

Classic Poetry Series

Henry Lawson
- poems -

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Henry Lawson(17 June 1867 – 2 September 1922)

Henry Lawson was an Australian writer and poet. Along with his contemporary Banjo Paterson, Lawson is among the best-known Australian poets and fiction writers of the colonial period and is often called Australia's "greatest writer". He was the son of the poet, publisher and feminist [Louisa Lawson](http://www.poemhunter.com/louisa-lawson/).

Early Life

Henry Lawson was born in a town on the Grenfell goldfields of New South Wales. His father was Niels Herzberg Larsen, a Norwegian-born miner who went to sea at 21, arrived in Melbourne in 1855 to join the gold rush. Lawson's parents met at the goldfields of Pipeclay (now Eurunderee, New South Wales) Niels and Louisa married on 7 July 1866; he was 32 and she, 18. On Henry's birth, the family surname was anglicised and Niels became Peter Lawson. The newly-married couple were to have an unhappy marriage. Peter Larsen's grave (with headstone) is in the little private cemetery at Hartley Vale New South Wales a few minutes walk behind what was Collitt's Inn.

Henry Lawson attended school at Eurunderee from 2 October 1876 but suffered an ear infection at around this time. It left him with partial deafness and by the age of fourteen he had lost his hearing entirely. He later attended a Catholic school at Mudgee, New South Wales around 8 km away; the master there, Mr. Kevan, would teach Lawson about poetry. He was a keen reader of [Dickens](http://www.poemhunter.com/charles-dickens/) and Marryat and serialised novels such as *Robbery under Arms* and *For the Term of his Natural Life*; an aunt had also given him a volume by [Bret Harte](http://www.poemhunter.com/bret-harte/). Reading became a major source of his education because, due to his deafness, he had trouble learning in the classroom.

In 1883, after working on building jobs with his father and in the Blue Mountains, Lawson joined his mother in Sydney at her request. Louisa was then living with Henry's sister and brother. At this time, Lawson was working during the day and studying at night for his matriculation in the hopes of receiving a university education. However, he failed his exams.

In 1896, he married Bertha Bredt Jr., daughter of Bertha Bredt, the prominent socialist. They had two children, son Jim (Joseph) and daughter Bertha. However, the marriage ended unhappily.

Poetry and Prose Writing

Lawson's first published poem was 'A Song of the Republic' which appeared in The Bulletin, 1 October 1887; his mother's radical friends were an influence. This was followed by 'The Wreck of the Derry Castle' and then 'Golden Gully.'

In 1890-1891 Lawson worked in Albany. He then received an offer to write for the Brisbane Boomerang in 1891, but he lasted only around 7-8 months as the Boomerang was soon in trouble. He returned to Sydney and continued to write for the Bulletin which, in 1892, paid for an inland trip where he experienced the harsh realities of drought-affected New South Wales. This resulted in his contributions to the Bulletin Debate and became a source for many of his stories in subsequent years. Elder writes of the trek Lawson took between Hungerford and Bourke as "the most important trek in Australian literary history" and says that "it confirmed all his prejudices about the Australian bush. Lawson had no romantic illusions about a 'rural idyll'." As Elder continues, his grim view of the outback was far removed from "the romantic idyll of brave horsemen and beautiful scenery depicted in the poetry of 'The Banjo' [Paterson]".

His most successful prose collection is While the Billy Boils, published in 1896. In it he "continued his assault on Paterson and the romantics, and in the process, virtually reinvented Australian realism". Elder writes that "he used short, sharp sentences, with language as raw as Ernest Hemingway or Raymond Carver. With sparse adjectives and honed-to-the-bone description, Lawson created a style and defined Australians: dryly laconic, passionately egalitarian and deeply humane." Most of his work focuses on the Australian bush, such as the desolate "Past Carin'", and is considered by some to be among the first accurate descriptions of Australian life as it was at the time. "The Drover's Wife" with its "heart-breaking depiction of bleakness and loneliness" is regarded as one of his finest short stories. It is regularly studied in schools and has often been adapted for film and theatre.

Lawson was a firm believer in the merits of the sketch story, commonly known simply as 'the sketch,' claiming that "the sketch story is best of all. Lawson's Jack Mitchell story, On The Edge Of A Plain, is often cited as one of the most accomplished examples of the sketch.

Like the majority of Australians, Lawson lived in a city, but had had plenty of experience in outback life, in fact, many of his stories reflected his experiences in

real life. In Sydney in 1898 he was a prominent member of the Dawn and Dusk Club, a bohemian club of writer friends who met for drinks and conversation.

Later Years

During his later life, the alcohol-addicted writer was probably Australia's best-known celebrity. At the same time, he was also a frequent beggar on the streets of Sydney, notably at the Circular Quay ferry turnstiles.

In 1903 he sought a room at Mrs Isabella Byers' Coffee Palace in North Sydney. This marked the beginning of a 20 year friendship between Mrs Byers and Lawson. Despite his position as the most celebrated Australian writer of the time, Lawson was deeply depressed and perpetually poor. He lacked money due to unfortunate royalty deals with publishers. His ex-wife repeatedly reported him for non-payment of child maintenance, resulting in gaol terms. He was gaoled at Darlinghurst Gaol for drunkenness and non-payment of alimony, and recorded his experience in the haunting poem "One Hundred and Three" - his prison number - which was published in 1908. He refers to the prison as "Starvinghurst Gaol" because of the meagre rations given to the inmates.

At this time, Lawson became withdrawn, alcoholic, and unable to carry on the usual routine of life.

Mrs Byers (nee Ward) was an excellent poet herself and although of modest education, had been writing vivid poetry since her teens in a similar style to Lawson's. Long separated from her husband and elderly, Mrs Bryers was, at the time she met Lawson, a woman of independent means looking forward to retirement. Bryers regarded Lawson as Australia's greatest living poet, and hoped to sustain him well enough to keep him writing. She negotiated on his behalf with publishers, helped to arrange contact with his children, contacted friends and supporters to help him financially, and assisted and nursed him through his mental and alcohol problems. She wrote countless letters on his behalf and knocked on any doors that could provide Henry with financial assistance or a publishing deal.

It was in Mrs Isabella Bryers' home that Henry Lawson died, of cerebral haemorrhage, in Abbotsford, Sydney in 1922. He was given a state funeral. His death registration on the NSW Births, Deaths & Marriages index is ref. 10451/1922 and was recorded at the Petersham Registration District. It shows his parents as Peter and Louisa. His funeral was attended by the Prime Minister W. M. Hughes and the Premier of New South Wales Jack Lang (who was the husband of Lawson's sister-in-law Hilda Bredt), as well as thousands of citizens.

He is interred at Waverley Cemetery. Lawson was the first person to be granted a state funeral.

Honours

In 1949 Lawson was the subject of an Australian postage stamp.

Henry Lawson was featured on the first (paper) Australian ten dollar note issued in 1966 when decimal currency was first introduced into Australia. This note was replaced by a polymer note in 1993. Lawson was pictured against scenes from the town of Gulgong in NSW.

`for'Ard'

It is stuffy in the steerage where the second-classers sleep,
For there's near a hundred for'ard, and they're stowed away like sheep, --
They are trav'lers for the most part in a straight 'n' honest path;
But their linen's rather scanty, an' there isn't any bath --
Stowed away like ewes and wethers that is shore 'n' marked 'n' draft.
But the shearers of the shearers always seem to travel aft;
 In the cushioned cabins, aft,
 With saloons 'n' smoke-rooms, aft --
There is sheets 'n' best of tucker for the first-salooners, aft.

Our beef is just like scrapin's from the inside of a hide,
And the spuds were pulled too early, for they're mostly green inside;
But from somewhere back amidships there's a smell o' cookin' waft,
An' I'd give my earthly prospects for a real good tuck-out aft --
 Ham an' eggs 'n' coffee, aft,
 Say, cold fowl for luncheon, aft,
Juicy grills an' toast 'n' cutlets -- tucker a-lor-frongsy, aft.

They feed our women sep'rate, an' they make a blessed fuss,
Just as if they couldn't trust 'em for to eat along with us!
Just because our hands are horny an' our hearts are rough with graft --
But the gentlemen and ladies always DINE together, aft --
 With their ferns an' mirrors, aft,
 With their flow'rs an' napkins, aft --
'I'll assist you to an orange' -- `Kindly pass the sugar', aft.

We are shabby, rough, 'n' dirty, an' our feelin's out of tune,
An' it's hard on fellers for'ard that was used to go saloon;
There's a broken swell among us -- he is barracked, he is chaffed,
An' I wish at times, poor devil, for his own sake he was aft;
 For they'd understand him, aft,
 (He will miss the bath-rooms aft),
Spite of all there's no denyin' that there's finer feelin's aft.

Last night we watched the moonlight as it spread across the sea --
'It is hard to make a livin',' said the broken swell to me.
'There is ups an' downs,' I answered, an' a bitter laugh he laughed --
There were brighter days an' better when he always travelled aft --

With his rug an' gladstone, aft,
With his cap an' spyglass, aft --
A careless, rovin', gay young spark as always travelled aft.

There's a notice by the gangway, an' it seems to come amiss,
For it says that second-classers `ain't allowed abaft o' this';
An' there ought to be a notice for the fellows from abaft --
But the smell an' dirt's a warnin' to the first-salooners, aft;
With their tooth and nail-brush, aft,
With their cuffs 'n' collars, aft --
Their cigars an' books an' papers, an' their cap-peaks fore-'n'-aft.

I want to breathe the mornin' breeze that blows against the boat,
For there's a swellin' in my heart -- a tightness in my throat --
We are for'ard when there's trouble! We are for'ard when there's graft!
But the men who never battle always seem to travel aft;
With their dressin'-cases, aft,
With their swell pyjamas, aft --
Yes! the idle and the careless, they have ease an' comfort, aft.

I feel so low an' wretched, as I mooch about the deck,
That I'm ripe for jumpin' over -- an' I wish there was a wreck!
We are driven to New Zealand to be shot out over there --
Scarce a shillin' in our pockets, nor a decent rag to wear,
With the everlastin' worry lest we don't get into graft --
There is little left to land for if you cannot travel aft;
No anxiety abaft,
They have stuff to land with, aft --
Oh, there's little left to land for if you cannot travel aft;

But it's grand at sea this mornin', an' Creation almost speaks,
Sailin' past the Bay of Islands with its pinnacles an' peaks,
With the sunny haze all round us an' the white-caps on the blue,
An' the orphan rocks an' breakers -- Oh, it's glorious sailin' through!
To the south a distant steamer, to the west a coastin' craft,
An' we see the beauty for'ard, better than if we were aft;
Spite of op'ra-glasses, aft;
But, ah well, they're brothers aft --
Nature seems to draw us closer -- bring us nearer fore-'n'-aft.

What's the use of bein' bitter? What's the use of gettin' mad?
What's the use of bein' narrer just because yer luck is bad?

What's the blessed use of frettin' like a child that wants the moon?
There is broken hearts an' trouble in the gilded first saloon!
We are used to bein' shabby -- we have got no overdraft --
We can laugh at troubles for'ard that they couldn't laugh at aft;
 Spite o' pride an' tone abaft
 (Keepin' up appearance, aft)
There's anxiety an' worry in the breezy cabins aft.

But the curse o' class distinctions from our shoulders shall be hurled,
An' the influence of woman revolutionize the world;
There'll be higher education for the toilin' starvin' clown,
An' the rich an' educated shall be educated down;
An' we all will meet amidships on this stout old earthly craft,
An' there won't be any friction 'twixt the classes fore-'n'-aft.
 We'll be brothers, fore-'n'-aft!
 Yes, an' sisters, fore-'n'-aft!
When the people work together, and there ain't no fore-'n'-aft.

Henry Lawson

I only woke this morning
 To find the world is fair—
 I'm going on for forty,
 With scarcely one grey hair;
 I'm going on for forty,
 Where man's strong life begins,
 With scarce a sign of crows' feet,
 In spite of all my sins.

