet to-night.

Let me hear but broken chords,  
    In yearning minors strung ;  
Concord and dissonance blent,—  
    Sweetness from sadness wrung.

Flow into my soul, O song !  
    With quivering ecstasy !—  
The wind sighs softly from the West,  
    There's moaning from the sea !—  
Chanting birds are in the nests,  
    The sunset pageant's fled ;  
Vesper stars are in the sky :  
    The Day is with the dead.

## IN THE MOONLIGHT

Two cold hands that rest in mine,  
Only for a moment's space ;  
Two averted eyes that shine,  
Tearless, from a pallid face.  
And the moonbeams, chaste and fair,  
Falling on her golden hair.

Zephyr-whispers in the firs  
Chimes for lost ones seem to ring ;  
Sorrow's restless spirit stirs  
O'er the face of everything.  
While my faint hands cling to thee,  
Mute to all my misery !

Girlish lips so calmly sweet,  
Hands without old tenderness,  
Hast thou not one soft word meet,  
For our parting bitterness ?  
Lift those eyes and let me see  
If one ray of hope's for me !

To my prayer thou sayest nay,  
Not one glance of love I win ;  
I have sinned, and I must pay  
All the penalty of sin.  
But I would that death were mine,  
Holding these young hands of thine.

Moonbeams touch her hair for me,  
Kiss the lips I may not press ;  
Shadows from the sighing tree,  
Wreath around her my caress ;  
While the night wind's mournful knell  
Moans for me a last farewell !

## THE CROSS

THEY stand out darkly, clear against  
The flowering scrub, to rough-hewn bars  
Forming a rugged cross, beneath  
The Southern stars.

A bare, Bush cross, raised by some hand,  
Unknown, memorial may be  
Of friendship, whose last tribute was  
This sign we see.

No tended grave ; for thorny briars  
Have knit them to the stony ground,  
And wandering cattle trample o'er  
The humble mound.

And yet this little lonely grave,  
Round which the sweet, wild bramble blooms,  
Seems quieter than the crowded space  
Of city tombs.

For here, tho' thorns and stones beset  
The sod, above the buried head,—  
The voice of Nature gently lulls  
The sleeping dead.

What if no monumental pomp  
Bedeck the grave?—I'd rather see  
Yon fair blue sky than proudest tomb's  
Carved canopy.

What tho' no kindly knee will bend  
Beside,—no weeping eye bedew  
The lonely mound?—Still Nature to  
Her own is true.

Grass deepens over love, as well  
As o'er the loved : who does not know  
The death of memories? Leave the graves,—  
God's weeds will grow !

Softly I pass thee by, lone bed  
Of some sealed soul ; when I, too, free  
From strivings, rest, earth clasp me round  
As peacefully.

## SWEET SUMMER 'S DEAD

SWEET Summer 's dead !  
Here 's blossom for her burial bed ;  
White wide-eyed daisies lingering yet  
By stalks of seeded mignonette.  
Blue violets, misty in the dew,  
I gather dew and blossoms too,  
And all to crown thy buried head,  
Sweet Summer dead !

Sweet Love is dead !  
Here 's blossom for the burial bed ;  
Some pansies, purple years ago :  
One wild bush flower I valued so.  
A crimson rose you gave to me,  
Grown in a garden by the sea,  
Fresh flowers for Summer,—sere instead,  
For sweet Love dead !

## JUST AS WELL

It is just as well that we parted so,  
The evening we walked in the sunset glow,  
    How many years ago ?  
It is just as well, as you say, old friend,  
That we only strolled to the green lane's end,  
    Nor more agreed to go.

It is just as well that I laughed so gay  
When you vowed to love only me for aye,  
    Is it not ever the way ?  
Yet how strange would an hour like this one  
    seem,  
Were that sunset time, now dim as a dream,  
    To rise in life to-day !

How well I remember the words you said  
While the green reeds sang in the marsh's bed,  
    And hills were grey with the rain.  
How strange to recall for a moment's space,  
The passionate pain of a pleading face,  
    Now bright and glad again.