Then here's the living Forties!
 The Forties! The Forties!
 Then here's the living Forties!
 We're good for ten years more.

The teens were black and bitter,
 A smothered boyhood's grave—
 A farm-drudge in the drought-time,
 A weary workshop slave.
 But twenty years have laid them,
 And all the world is fair—
 We'll find time in the Forties,
 To have some boyhood there.

Then here's the wide, free Forties—
 The Forties! The Forties!
 Then here's the wide, free Forties!
 We're good for ten years more!

The twenties they were noble,
 The bravest years, I think;
 'Twas man to man in trouble,
 In working and in drink;
 'Twas man to man in fighting,
 For money or for praise.
 And we'll find in the Forties
 Some more Bohemian days.

Then here's the wiser Forties!
 The Forties! The Forties!

Then here's the wiser Forties!
We're good for ten years more.

The thirties were the fate years;
I fought behind the scenes.
The thirties were more cruel
And blacker than the teens;
I held them not but bore them—
They were no years of mine;
But they are going from me,
For I am thirty-nine.

So here's the stronger Forties!
The Forties! The Forties!
And here's the good old Forties!
We're good for ten years more.

Henry Lawson

A Backward Glance

IT IS well when you've lived in clover,
To mourn for the days gone by—
Would I live the same life over
Could I live again? Not I!
But, knowing the false from the real,
I would strive to ascend:
I would seek out my boyhood's ideal,
And follow it to the end.

Henry Lawson

A Bush Girl

She's milking in the rain and dark,
As did her mother in the past.
The wretched shed of poles and bark,
Rent by the wind, is leaking fast.
She sees the "home-roof" black and low,
Where, balefully, the hut-fire gleams—
And, like her mother, long ago,
She has her dreams; she has her dreams.
The daybreak haunts the dreary scene,
The brooding ridge, the blue-grey bush,
The "yard" where all her years have been,
Is ankle-deep in dung and slush;
She shivers as the hour drags on,
Her threadbare dress of sackcloth seems—
But, like her mother, years ago,
She has her dreams; she has her dreams.

The sullen "breakfast" where they cut
The blackened "junk." The lowering face,
As though a crime were in the hut,
As though a curse was on the place;
The muttered question and reply,
The tread that shakes the rotting beams,
The nagging mother, thin and dry—
God help the girl! She has her dreams.

Then for "th' separator" start,
Most wretched hour in all her life,
With "horse" and harness, dress and cart,
No Chinaman would give his "wife";
Her heart is sick for light and love,
Her face is often fair and sweet,
And her intelligence above
The minds of all she's like to meet.

She reads, by slush-lamp light, may be,
When she has dragged her dreary round,
And dreams of cities by the sea
(Where butter's up, so much the pound),

Of different men from those she knows,
Of shining tides and broad, bright streams;
Of theatres and city shows,
And her release! She has her dreams.

Could I gain her a little rest,
A little light, if but for one,
I think that it would be the best
Of any good I may have done.
But, after all, the paths we go
Are not so glorious as they seem,
And—if t'will help her heart to know—
I've had my dream. 'Twas but a dream.

Henry Lawson

A Dan Yell

I WISH I'd never gone to board
In that house where I met
The touring lady from abroad,
Who mocks my nightmares yet.
I wish—I wish that she had saved
Her news of what she'd seen—
That Dan O'Connor is clean shaved
And parts his hair between.

The ladies down at Manly now—
And widows understood—
No more deplore their marriage vow
Or hopeless widowhood.
For Dan O'Connor is the same
As though he'd never been,
Since Daniel shaved that shave of shame,
And combed his hair between.

No more, Oh Bards, in Danyel tones
He'll voice our several fames,
And nevermore he'll mix our bones
As once he mixed our names.
Let Southern minstrels dree their weird
And lay their sad harps down,
For Dan O'Connor's shorn of beard
And cracked across the crown.

The lobby and refreshment room
Are shorn of half their larks,
A newer ghost now haunts the gloom
That knew the ghost of Parkes:
The brightest joke Australia had
Is but a hopeless grunt—
It went for ever mad and bad
When Daniel shaved his front.

The fair Spotswhoshky weeps indeed—
Frogsleggi and Bung Lung—
With none to greet and none to speed

Them in their native tongue!
By Sucklar Key nor Golden Gate
No Dan is ever seen
Since Dan O'Connor wiped his "slate"
And notched his top between.

But—Dan O'Connor—(Lord knows best
The thing might be a sell)—
You surely will forgive a jest
From one who wished you well—
When we've forgot the face we feared
And Time has deadened pain,
Oh! Dan O'Connor, grow your beard,
And come to us again.

Henry Lawson

A Derry On A Cove

'Twas in the felon's dock he stood, his eyes were black and blue;
His voice with grief was broken, and his nose was broken, too;
He muttered, as that broken nose he wiped upon his cap—
'It's orfal when the p'leece has got a derry on a chap.
'I am a honest workin' cove, as any bloke can see,
'It's just because the p'leece has got a derry, sir, on me;
'Oh, yes, the legal gents can grin, I say it ain't no joke—
'It's cruel when the p'leece has got a derry on a bloke.'

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

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

Henry Lawson

A Dirge Of Joy

Oh! this is a joyful dirge, my friends, and this is a hymn of praise;
And this is a clamour of Victory, and a pæan of Ancient Days.
It isn't a Yelp of the Battlefield; nor a Howl of the Bounding Wave,
But an ode to the Things that the War has Killed, and a lay of the Festive Grave.
'Tis a triolet of the Tomb, you bet, and a whoop because of Despair,
And it's sung as I stand on my hoary head and wave my legs in the air!
Oh! I dance on the grave of the Suffragette (I dance on my hands and dome),
And the Sanctity-of-the-Marriage-Tie and the Breaking-Up-of-the-Home.
And I dance on the grave of the weird White-Slave that died when the war
began;
And Better-Protection-for-Women-and-Girls, and Men-Made-Laws-for-Man!

Oh, I dance on the Liberal Lady's grave and the Labour Woman's, too;
And the grave of the Female lie and shriek, with a dance that is wild and new.
And my only regret in this song-a-let as I dance over dale and hill,
Is the Yarn-of-the-Wife and the Tale-of-the-Girl that never a war can kill.

Oh, I dance on the grave of the want-ter-write, and I dance on the Tomb of the
Sneer,
And poet-and-author-and-critic, too, who used to be great round here.
But "Old Mother Often" ("Mother of Ten") and "Parent" escaped from the grave—
And "Pro Bono Publico" liveth again, as "Victis," or "Honour the Brave."

Oh, lightly I danced upon Politics' grave where the Friend of the Candidate slept,
And over the Female Political Devil, oh wildly I bounded and leapt.
But this dance shall be nothing compared with the dance of the spook of the
writer who sings
On the grave of the bard and the Bulletin's grave, out there at the Finish of
Things!

Henry Lawson

A Fantasy Of War

From Australia

.
OH, tell me, God of Battles! Oh, say what is to come!
The King is in his trenches, the millionaire at home;
The Kaiser with his toiling troops, the Czar is at the front.
Oh! Tell me, God of Battles! Who bears the battle's brunt?
The Queen knits socks for soldiers, the Empress does the same,
And know no more than peasant girls which nation is to blame.
The wounded live to fight again, or live to slave for bread;
The Slain have graves above the Slain—the Dead are with the Dead.
The widowed young shall wed or not, the widowed old remain—
And all the nations of the world prepare for war again!
But ere that time shall be, O God, say what shall here befall!
Ten millions at the battle fronts, and we're five millions all!
The world You made was wide, O God, the world we made is small.
We toiled not as our fathers toiled, for
Sport was all our boast;
And so we built our cities, Lord, like warts, upon the coast.

From Europe

.
The seer stood on the mountain side, the witch was in her cave;
The gipsy with his caravan, the sailor on the wave;
The sophist in his easy chair, with ne'er a soul to save,
The factory slaves went forth to slave, the peasant to the field;
The women worked in winter there for one-tenth of the yield;
The village Granny nursed their babes to give them time to slave;
The child was in the cradle, and the grandsire in his grave.
The rich man slumbered in his chair, full fed with wine and meat;
The lady in her carriage sat, the harlot walked the street
With paint upon her cheek and neck, through winter's snow and sleet.
We saw the pride of Wealth go mad, and Misery increase—
And still the God of Gods was dumb and all the world was Peace!

The wizard on the mountain side, he drew a rasping breath,
For he was old and near to life, as he was near to death;
And he looked out and saw the star they saw at Nazareth.
"Two thousand years have passed," he said. "A thousand years," he said.

"A hundred years have passed," he said, "and, lo! the star is red!
The time has come at last," he said, and bowed his hoary head.
He laid him on the mountain-side—and so the seer was dead.
And so the Eastern Star was red, and it was red indeed—
We saw the Red Star in the South, but we took little heed.
(The Prophet in his garret starved or drank himself to death.)

The witch was mumbling in her hole before the dawn was grey;
The witch she took a crooked stick and prodded in the clay;
She doddered round and mumbled round as is the beldame's way.
"Four children shall be born," she said, "four children at a birth;
Four children of a peasant brood—and what shall come on earth?
Four of the poorest peasantry that Europe knows," she said,
"And all the nations of the world shall count their gory dead!"
The babes are born in Italy—and all the world is red!

The Ship

The world You gave was wide, O Lord, and wars were far away!
The goal was just as near, O Lord, to-morrow or to-day!
The tree You grew was stout and sound to carve the plank and keel.
(And when the darkness hid the sky Your hand was on the wheel.)
The pine You grew was straight and tall to fashion spar and mast.
Our sails and gear from flax and hemp were stout and firm and fast.
You gave the metal from the mine and taught the carpenter
To fasten plank and rib and beam, and sheath and iron her.
The world You made was wide, O Lord, with signs on sea and sky;
And all the stars were true, O Lord, you gave to steer her by.
More graceful than the albatross upon the morning breeze.
Ah me! she was the fairest thing that ever sailed the seas;
And when the madness of mankind burns out at last in war,
The world may yet behold the day she'll sail the seas once more.
We were not satisfied, O Lord, we were not satisfied;
We stole Your electricity to fortify our pride!
You gave the horse to draw our loads, You gave the horse to ride;
But we must fly above the Alps and race beneath the tide.
We searched in sacred places for the things we did not need;
Your anger shook our cities down—and yet we took no heed.
We robbed the water and the air to give us "energy,"
As we'd exhaust Thy secret store of electricity.

The day may come—and such a day!—when we shall need all three.

And lest Thou shouldst not understand our various ways and whys,
We cut Thy trees for paper, Lord, where-on to print our lies.
We sent the grand Titanic forth, for pleasure, gold and show;
And all her skeletons of wealth and jewels lie below.
For fame or curiosity, for pride, and greed, or trade,
We sought to know all things and make all things that Thou hast made!
From Pole to Pole we sought to speak, and Heaven's powers employ—
Our cruisers feverishly seek such language to destroy.
We shaped all things for war, and now the Sister Nations wade
Knee-deep in white man's blood to wreck all things that we have made!
For in the rottenness of Peace—worse than this bitter strife!—
We murdered the Humanity and Poetry of Life.

The Bells and the Child

.
The gongs are in the temple—the bells are in the tower;
The "tom-tom" in the jungle and the town clock tells the hour;
And all Thy feathered kind at morn have testified Thy power.

Did ever statesman save a land or science save a soul?—
Did ever Tower of Babel stand or war-drums cease to roll?—
Or wedding-bells to ring, O Lord—or requiems to toll?

Did ever child in cradle laid—born of a healthy race—
Cease for an hour, all unafraid, to testify Thy grace?
That shook its rattle from its bed in its proud father's face?

Cathedral bells must cease awhile, because of Pride and Sin,
That never failed a wedding-morn that hailed a king and queen,
Or failed to peal for victory that brave men died to win.
(Or failed to ring the Old Year out and ring the New Year in.)