Oh, love of old ! and oh, love of to-day !  
The heart roams on tho' it wishes to stay,

Is it not ever the way ?  
Time drowns our sorrows as forward it flows ;  
The rose of to-day for yesterday's rose,  
So do the wisest say !

## GOOD-BYE, MY FRIEND

GOOD-BYE, my friend ; the narrow strait of sea  
Broadens in pulsing billows, large and slow ;  
I watch the great ship bearing thee from me,  
To where the horizon rounds the waters low.  
Farewell ! I yield thee to the ocean wide  
In dull foreboding and dumb aching pain ;—  
O friend, between us rolls a broadening tide,—  
And I may never see thy face again !

For us the lowered gangway may not wait,  
On which to clasp our reunited hands ;  
So wayward the vicissitudes of fate,  
We may not meet again on earthly strands.  
But, spite of destiny, our thoughts shall fly  
To compass each with spiritual power,  
And we shall realise each other nigh,  
However long may last this parting hour.

Only *remember*, that no rift may grow  
Between us in the long dividing years,  
There is an ocean with a deeper flow  
Than that thro' which thy stately ship now  
steers ;

A sea whose sullen tides set dim and far,  
In vast futurities beyond our sight ;—  
Our chill misunderstandings are the bar  
O'er which we pass to that sad sea of night !

So, friend, good-bye ! My heart goes out to thee  
In one great throb of yearning and farewell !  
I cannot watch the ship upon the sea  
For blinding tears that in my dim eyes well.  
Should great Eternity's resistless tide  
Alone lead to the haven where we meet,—  
I'll wait, Time's dark and mystic verge beside,  
Till angels hold the gangway for our feet !

## THE YEARS AGO

THE years ago! Oh, words of gladdest meaning,  
Changing the present to the past again ;  
The years ago—sunset thro' shadows shining,  
Or music with a discord in the strain.

The years ago ; the murmured words come waking  
The tender echoes of forgotten things ;  
A dim, blurred picture sudden life revealing ;  
Irresolute music from reluctant strings.

The years ago—see life's full waves are ebbing,  
Their treasure left on the forsaken shore.  
Ah, me! cross arms upon the icy bosom,  
A silent form will wake to us no more!

The years ago! Oh, weary Time, release us,  
The leaves have fallen from the rose we crave ;  
And while earth's buds about us all are blowing,  
Its clods are broken for another grave.

## FADED FLOWERS

HERE is a lily that recalls  
    Thy bosom fair,  
Here is a marigold that matched  
    Thy sunny hair ;  
Sweet faithful myosotis-like  
    Those orbs of blue,  
And dead carnations, once as red  
    As lips I knew.

Blossoms of pansies, tender-bloomed  
    As heart of thine ;  
Leaves of sere roses, fragrant as  
    Thy soul divine.  
And pure embalmèd violets,  
    With leaves once green,  
And white fringed daisies snowy as  
    Thy brow serene.

So I take all the blossoms, we  
    Together pressed,  
The heart's-ease and the violet  
    Thy lips caressed.

The lily and forget-me-not,  
And rose-leaf old,  
The fringed, snowy daisy, and  
The marigold.



These are the milestones of the love  
We marked with flowers,  
The memories of a season's wealth  
Of golden hours.  
Alas, that, like the faded blooms,  
Love too should die ;  
And this flower-dust should breathe the  
words,  
Good-bye !

## NOT SUCH A WHILE AGO

Dost thou remember we used to float,  
Face to face in the grey old boat,  
    Not such a while ago ?

Dost thou remember the summer skies,  
Sunny and sweet in our love-lit eyes,  
    Not such a while ago ?

A down the river the grey old boat  
Still on the silvery tide doth float,  
    Just as in hours ago ;  
Only another mate is thine,  
Face to thy face, as thine with mine,  
    Not such a while ago.