The world You made was wide, O God!—O God, 'tis narrow now—
And all its ways must run with blood, for we knew more than Thou!
And millions perish at the guns or rot beside the plough,
For we knew more than Thou.

Henry Lawson

A Little Mistake

'Tis a yarn I heard of a new-chum 'trap'
On the edge of the Never-Never,
Where the dead men lie and the black men lie,
And the bushman lies for ever.
'Twas the custom still with the local blacks
To cadge in the 'altogether'—
They had less respect for our feelings then,
And more respect for the weather.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Henry Lawson

A Mate Can Do No Wrong

We learnt the creed at Hungerford,
We learnt the creed at Bourke;
We learnt it in the good times
And learnt it out of work.
We learnt it by the harbour-side
And on the billabong:
'No matter what a mate may do,
A mate can do no wrong!'
He's like a king in this respect
(No matter what they do),
And, king-like, shares in storm and shine
The Throne of Life with you.
We learnt it when we were in gaol
And put it in a song:
' No matter what a mate may do,
A mate can do no wrong!'
They'll say he said a bitter word
When he's away or dead.
We're loyal to his memory,
No matter what he said.
And we should never hesitate,
But strike out good and strong,
And jolt the slanderer on the jaw –
A mate can do no wrong !

Henry Lawson

A May Night On The Mountains

'Tis a wonderful time when these hours begin,
These long 'small hours' of night,
When grass is crisp, and the air is thin,
And the stars come close and bright.
The moon hangs caught in a silvery veil,
From clouds of a steely grey,
And the hard, cold blue of the sky grows pale
In the wonderful Milky Way.
There is something wrong with this star of ours,
A mortal plank unsound,
That cannot be charged to the mighty powers
Who guide the stars around.
Though man is higher than bird or beast,
Though wisdom is still his boast,
He surely resembles Nature least,
And the things that vex her most.

Oh, say, some muse of a larger star,
Some muse of the Universe,
If they who people those planets far
Are better than we, or worse?
Are they exempted from deaths and births,
And have they greater powers,
And greater heavens, and greater earths,
And greater Gods than ours?

Are our lies theirs, and our truth their truth,
Are they cursed for pleasure's sake,
Do they make their hells in their reckless youth
Ere they know what hells they make?
And do they toil through each weary hour
Till the tedious day is o'er,
For food that gives but the fleeting power
To toil and strive for more?

Henry Lawson

A Mixed Battle Song

Lo! the Boar's tail is salted, and the Kangaroo's exalted,
And his right eye is extinguished by a man-o'-warsman's cap;
He is flying round the fences where the Southern Sea commences,
And he's very much excited for a quiet sort of chap.
For his ships have had a scrap and they've marked it on the map
Where the H.M.A.S. Sydney dropped across a German trap.
So the Kangaroo's a-chasing of his Blessed Self, and racing
From Cape York right round to Leeuwin, from the coast to Nevertire;
And of him need be no more said, save that to the tail aforesaid
Is the Blue Australian Ensign firmly fixed with copper wire.
(When he's filled the map with white men there'll be little to desire.)
I was sulky, I was moody (I'm inclined to being broody)
When the news appeared in Sydney, bringing joy and bringing tears,
(There's an undertone of sorrow that you'll understand to-morrow)
And I felt a something in me that had not been there for years.
Though I lean in the direction of most absolute Protection
(And of wheat on the selection)
And, considering Congestion and the hopeless unemployed,
I'd a notion (but I hid it) that, the way the Emden did it,
'Twould be better for Australia if her "commerce" was destroyed.

You may say that war's a curse, but the peace curse may be worse,
When it's lasted till it's rotten—rotten from the inmost core,
To the mouldy skin which we are, in the land we call the freer—
And I almost feel inclined to call for "Three Cheers for the War!"
For I think, when all is over, from Magellan's Straits to Dover,
Things will be a great deal better than they ever were before.
But, since "Peace" and "Right" are squalling, I'll content myself with calling
For three rousers—like the ringing cheers we used to give of yore—
For the Emden!
For the Sydney!
And their gallant crews and captains—both of whom we've met before!
And, for Kaiser William's nevvvy, we shall venture three cheers more!
Cheers that go to end a war.

Henry Lawson

A New John Bull

A tall, slight, English gentleman,
With an eyeglass to his eye;
He mostly says "Good-Bai" to you,
When he means to say "Good-bye";
He shakes hands like a ladies' man,
For all the world to see—
But they know, in Corners of the World.
No ladies' man is he.

A tall, slight English gentleman,
Who hates to soil his hands;
He takes his mother's drawing-room
To the most outlandish lands;
And when, through Hells we dream not of,
His battery prevails,
He cleans the grime of gunpowder
And blue blood from his nails.

He's what our blokes in Egypt call
"A decent kinder cove."
And if the Pyramids should fall?
He'd merely say "Bai Jove!"
And if the stones should block his path
For a twelve-month, or a day,
He'd call on Sergeant Whatsisname
To clear those things away!

A quiet English gentleman,
Who dots the Empire's rim,
Where sweating sons of ebony
Would go to Hell for him.
And if he chances to get "winged,"
Or smashed up rather worse,
He's quite apologetic to
The doctor and the nurse.

A silent English gentleman—
Though sometimes he says "Haw."
But if a baboon in its cage
Appealed to British Law

And Justice, to be understood,
He'd listen all polite,
And do his very best to set
The monkey grievance right.

A thoroughbred whose ancestry
Goes back to ages dim;
Yet no one on his wide estates
Need fear to speak to him.
Although he never showed a sign
Of aught save sympathy,
He was the only gentleman
That shamed the cad in me.

Henry Lawson

A Prouder Man Than You

If you fancy that your people came of better stock than mine,
If you hint of higher breeding by a word or by a sign,
If you're proud because of fortune or the clever things you do --
Then I'll play no second fiddle: I'm a prouder man than you!

If you think that your profession has the more gentility,
And that you are condescending to be seen along with me;
If you notice that I'm shabby while your clothes are spruce and new --
You have only got to hint it: I'm a prouder man than you!

If you have a swell companion when you see me on the street,
And you think that I'm too common for your toney friend to meet,
So that I, in passing closely, fail to come within your view --
Then be blind to me for ever: I'm a prouder man than you!

If your character be blameless, if your outward past be clean,
While 'tis known my antecedents are not what they should have been,
Do not risk contamination, save your name whate'er you do --
'Birds o' feather fly together': I'm a prouder bird than you!

Keep your patronage for others! Gold and station cannot hide
Friendship that can laugh at fortune, friendship that can conquer pride!
Offer this as to an equal -- let me see that you are true,
And my wall of pride is shattered: I am not so proud as you!

Henry Lawson

A Slight Misunderstanding At The Jasper Gate

Oh, do you hear the argument, far up above the skies?
The voice of old Saint Peter, in expostulation rise?
Growing shrill, and ever shriller, at the thing that's being done;
More in sorrow than in anger, like our old Jack Robertson.
Old Saint Peter's had his troubles—heaps of troubles, great and small,
Since he kept the gates of Heaven—but this last one covers all!
It is not a crowing rooster—that's a sight and sound he's useter,
Simulated by some impish spirit that he knows full well;
It is simply Drake, of Devon, who is breaking out of Heaven,
With a crew of pirate brethren, to come down once more to Hell!
Oh, do you hear the distant sound, that seems to come and go,
As thunder does in summer time, when faraway and low?
Or the "croon" beneath the church bells, when they're pealing from the tower—
And the church bells are the battle-call in this dark, anxious hour.
Do you feel the distant throbbing; Do you feel it go and come;
Like a war hymn on horizons, or a centuries-mellowed drum!
Hear it sobbing, hear it throbbing, like some not unhappy sobbing—
By the peaceful Devon landscape and the fair Devonian home!
By the land those spirits meet in—and it's Drake's Drum, spirit-beaten,
By perhaps the Rose of Torridge—and it's calling Drake to come?

Oh, do you feel a cooling hand upon your fevered brow?
That dulls your ears to Hell's Own Din—or that worse Silence, now?
In the starlight in the Channel, while Destruction lurks below,
Or that Nether-Hell, the Stoke-hole, where you cannot see or know?
Do you feel a soothing presence, keeping sanity in one
Going mad, in Satan's Nightmare, where the gun-crew works the gun?
It is Raleigh!—Admiral-Poet, who had dreams though few may know it—
Who had dreams of England's greatness, otherwise than by the sea.
Sorrowful but all-forgiving, bringing courage to the living—
Raleigh's Spirit, not from London, but his Vanished Colony.

Oh, do you feel a stony calm that you had never known?
With comrades in the firing-line, or "Sentry Go" alone.
When it's Hellfire all around you, and it's freezing slush below,
Or you pace in rain and darkness, with Old Death, and "Sentry Go"—
Feel a cold determination that makes all but Now a blank;
That's half foreign to your nature, and half foreign to your rank?
It is Wellington, where French is, who has broken Heaven's trenches,

With his purple-blooded captains (who used purple language then)
Come to strengthen with his spirit all the coolness you inherit—
He who took the scum of Europe, and who trained them to be Men.

Henry Lawson

A Song Of Brave Men

Man, is the Sea your master? Sea, and is man your slave? –
This is the song of brave men who never know they are brave:
Ceaselessly watching to save you, stranger from foreign lands,
Soundly asleep in your state room, full sail for the Goodwin Sands!
Life is a dream, they tell us, but life seems very real,
When the lifeboat puts out from Ramsgate, and the buggers put out from Deal!

A gun from the lightship! – a rocket! – a cry of, "Turn out, me lad!"
"Ship on the Sands!" they're shouting, and a rush of the oilskin-clad.
The lifeboat leaping and swooping, in the wake of the fighting tug,
And the luggers afloat in Hell's water – Oh, "tourist", with cushion and rug! –
Think of the freezing fury, without one minute's relief,
When they stood all night in the blackness by the wreck of the Indian Chief!

Lashed to their seats, and crouching, to the spray that froze as it flew,
Twenty-six hours in midwinter! That was the lifeboat's crew.
Twice she was swamped, and she righted, in the rush of the heavy seas,
And her tug was mostly buried; but these were common things, these.
And the luggers go out whenever there's a hope to get them afloat,
And these things they do for nothing, and those fishermen say, "Oh! it's nowt!"

(Enemy, Friend or Stranger! In every sea or land,
And across the lives of most men run stretches of Goodwin Sand;
And across the life of a nation, as across the track of a ship,
Lies the hidden rock, or the iceberg, within the horizon dip.
And wise men know them, and warn us, with lightship, or voice, or pen;
But we strike, and the fool survivors sail on to strike again.)

But this is a song of brave men, wherever is aught to save,
Christian or Jew or Wowser – and I knew one who was brave;
British or French or German, Dane or Latin or Dutch:
"Scandies" that ignorant British reckon with "Dagoes and such" –
(Where'er, on a wreck titanic, in a scene of wild despair,
The officers call for assistance, a Swede or a Norse is there.)

Tale of a wreck titanic, with the last boat over the side,
And a brave young husband fighting his clinging, hysterical bride;
He strikes her fair on the temple, while the decks are scarce afloat,
And he kisses her once on the forehead, and he drops her into the boat.

So he goes to his death to save her; and she lives to remember and lie –
Or be true to his love and courage. But that's how brave men die.

(I hate the slander: "Be British" – and I don't believe it, that's flat:
No British sailor and captain would stoop to such cant as that.
What – in the rush of cowards – of the help from before the mast –
Of the two big Swedes and the Norse, who stood by the mate to the last? –
In every mining disaster, in a New-World mining town,
In one of the rescue parties an Olsen or Hans goes down.)

Men who fought for their village, away on their country's edge:
The priest with his cross – and a musket, and the blacksmith with his sledge;
The butcher with cleaver and pistols, and the notary with his pike.
And the clerk with what he laid hands on; but all were ready to strike.
And – Tennyson notwithstanding – when the hour of danger was come,
The shopman has struck full often with his "cheating yard-wand" home!