Mine was the hand, in the days of yore,  
To mate the stroke of thy dipping oar,  
    Not such a while ago ;  
Mine was the shadow upon the tide,  
That lay so near to thy shadow's side,  
    Not such a while ago.

And now I stand on the bank and see  
Another face on the stream with thee,

Out on the river's flow.  
And thou dost speak in the same old strain,  
Of tender love that shall aye remain,  
    Just as in days ago.

No room for me in the grey old boat,  
Where we together were wont to float,  
    Down with the current so !  
Another love is for thee to-day,  
And all forgotten and swept away  
    That love of the while ago !

## IN VAIN

COME near, old dog, I love to have  
Your nose against my knee ;  
What do you think's the news, old man,  
They've sent across the sea ?  
That fair-haired girl we left behind,  
Two years ago to-day,  
Has married some one else—heigh-ho !  
And cast us two away.

She's married, and, in spite of all,  
Our work has been in vain.  
Do you think we'll ever swing the axe,  
Or run the ploughs again ?  
For her we've toiled two summers thro'  
To try and make things trim ;  
But it's been all in vain, old dog,  
She's thrown us off for him.

Of course he had the money, lad ;  
And where's the chance for me ?  
We have been fools to think for us  
She'd cross that weary sea.

We have been fools—but, ah! recall  
Those eyes of heaven's blue ;  
The whole temptations of a world  
Should still have left them true !

Now let us stir the waning fire,  
The hour is somewhat cold ;  
And, Rory, do not look so glum,  
Despite the news I've told.  
Old man, you have your canine rubs  
Upon your canine way,  
There may be little difference  
'Tween yours and mine to-day !

I'm looking in the embers ; see  
How cheerily they glow !  
And in the ashes seem to pass  
Old memories to and fro.  
No doubt you see them too, my dog,  
Ay, nestle to my knee,  
Your pleading eyes will always say,  
That one is true to me !

He had the golden coffers, lad,  
And what is love to gold ?  
'Tis true we did not think the same,  
In clearer days of old ;  
But that ago is not to-day,  
Its love and trust are slain,  
For she has cast us off, old friend,  
And all our hopes are vain !

WERE IT LIGHT INSTEAD OF  
DARKNESS

LOVE of mine ! were it light instead of darkness,  
Were it peace, my beloved ! instead of pain ;  
Then I still might be deaf to all thy pleading,  
And thy passionate plea would be in vain.  
Love of mine, were there all the world to love thee,  
Were there many to wish thee true "God  
speed !"  
Then I might, dear, have passed from thee for  
ever,  
Seeking fulness, elsewhere, for life's deep need.

But I cannot forsake thee in the darkness ;—  
Leave thee, love, when the lights have all burnt  
low !  
I could yield thee to earth's delight and gladness,  
But, ah ! not to its loneliness and woe !  
Let me stand with thee, dearest, in the desert,  
I am thine in thy sorrow and thy loss,—  
In the sunshine of life I might deny thee,  
Never, love, in the shadow of a cross !

## ELM TREES IN AUTUMN

ELM leaves downward drifting  
From the stricken trees ;  
Naked boughs uplifting  
In the autumn breeze ;  
Ye hold all the sweetness  
Of the year's completeness.

Elm leaves softly lying  
Yellow by the way ;  
Elm boughs vaguely sighing,  
In the wind to-day ;  
Ye know all the sadness  
Of the year's brief gladness.

And like dead leaves lifting  
In the autumn wind,  
So the faiths are shifting  
In this pensive mind ;  
Doubt and incompleteness  
Lie in bitter sweetness.

Like the faint leaves, shaken  
By the season's breath,  
From my soul are taken  
Cerements of death ;  
And the vacant places  
Breathe of bygone graces.

Foliage down blowing  
In the mellow air,  
We have left, in going,  
All the branches bare.  
How when blasts awaken  
In the boughs forsaken?

Yet where deep snows whiten  
And the hoar frosts cling,  
Soon the boughs will brighten  
With the buds of spring ;  
Blue-eyed months be leaping,  
Where the dead are sleeping.