This is a song of brave men, ever, the wide world o'er –
Starved and crippled and murdered by the land they are fighting for.
Left to freeze in the trenches, sent to drown by the Cape,
Throttled by army contractors, and strangled by old red-tape.
Fighting for "Home" and "Country", or "Glory", or what you choose –
Sacrificed for the Syndicates, and a monarch "in" with the Jews.

Australia! your trial is coming! Down with the party strife:
Send Your cackling, lying women back to the old Home Life.
Brush from your Parliament benches the legal chaff and dust:
Make Federation perfect, as sooner or later you must.
Scatter your crowded cities, cut up your States – and so
Give your brave sons of the future the ghost of a White Man's show.

Henry Lawson

A Song Of The Republic

Sons of the South, awake! arise!
Sons of the South, and do.
Banish from under your bonny skies
Those old-world errors and wrongs and lies.
Making a hell in a Paradise
That belongs to your sons and you.

Sons of the South, make choice between
(Sons of the South, choose true),
The Land of Morn and the Land of E'en,
The Old Dead Tree and the Young Tree Green,
The Land that belongs to the lord and the Queen,
And the Land that belongs to you.

Sons of the South, your time will come –
Sons of the South, 'tis near –
The "Signs of the Times", in their language dumb,
Fortell it, and ominous whispers hum
Like sullen sounds of a distant drum,
In the ominous atmosphere.

Sons of the South, aroused at last!
Sons of the South are few!
But your ranks grow longer and deeper fast,
And ye shall swell to an army vast,
And free from the wrongs of the North and Past
The land that belongs to you.

Henry Lawson

A Study In The 'Nood'

He was bare—we don't want to be rude—
(His condition was owing to drink)
They say his condition was nood,
Which amounts to the same thing, we think
(We mean his condition, we think,
'Twas a naked condition, or nood,
Which amounts to the same thing, we think)
Uncovered he lay on the grass
That shrivelled and shrunk; and he stayed
Three hot summer days, while the glass
Was one hundred and ten in the shade.
(We nearly remarked that he laid,
But that was bad grammar we thought—
It does sound bucolic, we think
It smacks of the barnyard—
Of farming—of pullets in short.)

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

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

They say (if the telegram's true)
When he woke up he wondered (good Lord!)
'Why the engine-man didn't heave to—
'Why the train didn't take him aboard.'
And now, by the case of poor Grice,

We think that a daily express
Should travel with sunshades and ice,
And a lookout for flags of distress.

Henry Lawson

A Voice From The City

On western plain and eastern hill
Where once my fancy ranged,
The station hands are riding still
And they are little changed.
But I have lost in London gloom
The glory of the day,
The grand perfume of wattle bloom
Is faint and far away.
Brown faces under broad-brimmed hats
The grip of wiry hands,
The gallops on the frosty flats,
Seem dreams of other lands;
The camp fire and the stars that blaze
Above the mystic plain
Are but the thoughts of vanished days
That never come again.

The evening star I seldom view—
That led me on to roam—
I never see the morning star
That used to draw me home.
But I have often longed for day
To hide the few I see,
Because they only point and say
Most bitter things to me.

I wear my life on pavement stones
That drag me ever down,
A paltry slave to little things,
By custom chained to town.
I've lost the strength to strike alone,
The heart to do and dare—
I mind the day I'd roll my swag
And tramp to—God-knows-where.

When I should wait I wander out,
When I should go I bide—
I scarcely dare to think about
The days when I could ride.

I would not mount before his eyes,
'Straight' Bushman tall and tan—
I mind the day when I stood up
And fought him like a man.

I mind the time when I was shy
To meet the brown Bush girls—
I've lunched with lords since then and I
Have been at home with earls:
I learned to smile and learned to bow
And lie to ladies gay—
But to a gaunt Bushwoman now
I'd not know what to say.

And if I sought her hard bare home
From scenes of show and sham,
I'd sit all ill at ease and fell
The poor weak thing I am.
I could not meet her hopeless eyes
That look one through and through,
The haggard woman of the past
Who once thought I was true.

But nought on earth can last for aye,
And wild with care and pain,
Some day by chance I'll break away
And seek the Bush again.
And find awhile from bitter years
The rest the Bush can bring,
And hear, perhaps, with truer ears
The songs it has to sing.

Henry Lawson

A Word From The Bards

IT IS New Year's Day and I rise to state that here on the Sydney side
The Bards have commenced to fill out of late and they're showing their binjies
with pride
They're patting their binjies with pride, old man, and I want you to understand,
That a binjied bard is a bard indeed when he sings in the Southern Land,
Old chaps,
When he sings in the Southern Land.

For the Southern Land is the Poet's Home, and over the world's wide roam,
There was never till now a binjied bard that lived in a poet's home, old man;
For the poet's home was a hell on earth, and I want you to understand,
That it isn't exactly a paradise down here in the Southern Land,
Old chap,
Down here in the Southern Land.

The Beer and the Bailiff were gone last night and the "temple" doorstep clean,
And our heads are clear and our hearts are light with wine from the Riverine—
With wine from the Riverine, old man, and I want you to understand
That Bard, Beer and Bailiff too long were kin down here in the Southern Land,
Old man,
Down here in the Southern Land.

It is not because of a larger fee, nor yet that the bards are free,
For the bards I know and the bards I see are married enough for three;
Are married enough for three, old man, and I want you to understand,
They've a right to be married enough for four, down here in the Southern Land,
My girl,
Down here in the Southern Land.

But I think it's because a bird went round and twittered in ears of men
That bards have care and the world seems bare as seen from the rhyming den,
And twittered in ears of men, old chaps, and got folks to understand
That a poet is something more than a joke down here in the Southern Land,
Old man,
Down here in the Southern Land.

Henry Lawson

A Word To Texas Jack

Texas Jack, you are amusin'. By Lord Harry, how I laughed
When I seen yer rig and saddle with its bulwarks fore-and-aft;
Holy smoke! In such a saddle how the dickens can yer fall?
Why, I seen a gal ride bareback with no bridle on at all!
Gosh! so-help-me! strike-me-balmy! if a bit o' scenery
Like ter you in all yer rig-out on the earth I ever see!
How I'd like ter see a bushman use yer fixins, Texas Jack;
On the remnant of a saddle he can ride to hell and back.
Why, I heerd a mother screamin' when her kid went tossin' by
Ridin' bareback on a buckner that had murder in his eye.
What? yer come to learn the natives how to squat on horse's back!
Learn the cornstalk ridin'! Blazes!—w'at yer giv'n'us, Texas Jack?
Learn the cornstalk—what the flamin', jumtup! where's my country gone?
Why, the cornstalk's mother often rides the day afore he's born!

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

No, before yer teach the native you must ride without a fall
Up a gum or down a gully nigh as steep as any wall—
You must swim the roarin' Darlin' when the flood is at its height
Bearin' down the stock an' stations to the Great Australian Bight.

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

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

Ride across the hazy regins where the lonely emus wail
An' ye'll find the black'll track yer while yer lookin' for his trail;

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

P.S.—As poet and as Yankee I will greet you, Texas Jack,
For it isn't no ill-feelin' that is gettin' up my back,
But I won't see this land crowded by each Yank and British cuss
Who takes it in his head to come a-civilisin' us.
So if you feel like shootin' now, don't let yer pistol cough—
(Our Government is very free at chokin' fellers off);
And though on your great continent there's misery in the towns
An' not a few untitled lords and kings without their crowns,
I will admit your countrymen is busted big, an' free,
An' great on ekal rites of men and great on liberty;

I will admit yer fathers punched the gory tyrant's head,
But then we've got our heroes, too, the diggers that is dead—
The plucky men of Ballarat who toed the scratch right well
And broke the nose of Tyranny and made his peepers swell
For yankin' Lib.'s gold tresses in the roarin' days gone by,
An' doublin' up his dirty fist to black her bonny eye;
So when it comes to ridin' mokes, or hoistin' out the Chow,
Or stickin' up for labour's rights, we don't want showin' how.
They come to learn us cricket in the days of long ago,
An' Hanlan come from Canada to learn us how to row,
An' 'doctors' come from 'Frisco just to learn us how to skite,
An' 'pugs' from all the lands on earth to learn us how to fight;
An' when they go, as like or not, we find we're taken in,
They've left behind no larnin'—but they've carried off our tin.

Henry Lawson

Above Crow's Nest [sydney]

A BLANKET low and leaden,
Though rent across the west,
Whose darkness seems to deaden
The brightest and the best;
A sunset white and staring
On cloud-wrecks far away—
And haggard house-walls glaring
A farewell to the day.

A light on tower and steeple,
Where sun no longer shines—
My people, Oh my people!
Rise up and read the signs!
Low looms the nearer high-line
(No sign of star or moon),
The horseman on the skyline
Rode hard this afternoon!

(Is he—and who shall know it?—
The spectre of a scout?
The spirit of a poet,
Whose truths were met with doubt?
Who sought and who succeeded
In marking danger's track—
Whose warnings were unheeded
Till all the sky was black?)

It is a shameful story
For our young, generous home—
Without the rise and glory
We'd go as Greece and Rome.
Without the sacrifices
That make a nation's name,
The elder nation's vices
And luxuries we claim.

Grown vain without a conquest,
And sure without a fort,
And maddened in the one quest

For pleasure or for sport.
Self-blinded to our starkness
We'd fling the time away
To fight, half-armed, in darkness
Who should be armed to-day.

This song is for the city,
The city in its pride—
The coming time shall pity
And shield the countryside.
Shall we live in the present
Till fearful war-clouds loom,
And till the sullen peasant
Shall leave us to our doom?

Cloud-fortresses titanic
Along the western sky—
The tired, bowed mechanic
And pallid clerk flit by.
Lit by a light unhealthy—
The ghastly after-glare—
The veiled and goggled wealthy
Drive fast—they know not where.

Night's sullen spirit rouses,
The darkening gables lour
From ugly four-roomed houses
Verandah'd windows glower;
The last long day-stare dies on
The scrub-ridged western side,
And round the near horizon
The spectral horsemen ride.

Henry Lawson

Above Eurunderee

There are scenes in the distance where beauty is not,
On the desolate flats where gaunt appletrees rot.
Where the brooding old ridge rises up to the breeze
From his dark lonely gullies of stringy-bark trees,
There are voice-haunted gaps, ever sullen and strange,
But Eurunderee lies like a gem in the range.

Still I see in my fancy the dark-green and blue
Of the box-covered hills where the five-corners grew;
And the rugged old sheoaks that sighed in the bend
O'er the lily-decked pools where the dark ridges end,
And the scrub-covered spurs running down from the Peak
To the deep grassy banks of Eurunderee Creek.

On the knolls where the vineyards and fruit-gardens are
There's a beauty that even the drought cannot mar;
For I noticed it oft, in the days that are lost,
As I trod on the siding where lingered the frost,
When the shadows of night from the gullies were gone
And the hills in the background were flushed by the dawn.

I was there in late years, but there's many a change
Where the Cudgegong River flows down through the range,
For the curse of the town with the railroad had come,
And the goldfields were dead. And the girl and the chum
And the old home were gone, yet the oaks seemed to speak
Of the hazy old days on Eurunderee Creek.

And I stood by that creek, ere the sunset grew cold,
When the leaves of the sheoaks are traced on the gold,
And I thought of old things, and I thought of old folks,
Till I sighed in my heart to the sigh of the oaks;
For the years waste away like the waters that leak
Through the pebbles and sand of Eurunderee Creek.

Henry Lawson

Above Lavender Bay

'Tis glorious morning everywhere
Save where the alleys lie—
I see the fleecy steam jets bid
"Good morning" to the sky.
The gullies of the waratah
Are near, with fall and pool,
And by the shadowed western rocks
The bays are fresh and cool.
To "points" that hint of Italy—
Of Italy and Spain—
I see the busy ferry boats
Come nosing round again.
To the toy station down below
I see the toy trains run—
(I wonder when those ferry boats
Will get their business done?)

Above the Bay called Lavender
This bard is domiciled,
Where up through rich, dark greenery
The red-tiled roofs are piled—
(At least some are—I hope that soon
They all shall be red-tiled)—
A moonlight night in middle-age
That makes one feel a child.

Close over, to the nearer left—
That feels the ocean breeze—
A full moon in a dim blue sky
A church spire and dark trees.
And, further right, the harsher heights
Of Mosman, Double Bay,
And Rose Bay, with their scattered lights,
Have softened with the day.

And fair across to where we know
The shelving sea cliffs are—
The lighthouse, with a still faint glow,
Beneath a twinkling star.

Across the harbour from the right,
And fairly in a line,
The Clock-tower on the City Hall,
A ship-mast and a pine.

The pale and bright, yet dusky blue,
And crossed by fleecy bars,
Flings out the brilliant city lights,
The moonlight and the stars—
And like a transformation scene,
On sheet glass down below,
The fairy-lighted ferry boats
Are gliding to and fro.

Henry Lawson

Advertisement For Hean's Essence

If yer gotter corf about yer,
Gotter corf –
Gotter corf –
If yer gotter corf about yer,
Gotter cord –
Feelin' orf –
Have some horse sense;
Take HEAN'S ESSENCE –
It will rid yer of that corf.
That's a cert.

Henry Lawson

After All

The brooding ghosts of Australian night have gone from the bush and town;
My spirit revives in the morning breeze,
though it died when the sun went down;
The river is high and the stream is strong,
and the grass is green and tall,
And I fain would think that this world of ours is a good world after all.

The light of passion in dreamy eyes, and a page of truth well read,
The glorious thrill in a heart grown cold of the spirit I thought was dead,
A song that goes to a comrade's heart, and a tear of pride let fall --
And my soul is strong! and the world to me is a grand world after all!

Let our enemies go by their old dull tracks,
and theirs be the fault or shame
(The man is bitter against the world who has only himself to blame);
Let the darkest side of the past be dark, and only the good recall;
For I must believe that the world, my dear, is a kind world after all.

It well may be that I saw too plain, and it may be I was blind;
But I'll keep my face to the dawning light,
though the devil may stand behind!
Though the devil may stand behind my back, I'll not see his shadow fall,
But read the signs in the morning stars of a good world after all.

Rest, for your eyes are weary, girl -- you have driven the worst away --
The ghost of the man that I might have been is gone from my heart to-day;
We'll live for life and the best it brings till our twilight shadows fall;
My heart grows brave, and the world, my girl, is a good world after all.

Henry Lawson

All Ashore!

The rattling `donkey' ceases,
The bell says we must part,
You long slab of good-nature,
And poetry and art!

We'll miss your smile in Sydney,
We'll miss your care-free air;
Where care-free airs are needed
And grins are growing rare,

Good Health! Good pay! Good liquor,
And good pals, night and day,
Good morning and good evening –
God bless you, Hugh McCrae!

Henry Lawson

An Australian Advertisement

WE WANT the man who will lead the van,
The man who will pioneer.
We have no use for the gentleman,
Or the cheating Cheap-Jack here;
We have no room for the men who shirk
The sweat of the brow. Condemn
The men who are frightened to look for work
And funk when it looks for them.

We'll honour the man who can't afford
To wait for a job that suits,
But sticks a swag on his shoulders broad
And his feet in blucher boots,
And tramps away o'er the ridges far
And over the burning sand
To look for work where the stations are
In the lonely Western land.

He'll brave the drouth and he'll brave the rain,
And fight his sorrows down,
And help to garden the inland plain
And build the inland town;
And he'll be found in the coming years
With a heart as firm and stout,
An honoured man with the pioneers
Who lead the people out.

Henry Lawson

And The Bairns Will Come

So you've seen at last what we have seen so long through scalding tears:
You have found what we—the People—we have known for twenty years:
And Australia's hymn is swelling till the furthest fence-wires hum—
Save your country, Legislators—and the bairns will come.
You would put the blame upon us—we are women, we are men;
And our fathers and our mothers gave the country nine and ten.
They had honest work and wages, and the ways to win a home—
Give us half the chances they had—and the bairns will come.

Try the ranks of wealth and fashion, ask the rich and well-to-do,
With their nurseries and their nurses and their children one and two,
Will they help us bear the burden?—but their purse-proud lips are dumb.
Let us earn a decent living—and the bairns will come.

Young men, helpless in the city's wheel of greed that never stops,
Tramp the streets for work while sweethearts slave in factories and shops.
Shall they marry and bear children to their parents' martyrdom?
Make the city what it should be—and the bairns will come.

Shall we give you sons and daughters to a life of never-rest,
Sacrificing all for nothing in the desert of the West,
To be driven to the city's squalid suburb and the slum?
Make the city what it should be—and the bairns will come.

Don't you hear Australia calling for her children unconceived?
Don't you hear them calling to her while her heart is very grieved?
Give the best land to the farmers, make the barren West a home,
Save the rainfall, lock the rivers—and the bairns will come.

Henry Lawson

And What Have You To Say?

I MIND the days when ladies fair
Helped on my overcoat,
And tucked the silken handkerchief
About my precious throat;
They used to see the poet's soul
In every song I wrote.

They pleaded hard, but I had work
To do, and could not stay
I used to work the whole night through,
And what have you to say?

'Twas clever, handsome woman then,
And I their rising star;
I could not see they worshipped me,
Because I saw too far.
('Tis well for one or two, I think,
That things are as they are.)

(I used to write for writing's sake,
I used to write till day,
I loved my prose and poetry,
And what have you to say?)

I guess if one should meet me now
That she would gasp to think,
She ever knew a thing like me,
As down the street I slink,
And trembling cadge from some old pal
The tray-bit for a drink.

I used to drink with gentlemen
To pass an hour away:
I drink long beers in common bars,
And what have you to say?

But often, in the darkest night
(And 'tis a wondrous thing)—
When others see the devils dance,

I hear the angels sing,
And round the drunkard's lonely bed
Heaven's nurses whispering.

I wrote for Truth and Right alone,
I wrote from night till day;
I'll find a drunken pauper grave,
And what have you to say?
Good night!
Good day!
My noble friends,
And what have you to say?

Henry Lawson

Andy's Gone With Cattle

Our Andy's gone to battle now
'Gainst Drought, the red marauder;
Our Andy's gone with cattle now
Across the Queensland border.

He's left us in dejection now;
Our hearts with him are roving.
It's dull on this selection now,
Since Andy went a-droving.

Who now shall wear the cheerful face
In times when things are slackest?
And who shall whistle round the place
When Fortune frowns her blackest?

Oh, who shall cheek the squatter now
When he comes round us snarling?
His tongue is growing hotter now
Since Andy cross'd the Darling.

The gates are out of order now,
In storms the `riders' rattle;
For far across the border now
Our Andy's gone with cattle.

Poor Aunty's looking thin and white;
And Uncle's cross with worry;
And poor old Blucher howls all night
Since Andy left Macquarie.

Oh, may the showers in torrents fall,
And all the tanks run over;
And may the grass grow green and tall
In pathways of the drover;

And may good angels send the rain
On desert stretches sandy;
And when the summer comes again

God grant 'twill bring us Andy.

Henry Lawson

Andy's Return

With pannikins all rusty,
And billy burnt and black,
And clothes all torn and dusty,
That scarcely hide his back;
With sun-cracked saddle-leather,
And knotted greenhide rein,
And face burnt brown with weather,
Our Andy's home again!
His unkempt hair is faded
With sleeping in the wet,
He's looking old and jaded;
But he is hearty yet.
With eyes sunk in their sockets—
But merry as of yore;
With big cheques in his pockets,
Our Andy's home once more!

Old Uncle's bright and cheerful;
He wears a smiling face;
And Aunty's never tearful
Now Andy's round the place.
Old Blucher barks for gladness;
He broke his rusty chain,
And leapt in joyous madness
When Andy came again.

With tales of flood and famine,
On distant northern tracks,
And shady yarns—'baal gammon!'
Of dealings with the blacks,
From where the skies hang lazy
On many a northern plain,
From regions dim and hazy
Our Andy's home again!

His toil is nearly over;
He'll soon enjoy his gains.
Not long he'll be a drover,
And cross the lonely plains.

We'll happy be for ever
When he'll no longer roam,
But by some deep, cool river
Will make us all a home.

Henry Lawson

Antony Villa

Over there, above the jetty, stands the mansion of the Vardens,
With a tennis ground and terrace, and a flagstaff in the gardens:
They are gentlemen and ladies—they've been 'toffs' for generations,
But old Varden's been unlucky—lost a lot in speculations.
Troubles gathered fast upon him when the mining bubble 'busted,'
Then the bank suspended payment, where his little all he trusted;
And the butcher and the baker sent their bills in when they read it,
Even John, the Chow that served him, has refused to give him 'cledit.'

And the daughters of the Vardens—they are beautiful as Graces—
But the balcony's deserted, and they rarely show their faces;
And the swells of their acquaintance never seem to venture near them,
And the bailiff says they seldom have a cup of tea to cheer them.

They were butterflies—I always was a common caterpillar,
But I'm sorry for the ladies over there in 'Tony Villa,
Shut up there in 'Tony Villa with the bailiff and their trouble;
And the dried-up reservoir, where my tears were seems to bubble.

Mrs. Rooney thinks it nothing when she sends a brat to 'borry'
Just a pinch of tea and sugar till the grocer comes 'temorry;'
But it's dif'rent with the Vardens—they would starve to death as soon as
Knuckle down. You know, they weren't raised exactly like the Rooneys!

There is gossip in the 'boxes' and the drawing-rooms and gardens—
'Have you heard of Varden's failure? Have you heard about the Vardens?'
And no doubt each toney mother on the Point across the water's
Mighty glad about the downfall of the rivals of her daughters.
(Tho' the poets and the writers say that man to man's inhuman,
I'm inclined to think it's nothing to what woman is to woman,
More especially, the ladies, save perhaps a fellow's mother;
And I think that men are better—they are kinder to each other.)

There's a youngster by the jetty gathering cinders from the ashes,
He was known as 'Master Varden' ere the great financial crashes.
And his manner shows the dif'rence 'twixt the nurs'ry and gutter—
But I've seen him at the grocer's buying half a pound of butter.

And his mother fights her trouble in the house across the water,
She is just as proud as Varden, though she was a 'cocky's' daughter;
And at times I think I see her with the flick'ring firelight o'er her,
Sitting pale and straight and quiet, gazing vacantly before her.

There's a slight and girlish figure—Varden's youngest daughter, Nettie—
On the terrace after sunset, when the boat is near the jetty;
She is good and pure and pretty, and her rivals don't deny it,
Though they say that Nettie Varden takes in sewing on the quiet.

(How her sister graced the 'circle,' all unconscious of a lover
In the seedy 'god' who watched her from the gallery above her!
Shade of Poverty was on him, and the light of Wealth upon her,
But perhaps he loved her better than the swells attending on her.)

There's a white man's heart in Varden, spite of all the blue blood in him,
There are working men who wouldn't stand and hear a word agin' him;
But his name was never printed by the side of his 'donations,'
Save on hearts that have—in this world—very humble circulations.
He was never stiff or hoggish—he was affable and jolly,
And he'd always say 'Good morning' to the deck hand on the 'Polly';
He would 'barrack' with the newsboys on the Quay across the ferry,
And he'd very often tip 'em coming home a trifle merry.

But his chin is getting higher, and his features daily harden
(He will not 'give up possession'—there's a lot of fight in Varden);
And the way he steps the gangway! oh, you couldn't but admire it!
Just as proud as ever hero walked the plank aboard a pirate!

He will think about the hardships that his girls were never 'usetter,'
And it must be mighty heavy on the thoroughbred old rooster;
But he'll never strike his colours, and I tell a lying tale if
Varden's pride don't kill him sooner than the bankers or the bailiff.

You remember when we often had to go without our dinners,
In the days when Pride and Hunger fought a finish out within us;
And how Pride would come up groggy—Hunger whooping loud and louder—
And the swells are proud as we are; they are just as proud—and prouder.