Outlived dreams down-drifting,  
Like the leafage fair,  
Thro' the spirit shifting—  
Ye have left me bare !  
Till I fear to languish  
In the winter anguish !

O my soul, take courage,  
Brave the loss and cold,  
For a newer knowledge  
Shall replace the old.  
Be thy winter longer,  
Thou shalt rise the stronger.

Leaf and faith together  
Passing, may be best,  
Thro' the autumn weather,  
To the winter rest.  
Into darkness speed ye,  
Life doth no more need ye !

## IN MEMORY

(C. S. C.)

WHY grieve we? Could we follow where he lifts  
His waking, dawn-lit face,—  
Could we but see the glow behind the rifts,  
Athwart our shadow space—  
We would but ask to leave him in the light,  
Nor mourn his vacant place.

O Light! beyond the darkness and the cries,  
Take our loved dead, we pray!  
We cannot keep the tears from their dear eyes,  
Nor bid the gladness stay.  
Draw them towards God, and rest :—Thou  
knowest how,  
But we have missed the way.

We weep not ; our warm tears are all too few  
For those who wear not yet  
The peace-palm 'gainst the breast, gathered in dew.—  
If we must grieve, our debt  
Is rather to the earth-bound ones we love,  
Whose wistful eyes are wet.

These need our pity through the trying years,—  
O sad, mistaken grief,  
Mourning the fair, translated love in tears,  
Too blinding for relief!  
Pass upward, spirit-wise ; so understand  
Why sorrow should be brief.

So do we weep not o'er the blossoms lain  
Fresh in thy dear young hands.  
Thy perfect peace shall have no shadow-stain,  
Thro' our sad underlands.  
Father ! we yield him gladly to Thy light,  
Wherein he, hallowed, stands.

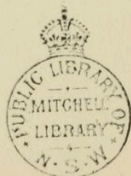
## A GOOD-NIGHT

THE darkness to the ocean clings,  
    Good-night, dear love, good-night ;  
The bird of day has spread his wings,  
    Good-night, dear love, good-night.  
Light's streaming fountains flow no more,  
A shadow blots the burning shore,  
    Good-night, dear love, good-night.

Star-eyes awake to watch the world,  
    Good-night, my love, good-night ;  
The sails upon the sea are furled,  
    Good-night, my love, good-night.  
The vesper birds begin to thrill,  
The pulses of the day are still,—  
    Good-night, my love, good-night.

The whisper of our dreams is near,  
    O love of mine, good-night !  
The lullabies of eve are here,  
    O love of mine, good-night !  
One kiss upon thy lips I lay,  
Then cede thee with the vanished day,—  
    My love, my love, good-night !

Printed by BALLANTYNE, HANSON & Co.  
London and Edinburgh





# A Verse-Writer's Memorial.

THE STORY OF JENNINGS CARMICHAEL AND  
HER CHILDREN.

BY GWEN SERJEANT WHITE.



So, friend, good-bye! My heart goes out to  
thee

In one great throb of yearning and farewell!

I cannot watch the ship upon the sea,

For blinding tears that in my dim eyes well.

Should great eternity's resistless tide

Alone lead to the haven where we meet—

I'll wait, Time's dark and mystic verge be-  
side,

Till angels hold the gangway for our feet!

—Jennings Carmichael.

In April, last year, the interest of the reading public was suddenly aroused by an article which appeared in one of the leading dailies. It stated that the three surviving sons of the late Grace Jennings Carmichael—the first Australian woman to gain anything like a reputation as a poetess—were left destitute in the Northampton Union Workhouse. The whereabouts of their father, Francis Mullis, was unknown.

To the generous Southern mind it was a position intolerable for the three little lads, then aged only thirteen, ten, and seven. According to English law the father who deserts his children, and leaves them to the care of the workhouse, relinquishes his individual rights over them. They become the legal wards of the guardians of the Institution in which they are housed. These guardians, however, are always willing to hand their wards over to persons qualified from every point of view to further their ultimate position in life.



Once the miserable facts of the case (which, by the way, were discovered quite accidentally by the writer of the initial article) became known, the Australian admirers of Jennings Carmichael did not consider long the best thing to do. It was so obvious! The boys, it was resolved, must be brought to Australia and given the chance they needed so woefully. Preliminaries were immediately set on foot to approach the authorities in order to gain possession of the children. Letters poured in from all classes of the community, ranging from well-known literary men and women to that large-hearted, kindly-natured person who signed herself "An Australian Mother." Subscription lists were started; committees were formed; and, finally, the necessary instructions were cabled through the Premier of Victoria to the Agent-General's office in London, which, in turn, communicated with the guardians of the workhouse, with the triumphant result that the boys were released and their future advent to Australia assured.

The life of Jennings Carmichael was pathetically short, and her end a desperately sad one. She was born in Ballarat, Victoria, in 1868, and died in 1904, at the age of thirty-six. Of the intervening years there is not very much on record. She spent her early childhood in Ballarat. Then, when her widowed mother married again, she went to live near Orbost, where her stepfather managed a large station property. One can understand that to an imaginative child of nine years of age this change from town life to the fascinating wilds of the Gippsland bush must have been nothing less than delightful. "O native bush!" she herself wrote, when she afterwards found expression. "My heart amidst thy vastness grows full with perfect rest!"

Innately a lover of Nature in all its aspects, she absorbed the influences which surrounded her at this happy period of her life to such an extent that the fragrance of the bush flowers still clings to some of her poems. But even as the dominant note of the bush is insistently sad, so the chord to which the young singer attuned her heart was ever in the minor. Indeed, there is a strange sadness in all her songs which appeals to our sympathy more thoroughly to-day, in the face of the after events than any trill of joyous spontaneity could ever have done. Jennings Carmichael loved Australia with all her heart. In a homesick little poem—the very one which headed the subscription lists which were sent around in aid of her children—she tells how much "a little spray of Gippsland wattle" brought back to her in her weary loneliness.

2

Ah! little flower I loved of old,  
Dear little downy heads of gold!  
Truly mine eyes are full of tears,  
As, o'er the long, dividing years,  
The past comes back to me.

Surely thou knowest not from home—  
Thy home and mine—I willing roam.  
Ah, couldst thou guess how fancy flies,  
To those bush shades and forest skies,  
Far from these city stones!

But it was not only of the bush that Miss Carmichael sang. In the later eighties she went to Melbourne—where she had been previously educated—and there she entered the Children's Hospital as a nurse. She was devotedly attached to children, more especially to suffering ones; and she remained at the Hospital until 1890, when she obtained her nurse's certificate. What may be termed the record of these few years was bound into book form in 1891 under the title of "Hospital Children." At this time her verse and prose sketches found place in the different journals almost weekly; and she became known in the literary circle to which she belonged as "The Gippsland Poetess;" Mr. Brunton Stephens designating her "The Australian Jean Ingelow."

As one reads her poems even the most unthinking person cannot but be struck with their pathetic application to the troubles afterwards endured by her own children. This is particularly noticeable in the poem entitled "For Someone's Sake," which was written as an appeal for the little inmates of the Children's Hospital. In it we find the two following verses:

Surely somewhere, in the world of little children,

There's a tiny face that meets your loving eye;

There's a childish form you'd shelter from all sorrow.

Ah! you couldn't bear to hear that little creature's cry.

For the sake of the one be pitiful and tender,  
Helping all who pine in anguish and in woe;

For we never know how sorely they were stricken,

Nor how soon our dear ones may be crying  
**so!**

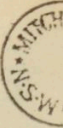
Hearken, fathers! to the voices of the children;  
Listen, mothers! to the pathos of their cry;

Be not deaf to childish misery and sorrow—  
There is anguish that we must not hurry  
by!

Stretch your loving open arms a little wider,  
To your heart the world of little children  
take;

In remembering those your love may yet be calling

For the aid you give to-day For Someone's  
Sake!