Yes, the toffs have grit, in spite of all our sneering and our scorning—
What's the crowd? What's that? God help us!—Varden shot himself this morning!

. . . .

There'll be gossip in the 'circle,' in the drawing-rooms and gardens;
But I'm sorry for the family; yes—I'm sorry for the Vardens.

Henry Lawson

As Far As Your Rifles Cover

Do you think, you slaves of a thousand years to poverty, wealth and pride,
You can crush the spirit that has been free in a land that's new and wide?
When you've scattered the last of the farmer bands, and the war for a while is
over,
You will hold the land – ay, you'll hold the land – the land that your rifles cover.

Till your gold has levelled each mountain range where a wounded man can hide,
Till your gold has lighted the moonless night on the plains where the rebels ride;
Till the future is proved, and the past is bribed from the son of the land's dead
lover –
You may hold the land – you may hold the land just as far as your rifles cover.

Henry Lawson

As Good As New

OH, this is a song of the old lights, that came to my heart like a hymn;
And this is a song for the old lights—the lights that we thought grew dim,
That came to my heart to comfort me, and I pass it along to you;
And here is a hand to the good old friend who turns up as good as new.
And this is a song for the camp-fire out west where the stars shine bright—
Oh, this is a song for the camp-fire where the old mates yarn to-night;
Where the old mates yarn of the old days, and their numbers are all too few,
And this is a song for the good old times that will turn up as good as new.

Oh, this is a song for the old foe—we have both grown wiser now,
And this is a song for the old foe, and we're sorry we had that row;
And this is a song for the old love—the love that we thought untrue—
Oh, this is a song of the dear old love that comes back as good as new.

Oh, this is a song for the black sheep, for the black sheep that fled from town,
And this is a song for the brave heart, for the brave heart that lived it down;
And this is a song for the battler, for the battler who sees it through—
And this is a song for the broken heart that turns up as good as new.

Ah, this is a song for the brave mate, be he Bushman, Scot, or Russ,
A song for the mates we will stick to—for the mates who have stuck to us;
And this is a song for the old creed, to do as a man should do,
Till the Lord takes us all to a wider world—where we'll turn up as good as new.

Henry Lawson

As Ireland Wore The Green

BY RIGHT of birth in southern land I send my warning forth.
I see my country ruined by the wrongs that damned the North.
And shall I stand with fireless eyes and still and silent mouth
While Mammon builds his Londons on the fair fields of the South?

CHORUS:

O must we hide our colour
In fear of Mammon's spleen?
Or shall we wear the bonnie blue
As Ireland wore the green?
As Ireland wore the green, my friends!
As Ireland wore the green!
Aye, we will wear our colour still,
As Ireland wore the green!

I see the shade of poverty fall on each sunny scene.
And slums and alley-ways extend where fields were evergreen.
There is a law that stamps the flower of freedom as it springs;
And this upon a soil that's trod by prouder feet than kings'.

And must I hide my colour
In fear of Mammon's spleen?
Or shall I wear the bonnie blue
As Ireland wore the green?
As Ireland wore the green, my friends!
As Ireland swore the green!
Aye, I will wear my colour yet,
As Ireland wore the green!

Out there beyond the lonely range our fathers toiled for years
'Neath all the hardships that beset true-hearted pioneers;
And our brave mothers journeyed there to do the work of men
On those great awful plains that were unfit for women then.

Then must we hide our colour
In fear of Mammon's spleen?
Or shall we wear the bonnie blue
As Ireland swore the green?
As Ireland wore the green, my friends!

As Ireland wore the green!
Aye, we shall wear our colour still,
As Ireland wore the green!

O shall the fields our fathers won be yielded to the few
Who never touched the axe or spade, and hardships never knew?
Shall lordly robbers rule the land and build their mansions high,
And ladies flaunt their jewelled plumes where our brave mothers lie?

O must we hide our colour
In fear of Mammon's spleen?
Or shall we wear the bonnie blue
As Ireland wore the green?
As Ireland wore the green, my friends!
As Ireland wore the green!
Aye, we will wear our colour yet,
As Ireland wore the green!

What though our stalwart fathers came from every land on earth,
We will be loyal to the land that gives our children birth.
We'll show our banner to the sun—the Southern Cross displayed—
And join our strength together for the home our fathers made.

Let cowards hide their colour
For fear of Mammon's spleen!
But I will wear my bonnie blue
As Ireland swore the green!
As Ireland swore the green, my friends!
As Ireland wore the green!
Aye, I will wear my colour still,
As Ireland swore the green!

We'll light the lamp of hope above the alley and the slum,
And teach the poor and drill them for the war that is to come.
We'll send our songs recruiting far beneath the western sky,
And wake the towns and let them know the day of deeds is nigh.

And we will wear our colour
In spite of Mammon's spleen!
O we will wear the bonnie blue
As Ireland wore the green!
As Ireland wore the green, my friends!

As Ireland wore the green!
Aye, the will wear our colour yet,
As Ireland wore the green!

Henry Lawson

As It Was In The Beginning

As it was in the beginning, so we'll find it in the end,
For a lover, or a brother, or a sweetheart, or a friend;
As it was in the beginning, so we'll find it by-and-bye,
When weak women hug their babies, and strong men go out to die.
As 'tis written now, or spoken, so we'll find it yet in deed—
For their State, or for their Country, for their Honour or their Creed;
For the love of Right, or hatred for the Everlasting Lie,
When the women think of some things, and strong men go out to die.

As it used to be in past times, in the future so it must,
We shall find him stretching forward with his face down in the dust,
All his wounds in front, and hidden—blood to earth, and back to sky,
When pale women pray in private, and strong men go out to die.

Rebels all we are, and brothers—rebels to the laws we make—
Rich or poor, or fat or lean man, fighting for another's sake;
It is all as God decreed it—we shall find it by-and-bye,
When our girls, disguised in boys' clothes, go to die where strong men die.

Henry Lawson

At The Beating Of A Drum

Fear ye not the stormy future, for the Battle Hymn is strong,
And the armies of Australia shall not march without a song;
The glorious words and music of Australia's song shall come
When her true hearts rush together at the beating of a drum.

We may not be there to hear it – 'twill be written in the night,
And Australia's foes shall fear it in the hour before the fight.
The glorious words and music from a lonely heart shall come
When our sons shall rush to danger at the beating of the drum.

He shall be unknown who writes it; he shall soon forgotten be,
But the song shall ring through ages as a song of liberty.
And I say the words and music of our battle hymn shall come,
When Australia wakes in anger at the beating of a drum.

Henry Lawson

At The Tug-0-War

'Twas in a tug-of-war where I—the guvnor's hope and pride—
Stepped proudly on the platform as the ringer on my side;
Old dad was in his glory there—it gave the old man joy
To fight a passage through the crowd and barrack for his boy.
A friend came up and said to me, 'Put out your muscles, John,
And pull them to eternity—your guvnor's looking on.'
I paused before I grasped the rope, and glanced around the place,
And, foremost in the waiting crowd, I saw the old man's face.

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

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

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

.

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

Henry Lawson

Australian Bards And Bush Reviewers

While you use your best endeavour to immortalise in verse
The gambling and the drink which are your country's greatest curse,
While you glorify the bully and take the spieler's part --
You're a clever southern writer, scarce inferior to Bret Harte.

If you sing of waving grasses when the plains are dry as bricks,
And discover shining rivers where there's only mud and sticks;
If you picture `mighty forests' where the mulga spoils the view --
You're superior to Kendall, and ahead of Gordon too.

If you swear there's not a country like the land that gave you birth,
And its sons are just the noblest and most glorious chaps on earth;
If in every girl a Venus your poetic eye discerns,
You are gracefully referred to as the `young Australian Burns'.

But if you should find that bushmen -- spite of all the poets say --
Are just common brother-sinners, and you're quite as good as they --
You're a drunkard, and a liar, and a cynic, and a sneak,
Your grammar's simply awful and your intellect is weak.

Henry Lawson

Australian Engineers

Ah, well! but the case seems hopeless, and the pen might write in vain;

The people gabble of old things over and over again.

For the sake of the sleek importer we slave with the pick and the shears,

While hundreds of boys in Australia long to be engineers.

A new generation has risen under Australian skies,

Boys with the light of genius deep in their dreamy eyes---

Not as of artists or poets with their vain imaginings,

But born to be thinkers and doers, and makers of wonderful things.

Born to be builders of vessels in the Harbours of Waste and Loss,

That shall carry our goods to the nations, flying the Southern Cross;

And fleets that shall guard our seaboard---while the

East is backed by the Jews---

Under Australian captains, and manned by Australian crews.

Boys who are slight and quiet, but boys who are strong and true,

Dreaming of great inventions---always of something new;

With brains untrammelled by training, but quick where reason directs---

Boys with imagination and keen, strong intellects.

They long for the crank and the belting, the gear and the whirring wheel,
The stamp of the giant hammer, the glint of the polished steel,
For the mould, and the vice, and the turning-lathe
---they are boys who long for the keys
To the doors of the world's mechanics and science's mysteries.

They would be makers of fabrics, of cloth for the continents---
Makers of mighty engines and delicate instruments,
It is they who would set fair cities on the western plains far out,
They who would garden the deserts---it is they who would conquer the drought!

They see the dykes to the skyline, where a dust-waste blazes to-day,
And they hear the lap of the waters on the miles of sand and clay;
They see the rainfall increasing, and the bountiful sweeps of grass,
And all the year on the rivers long strings of their barges pass.

.

But still are the steamers loading with our timber and wood and gold,
To return with the costly shoddy stacked high in the foreign hold,
With cardboard boots for our leather, and Brum-magem goods and slops
For thin, white-faced Australians to sell in our sordid shops.

Henry Lawson

Australia's Forgotten Flag

Oh! the Cross of deepest blue,
With the bright stars shining through,
That was raised, my sons, for you,
On a skirt of purest whiteness long ago,
Long ago,
Long ago,
On the field of far Eureka long ago.

Oh! the girl that sewed the silk,
Blue as skies and white as milk,
(Jeanie Scotland – of that ilk)
In the hut there by Eureka long ago –
Years agone –
Auld Lang Syne –
With her young dead digger sweetheart on Eureka long ago.

Oh! the prayer the diggers said,
With the Southern Cross o'erhead!
It is whispered by the dead –
In the graveyard by Eureka whispered still –
Whispered still,
Murmured still,
By the shades that haunt Eureka murmured still.

Oh! the brother and the mate,
In the bonds of love and hate,
Ah! the help that came too late,
When the diggers marched from Creswick to the dawn,
Years agone!
Long years gone,
Oh! the midnight march from Creswick to Eureka and the dawn!

Few, and taken by surprise,
Oh! the mist that hid the skies –
And the steel in diggers' eyes –
Sunday morning in September long ago;
And they grapple and they strike –
With the pick-handle and pike –
Twenty minutes freed Australia at Eureka long ago.

For the leader won his crown,
Though the flag was trampled down,
For it rose in Melbourne town,
Oh, it rose in Melbourne city that same year,
With a clear
Ringing cheer
Oh! it floated high in Melbourne that same year.

When the London strikers starved,
While old England's roast was carved,
And our loaf with them was halved,
Then they bore our flag through London wreathed in flowers,
Wreathed in flowers,
Wreathed in flowers,
In the dreary streets of London, brightest spot in those dark hours.

They have stained it mongrel red,
And the stars are dull and dead,
With a northern cross instead,
Oh. the bloodstain like a red star long ago,
Long ago –
Long ago –
Oh! the red star that was bloodstain on the goldfields long ago.

We're divided – we are curst,
By the paltriest and worst,
Parties striving to be first.
But the shots from far Eureka echo yet,
Echo yet, –
Echo yet.
And they rattle round my window in the wet.

Flag and banner of my dreams!
The time is not as it seems,
And the tide of freedom streams
With the spirit of the people over all.
We shall raise the bright flag yet,
Ne'er to falter or forget,
And 'twill go through many battles ne'er to fall.