Truly, in the ears of those working to relieve the distress of Jennings Carmichael's own children, the living voice of the dead mother must have sounded very clearly!

Her hospital training completed, Miss Carmichael took up private nursing in St. Kilda, where she attended to a poor little boy—in an afflicted sense—for some considerable time; but she still kept on writing. A poem, which was perhaps her favourite, called "Tomboy Madge," appeared about this period. It begins and ends thus:

O for a swim through the running river,  
And one long pull with the boys at dawn!  
O for a ride on my dear old Rover,  
One tennis round on the grassy lawn!  
O could I watch the sun on the wide sea,  
And feel the cool foam around my feet!  
O breezes wild, come blowing about me,  
And fill the bush with your music sweet!

Is it a week since we crossed the river  
(Shallow and clear for the time of year),  
And found the wattles and tall red clover  
Scenting the air from afar and near?  
Is it a week since we all went playing  
On the bent arm of the creaking gum?  
Who would have thought that the old limb,  
swaying,  
Would lay the Tomboy crippled and dumb?

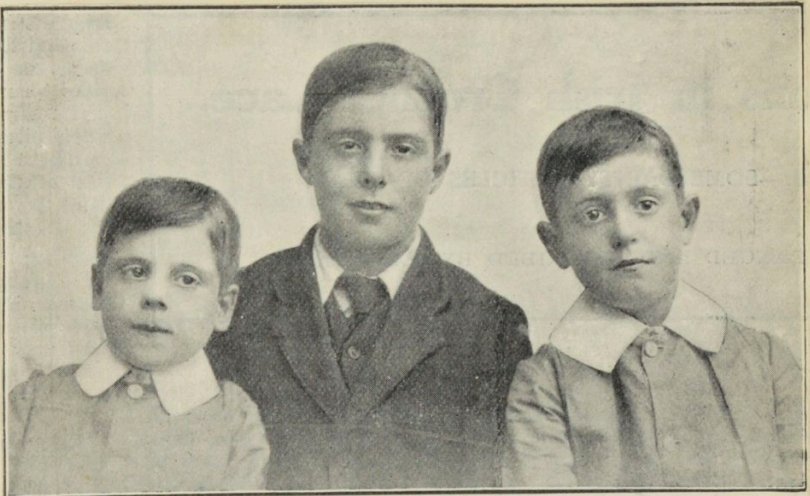
But I must lie here, far from the bright wave,  
Far from the sounds and the scenes I love;  
Nothing before me but pain and a green grave,  
Nothing to seek for but the Hope from  
above.  
No gallop home through the dusk bush thread-  
ing,  
No long-drawn swim in the river or sea,  
No way to seek but the one I am treading  
Towards the lonely grave that is waiting for  
me.

When the season turns, you will find the  
grasses  
Out in the paddocks yellow and deep;  
Bury me near where the river passes,  
And let them cover me while I sleep.  
The boys, when they swing on the blue gums  
bending,  
And hear the waves on the shingled sand,  
Will sometimes think of poor Tomboy's end-  
ing,  
Who waits for them in another land.



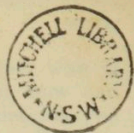


THE LATE JENNINGS CARMICHAEL.  
Whose three boys are shown in the accompanying picture.



THE THREE BOYS OF THE LATE JENNINGS CARMICHAEL—  
PROMISING AUSTRALIAN CITIZENS OF THE FUTURE.

Photos by Swiss Studios.



In 1895 all Jennings Carmichael's poems were collected and published in book form, and shortly before this realisation of her girlish literary ambitions she married Francis Mullis, an architect. Before leaving Australia to go with him to England, she lectured at a great many Australian towns upon "The Spirit of the Bush," a subject of which she was said to be a perfect exponent. By many she was considered to be a beautiful woman personally, and all who knew her recognised the sterling quality of her character. She was loved and admired by all her friends.