Henry Lawson

Australia's Peril

We must suffer, husband and father, we must suffer, daughter and son,
For the wrong we have taken part in and the wrong that we have seen done.
Let the bride of frivolous fashion, and of ease, be ashamed and dumb,
For I tell you the nations shall rule us who have let their children come!

How shall Australia escape it – we in the South and alone
Who have taken the sword for no right of England and none of our own?
(Can we bring back the husbands and fathers, can we bring the lovers and sons?
From the Dead to the homes we have ruined with the fire of our murdering
guns?)

Who shall aid and protect us when the blood-streaked dawn we meet?
Will England, the hated of nations, whose existence depends on her fleet?
Who, because of the deer-parks and game-runs where her wheat-fields and
pastures should be,
Must bring food for her herded thousands and shepherd it over the sea?

The beak of the British Octopus, or the Bosses within our reach
Who spend the hot days on the Mountains or summer at Manly Beach!
The thousands of paltry swindlers who are fathoms beneath our scorn –
Or the army of brave sons grown from the children who should have been born!

The wealth you have won has been wasted on trips to the English Rome,
On costly costumes from Paris, and titles and gewgaws from "home".
Shall a knighthood frighten Asia when she comes with the hate of hell?
Will the motor-launch race the torpedo, or the motor-car outspeed the shell?

Keep the wealth you have won from the cities, spend the wealth you have won
on the land,
Save the floods that run into the ocean – save the floods that sink into the sand!
Make farms fit to live on, build workshops and technical schools for your sons;
Keep the wealth of the land in Australia – make your own cloth, machines, and
guns!

Clear out the Calico Jimmy, the nigger, the Chow, and his pals;
Be your foreword for years: Irrigation. Make a network of lakes and canals!
See that your daughters have children, and see that Australia is home,
And so be prepared, a strong nation, for the storm that most surely must come.

Henry Lawson

Ballad Of The Drover

Across the stony ridges,
Across the rolling plain,
Young Harry Dale, the drover,
Comes riding home again.
And well his stock-horse bears him,
And light of heart is he,
And stoutly his old pack-horse
Is trotting by his knee.

Up Queensland way with cattle
He travelled regions vast;
And many months have vanished
Since home-folk saw him last.
He hums a song of someone
He hopes to marry soon;
And hobble-chains and camp-ware
Keep jingling to the tune.

Beyond the hazy dado
Against the lower skies
And yon blue line of ranges
The homestead station lies.
And thitherward the drover
Jogs through the lazy noon,
While hobble-chains and camp-ware
Are jingling to a tune.

An hour has filled the heavens
With storm-clouds inky black;
At times the lightning trickles
Around the drover's track;
But Harry pushes onward,
His horses' strength he tries,
In hope to reach the river
Before the flood shall rise.

The thunder from above him
Goes rolling o'er the plain;
And down on thirsty pastures

In torrents falls the rain.
And every creek and gully
Sends forth its little flood,
Till the river runs a banker,
All stained with yellow mud.

Now Harry speaks to Rover,
The best dog on the plains,
And to his hardy horses,
And strokes their shaggy manes;
'We've breasted bigger rivers
When floods were at their height
Nor shall this gutter stop us
From getting home to-night!'

The thunder growls a warning,
The ghastly lightnings gleam,
As the drover turns his horses
To swim the fatal stream.
But, oh! the flood runs stronger
Than e'er it ran before;
The saddle-horse is failing,
And only half-way o'er!

When flashes next the lightning,
The flood's grey breast is blank,
And a cattle dog and pack-horse
Are struggling up the bank.
But in the lonely homestead
The girl will wait in vain -
He'll never pass the stations
In charge of stock again.

The faithful dog a moment
Sits panting on the bank,
And then swims through the current
To where his master sank.
And round and round in circles
He fights with failing strength,
Till, borne down by the waters,
The old dog sinks at length.

Across the flooded lowlands
And slopes of sodden loam
The pack-horse struggles onward,
To take dumb tidings home.
And mud-stained, wet, and weary,
Through ranges dark goes he;
While hobble-chains and tinware
Are sounding eerily.

The floods are in the ocean,
The stream is clear again,
And now a verdant carpet
Is stretched across the plain.
But someone's eyes are saddened,
And someone's heart still bleeds
In sorrow for the drover
Who sleeps among the reeds.

Henry Lawson

Barta

Wide solemn eyes that question me,
Wee hand that pats my head—
Where only two have stroked before,
And both of them are dead.
'Ah, poo-ah Daddy mine,' she says,
With wondrous sympathy—
Oh, baby girl, you don't know how
You break the heart in me!
Let friends and kinsfolk work their worst,
And the world say what it will,
Your baby arms go round my neck—
I'm your own Daddy still!
And you kiss me and I kiss you,
Fresh kisses frank and free—
Ah, baby girl, you don't know how
You break the heart in me!

I dreamed when I was good that when
The snow showed in my hair,
A household angel in her teens
Would flit about my chair,
To comfort me as I grew old;
But that shall never be—
Ah, baby girl, you don't know how
You break the heart in me!

But one shall love me while I live
And soothe my troubled head,
And never hear an unkind word
Of me when I am dead.
Her eyes shall light to hear my name
Howe'er disgraced it be—
Ah, baby girl, you don't know how
You help the heart in me!

Henry Lawson

Beaten Back

BEATEN back in sad dejection,
After years of weary toil
On that burning hot selection
Where the drought has gorged his spoil.

All in vain 'gainst him, the vulture,
I have battled without rest—
In the van of agriculture,
Marching out into the West.

Now the eagle-hawks are feeding
On my perished stock that reek
Where the water-holes receding
Long had left the burning creek.

I must labour without pity—
I the pick and spade must wield
In the streetways of the city
Or upon another's field!

Can it be my reason's rocking,
For I feel a burning hate
For the God who, only mocking,
Sent the prayed-for rain too late?

Pour, ye mocking rains, and rattle
On the bare, brown, grassless plain,
On the shrivelled hides of cattle
That shall ne'er want grass again!

Rush, ye yellow floods, to Murray,
Over thirsty creek-banks foam;
And o'er all, ye black clouds, hurry;
Ye can bring not back my home!

Henry Lawson

Because My Father's One

It was the King of Virland –
O he was angry then –
That rode to crush rebellion
With twenty thousand men.
His enemies he scattered
And hanged on every side,
Because their creed was rapine,
Their cause was greed and pride.

They searched for Outlaw Eric,
They hunted everywhere –
(Most honest of the rebels
If aught was honest there).
King Hertzberg swore to hang him,
But, when the day was done,
They had not found the Outlaw,
But found his little son.

He had not seen his father,
Nor knew where he had gone;
And someone asked him, thoughtless,
Which side himself was on,
And straightway he made answer –
They found he answered true –
'My father is a rebel,
And I'm a rebel too.'

King Hertzberg, he dismounted,
And kindly bent his head:
'Now, why are you a rebel,
My little man?' he said.
The boy nor paused nor faltered,
But stood like Eric's son,
And answered Hertzberg simply –
'Because my father's one.'

And then they promised all things,
Dear to his heart, I ween –
They promised they would make him

The first page to the queen,
With princesses for playmates –
But, nay, it would not do –
'My father is a rebel,
And I'm a rebel too!'

King Hertzberg sank beside him
And rested on one knee.
'I would my royal children
As loyal were!' said he.
'Go, seek and tell your father
That he and his go free,
And if his wrongs be real
Then let him come to me.

'And let him come with plain words,
With plain words in daylight,
And ride not with armed rebels
And outlaws in the night.
And let him not misjudge me –
For to all that is untrue,
And wherever Wrong's the ruler,
I am a rebel too.

Henry Lawson

Before We Were Married

BLACKSOIL PLAINS were grey soil, grey soil in the drought.
Fifteen years away, and five hundred miles out;
Swag and bag and billy carried all our care
Before we were married, and I wish that I were there.

River banks were grassy—grassy in the bends,
Running through the land where mateship never ends;
We belled the lazy fishing lines and droned the time away
Before we were married, and I wish it were to-day.

Working down the telegraph—winters' gales and rains
Cross the tumbled scenery of Marlborough "plains",
Beach and bluff and cook's tent—and the cook was a "cow"
Before we were married, but I wish that it was now.

The rolling road to Melbourne, and grey-eyed girl in fur—
One arm to a stanchion—and one round her;
Seat abaft the skylight when the moon had set—
Before she was married, and I wish it wasn't yet.

Henry Lawson

Ben Boyd's Tower

Ben Boyd's Tower is watching—
Watching o'er the sea;
Ben Boyd's Tower is waiting
For her and me.

We do not know the day,
We do not know the hour,
But we know that we shall meet
By Ben Boyd's Tower.

Moonlight peoples Boyd Tower,
Mystic are its walls;
Lightly dance the lovers
In its haunted halls.

Ben Boyd's Tower is watching—
Watching o'er the foam;
Ben Boyd's Tower is waiting
Till the "Wanderer" comes home.

O! he lay above us—
High above the surf—
Finger-nails and toe-caps
Digging in the turf.

We do not know the day,
We do not know the hour,
But Two and Two shall meet again
By Ben Boyd's Tower.

There's an ancient dame in Eden—
Basket on her arm—
And she goes down the Main Street
From the old, old farm.

Hood drawn on her forehead—
Withered dame and grey—
She never looks on Boyd Tower
Out across the Bay.

Bright eyes in the ballroom,
Coquetting with two,
Just for love of mischief,
As a girl will do.
A quarrel in the bar-room—
All within the hour—
And four men rode from Boyd Town
To Ben Boyd's Tower.

Henry Lawson

Ben Duggan

Jack Denver died on Talbragar when Christmas Eve began,
And there was sorrow round the place, for Denver was a man;
Jack Denver's wife bowed down her head -- her daughter's grief was wild,
And big Ben Duggan by the bed stood sobbing like a child.
But big Ben Duggan saddled up, and galloped fast and far,
To raise the longest funeral ever seen on Talbragar.

By station home
And shearing shed
Ben Duggan cried, `Jack Denver's dead!
Roll up at Talbragar!'

He borrowed horses here and there, and rode all Christmas Eve,
And scarcely paused a moment's time the mournful news to leave;
He rode by lonely huts and farms, and when the day was done
He turned his panting horse's head and rode to Ross's Run.
No bushman in a single day had ridden half so far
Since Johnson brought the doctor to his wife at Talbragar.

By diggers' camps
Ben Duggan sped --
At each he cried, `Jack Denver's dead!
Roll up at Talbragar!'

That night he passed the humpies of the splitters on the ridge,
And roused the bullock-drivers camped at Belinfante's Bridge;
And as he climbed the ridge again the moon shone on the rise;
The soft white moonbeams glistened in the tears that filled his eyes;
He dashed the rebel drops away -- for blinding things they are --
But 'twas his best and truest friend who died on Talbragar.

At Blackman's Run
Before the dawn,
Ben Duggan cried, `Poor Denver's gone!
Roll up at Talbragar!'

At all the shanties round the place they'd heard his horse's tramp,
He took the track to Wilson's Luck, and told the diggers' camp;

But in the gorge by Deadman's Gap the mountain shades were black,
And there a newly-fallen tree was lying on the track --
He saw too late, and then he heard the swift hoof's sudden jar,
And big Ben Duggan ne'er again rode home to Talbragar.

`The wretch is drunk,
And Denver's dead --
A burning shame!' the people said
Next day at Talbragar.

For thirty miles round Talbragar the boys rolled up in strength,
And Denver had a funeral a good long mile in length;
Round Denver's grave that Christmas day rough bushmen's eyes were dim --
The western bushmen knew the way to bury dead like him;
But some returning homeward found, by light of moon and star,
Ben Duggan dying in the rocks, five miles from Talbragar.

They knelt around,
He raised his head
And faintly gasped, `Jack Denver's dead,
Roll up at Talbragar!'