One feels more than a passing throb of pity when one hears of her undeserved end. In London, Francis Mullis deserted his wife and children—left them alone, unknown and uncared for, in a strange land. What happened exactly during the early part of those seven wretched years, and subsequently, no one can for certain say. But one can imagine the futile struggle against overwhelming circumstances, the sickening disappointments ending in helpless resignation born of the despair which must have numbed her every hope.

There were five children of this unhappy marriage, two of whom are now dead. One of these was a little girl, and her mother must have been utterly thankful that she was taken, and so spared the dire deprivations and cruel poverty which beset herself and her boys. She must have realised the truth of her own words:

God's fulness waits beyond our earthly loss,

Drink thy Gethsemane in faith and prayer;

The shadow of the garden will grow fair,  
And sweet will seem the story of the Cross.

Jennings Carmichael died towards the end of the bitter English winter, on February 9, 1904, in the workhouse at Leyton. The sordid, ironic tragedy of it all! For the woman used to roaming the wide sunny spaces of the Australian country to die alone in the biting English cold, pent up between the four prison-like walls of a poorhouse! Besides all this, the one awful thought which must have obliterated every other misery with its intensity—that she was leaving her three boys, as she thought, humanly unprotected.

It was some years before the forlorn condition of the boys was discovered, and about six before any effort was made to help them. But then it was made right royally, £350 being collected in



hard cash. The three boys are at present in Australia, comfortably placed in real homes where their surroundings must seem like a beautiful enchanted fairy tale in comparison with their former pitiful existence. One of the first steps taken on their arrival was to legally effect their taking the surname Carmichael instead of Mullis. Their mother's respected name will henceforth be their passport.

But all three of the lads have many personal qualities to recommend them favourably anywhere. They all seem open, honest and manly. The eldest, Jeffrey, is rather grave for his fourteen years. He has had the care of the family upon his shoulders! And he seems to have felt the responsibility, taking upon himself the correction of the two younger ones—always a sorry task! He immediately appealed to the feminine mind of the lady who went down on board the "Norseman" to welcome them on their arrival from England by taking away Rupert, his little brother, to wash his face before landing! Jeffrey is now the office-boy to a well-known barrister in Melbourne, who has promised to give him a legal training, provided he shows the necessary ability to avail himself of the course. Keith, the middle boy, has had his wish gratified—"to learn to be a farmer." He is with kind people in Deniliquin, N.S.W., whom he calls "Father" and "Mother."

In a letter to the writer of this sketch from his adopted "Mother," she said, "He is the right boy in the right place," and he seems to have completely won her Australian heart by taking "no time" to find out that he must lengthen his stirrup when mounting his horse. "The highest praise," she adds, "should be given to the Institution in England for the high principles instilled into Keith, and for the good standing he is able to take in the local State-school. The lad was very happy when he found I loved his own mother's poetry, and he has learnt to recite several of the poems for me." Keith is having a good time!

Little Rupert doesn't look as nice in his photo as he does in reality, for he was just on the point of developing mumps when it was taken, and the proportions of mumps are not the proportions of beauty. He is a dear little chap, and the woman who took care of him when his mother died described him as a "bundle of love." The lady with whom he is now staying frankly admits that he has entwined himself around her heart. She hopes that, if he *has* to be taken away, he will be taken soon, before she gets too fond of him. He loves to hear about his mother, and his little soul grows lonely for her

sometimes. The other day, after listening to a long, minute description of her which he had begged from his kind friend, he sighed wistfully and said: "Oh, if I could only die once—just to see her!" Poor little mother-hungry laddie—he is only eight years old! It will not be until manhood is reached that these three boys will realise how much has been done for them "for someone's sake." Then they will fully appreciate the fact that of all the monuments Australia could have erected to their mother's memory, none could have so honoured her as a poetess, or touched her as a mother, as the perpetual and living monument of her children's presence in her native land to-day.



13804991





DSM/ A821/ M  
Poems

STATE LIBRARY  
OF N.S.W.



N2143666