But one short hour before he died he woke to understand,
They told him, when he asked them, that the funeral was `grand';
And then there came into his eyes a strange victorious light,
He smiled on them in triumph, and his great soul took its flight.
And still the careless bushmen tell by tent and shanty bar
How Duggan raised a funeral years back on Talbragar.

And far and wide
When Duggan died,
The bushmen of the western side
Rode in to Talbragar.

Henry Lawson

Bill And Jim Fall Out

Bill and Jim are mates no longer—they would scorn the name of mate—
Those two bushmen hate each other with a soul-consuming hate;
Yet erstwhile they were as brothers should be (tho' they never will):
Ne'er were mates to one another half so true as Jim and Bill.
Bill was one of those who have to argue every day or die—
Though, of course, he swore 'twas Jim who always itched to argufy.
They would, on most abstract subjects, contradict each other flat
And at times in lurid language—they were mates in spite of that.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Henry Lawson

Billy Of Queensland

"Queensland," he heads his letters—that's all:
The date, and the month, and the year in brief;
He often sends me a cheerful scrawl,
With an undertone of ancient grief.
The first seems familiar, but might have changed,
As often the writing of wanderers will;
He seems all over the world to have ranged,
And he signs himself William, or Billy, or Bill.

He might have been an old mate of mine—
A shearer, or one of the station hands.
(There were some of 'em died, who drop me a line,
Signing other names, and in other hands.
There was one who carried his swag with me
On the western tracks, when the world was young,
And now he is spouting democracy
In another land with another tongue.)

He cheers me up like an old mate, quite,
And swears at times like an old mate, too;
(Perhaps he knows that I never write
Except to say that I'm going to).
He says he is tired of telling lies
For a Blank he knows for a Gory Scamp—
But—I note the tone where the sunset dies
On the Outside Track or the cattle camp.

Who are you, Billy? But never mind—
Come to think of it, I forgot—
There were so many in days behind,
And all so true that it matters not.
It may be out in the Mulga scrub,
In the southern seas, or a London street—
(I hope it's close to a bar or pub)
But I have a feeling that we shall meet.

Henry Lawson

Billys 'square Affair'

Long Bill, the captain of the push, was tired of his estate,
And wished to change his life and win the love of something 'straight';
'Twas rumour'd that the Gory B.'s had heard Long Bill declare
That he would turn respectable and wed a 'square affair.'
He craved the kiss of innocence; his spirit longed to rise;
The 'Crimson Streak,' his faithful 'piece,' grew hateful in his eyes;
(And though, in her entirety, the Crimson Streak 'was there,'
I grieve to state the Crimson Streak was not a 'square affair.')

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Henry Lawson

Black Bonnet

A day of seeming innocence,
A glorious sun and sky,
And, just above my picket fence,
Black Bonnet passing by.
In knitted gloves and quaint old dress,
Without a spot or smirch,
Her worn face lit with peacefulness,
Old Granny goes to church.

Her hair is richly white, like milk,
That long ago was fair --
And glossy still the old black silk
She keeps for "chapel wear";
Her bonnet, of a bygone style,
That long has passed away,
She must have kept a weary while
Just as it is to-day.

The parasol of days gone by --
Old days that seemed the best --
The hymn and prayer books carried high
Against her warm, thin breast;
As she had clasped -- come smiles come tears,
Come hardship, aye, and worse --
On market days, through faded years,
The slender household purse.

Although the road is rough and steep,
She takes it with a will,
For, since she hushed her first to sleep
Her way has been uphill.
Instinctively I bare my head
(A sinful one, alas!)
Whene'er I see, by church bells led,
Brave Old Black Bonnet pass.

For she has known the cold and heat
And dangers of the Track:
Has fought bush-fires to save the wheat

And little home Out Back.
By barren creeks the Bushman loves,
By stockyard, hut, and pen,
The withered hands in those old gloves
Have done the work of men.

.....

They called it "Service" long ago
When Granny yet was young,
And in the chapel, sweet and low,
As girls her daughters sung.
And when in church she bends her head
(But not as others do)
She sees her loved ones, and her dead
And hears their voices too.

Fair as the Saxons in her youth,
Not forward, and not shy;
And strong in healthy life and truth
As after years went by:
She often laughed with sinners vain,
Yet passed from faith to sight --
God gave her beauty back again
The more her hair grew white.

She came out in the Early Days,
(Green seas, and blue -- and grey) --
The village fair, and English ways,
Seemed worlds and worlds away.
She fought the haunting loneliness
Where brooding gum trees stood;
And won through sickness and distress
As Englishwomen could.

.....

By verdant swath and ivied wall
The congregation's seen --
White nothings where the shadows fall,
Black blots against the green.
The dull, suburban people meet

And buzz in little groups,
While down the white steps to the street
A quaint old figure stoops.

And then along my picket fence
Where staring wallflowers grow --
World-wise Old Age, and Common-sense! --
Black Bonnet, nodding slow.
But not alone; for on each side
A little dot attends
In snowy frock and sash of pride,
And these are Granny's friends.

To them her mind is clear and bright,
Her old ideas are new;
They know her "real talk" is right,
Her "fairy talk" is true.
And they converse as grown-ups may,
When all the news is told;
The one so wisely young to-day,
The two so wisely old.

At home, with dinner waiting there,
She smooths her hair and face,
And puts her bonnet by with care
And dons a cap of lace.
The table minds its p's and q's
Lest one perchance be hit
By some rare dart which is a part
Of her old-fashioned wit.

.....

Her son and son's wife are asleep,
She puts her apron on --
The quiet house is hers to keep,
With all the youngsters gone.
There's scarce a sound of dish on dish
Or cup slipped into cup,
When left alone, as is her wish,
Black Bonnet "washes up."

Henry Lawson

Bonnie New South Wales

It surely cannot be too soon, and never is too late,
It tones with all Australia's tune to praise one's native State,
And so I bring an old refrain from days of posts and rails,
And lift the good old words again, for Sunny New South Wales.
She bore me on her tented fields, and wore my youth away,
And little gold of all she yields repays my toil to-day;
By track and camp and bushman's hut—by streets where courage fails—
I've sung for all Australia, but my heart's in New South Wales.

The waratah and wattle there in all their glory grow—
And if they bloom on hills elsewhere, I'm not supposed to know,
The tales that other States may tell—I never hear the tales!
For I, her son, have sinned as well as Bonnie New South Wales.

I only know her heart is good to sweetheart and to mate,
And pregnant with our nationhood from Sunset to the Gate;
I only know her sons sail home on every ship that sails,
Though round the world ten times they roam from dear old New South Wales.

Henry Lawson

Booth's Drum [1]

They were "ratty" they were hooted by the meanest and the least,
When they woke the Drum of Glory long ago in London East.
They were often mobbed by hoodlums—they were few, but unafraid—
And their Lassies were insulted, but they banged the drum—and prayed.
Prayed in public for the sinners, prayed in private for release,
Till they saved some brawny lumpers—then they banged the drum in peace.
(Saved some prize-fighter and burglars)—and they banged the drum in peace.
Booth's Drum.

He was hook-nosed, he was "scrawny,"
He was nothing of a Don.
And his business ways seemed Yiddish,
And his speeches "kid"—or kiddish;
And we doubted his "convictions"—
But his drum is going on.

Oh, they drummed it ever onward with old Blood-and-Fire unfurled,
And they drummed it ever outward to the corners of the world.
Till they banged the drum in Greenland and they banged in Ispahan,
And they banged it round to India and China and Japan.
And they banged it through the Islands where each seasoned Son of Rum
Took them for new-fangled Jim Jams when he heard the Army Drum.
(For a bran' new brand of Horrors, when he saw the Army come.)
So they banged it in the desert, and they banged in the snow—
They'd have banged the Drum to Mecca! with the shadow of a "show."
(But Mohammed cut their heads off, so they had to let it go.)

Somewhere in the early eighties they had banged the drum to Bourke,
Where the job of fighting Satan was white-hot and dusty work.
Oh, the Local Lass was withered in the heat that bakes and glares,
And we sent her food and firewood but took small heed of her prayers.
We were blasphemous and beery, we were free from Creed or Care,
Till they sent their prettiest Lassies—and they broke our centre there.
So that, moderately sober, we could stand to hear them sing—
And we'd chaff their Testifiers, and throw quids into the ring.
(Never less than bobs or "dollars"—sometimes quids into the ring.)

They have "stormed" our sinful cities—banged for all that they were worth—
From Port Darwin to Port Melbourne, and from Sydney round to Perth.
We'd no need for them (or woman) when we were all right and well,

But they took us out of prison, and they took us out of Hell.
And they helped our fallen sisters who went down for such as we,
And our widows and our orphans in distress and poverty.
And neglected wives and children of the worst of us that be;
And they made us fit for Glory—or another Glorious Spree.
(So I rather think there's something that is up to you or me.)

Oh! the Blindness of the Future!—Ah, we never reckoned much
That they'd beat the quids we gave them into bayonets and such.
That the coin would be devoted, when our world was looking blue,
To another kind of orphan—wife, or child, or widow too.
But the times have changed a sudden, and the past is very dim;
They Have Found a Real Devil, and They're Going After Him.
(With a Bible and a Rifle they are going after him.)

For the old Salvation Army, and their Country, and their King,
They are marching to the trenches, shouting, "Comrades! Let us Sing!"
They'll find foreign "Army" soldiers here and there and everywhere,
Who will speak their tongue and help them. And they'll surely breathe a prayer
For the Spy—before they shoot him; and another when he's still.
And they're going to "fire a volley" in the Land of Kaiser Bill.
But, when all is done and quiet—as before they march away—
They will kneel about their banner, saying "Brethren. Let us pray."

They have long used army rank-terms, and oh, say what it shall be,
When a few come back the real thing, and when one comes back V.C.!
They will bang the drum at Crow's Nest, they will bang it on "the Shore,"
They will bang the drum in Kent-street as they never banged before.
And At Last they'll frighten Satan from the Mansion and the Slum—
He'll have never heard till that time such a Banging of the Drum.

He was lonely with his thousands,
Lonely in his household too,
For his children had deserted,
And his captains, not a few.
He was old and white and feeble
And his sight was nearly gone,
And he "could not see his people,"
But his drum is rolling on.
Booth's Drum.

Henry Lawson

Borderland

I am back from up the country -- very sorry that I went --
Seeking for the Southern poets' land whereon to pitch my tent;
I have lost a lot of idols, which were broken on the track --
Burnt a lot of fancy verses, and I'm glad that I am back.
Further out may be the pleasant scenes of which our poets boast,
But I think the country's rather more inviting round the coast --
Anyway, I'll stay at present at a boarding-house in town
Drinking beer and lemon-squashes, taking baths and cooling down.

Sunny plains! Great Scot! -- those burning wastes of barren soil and sand
With their everlasting fences stretching out across the land!
Desolation where the crow is! Desert! where the eagle flies,
Paddocks where the lunny bullock starts and stares with reddened eyes;
Where, in clouds of dust enveloped, roasted bullock-drivers creep
Slowly past the sun-dried shepherd dragged behind his crawling sheep.
Stunted "peak" of granite gleaming, glaring! like a molten mass
Turned, from some infernal furnace, on a plain devoid of grass.

Miles and miles of thirsty gutters -- strings of muddy waterholes
In the place of "shining rivers" (walled by cliffs and forest boles).
"Range!" of ridgs, gullies, ridges, barren! where the madden'd flies --
Fiercer than the plagues of Egypt -- swarm about your blighted eyes!
Bush! where there is no horizon! where the buried bushman sees
Nothing. Nothing! but the maddening sameness of the stunted trees!
Lonely hut where drought's eternal -- suffocating atmosphere --
Where the God forgottcn hatter dreams of city-life and beer.

Treacherous tracks that trap the stranger, endless roads that gleam and glare,
Dark and evil-looking gullies -- hiding secrets here and there!
Dull, dumb flats and stony "rises," where the bullocks sweat and bake,
And the sinister "gohanna," and the lizard, and the snake.
Land of day and night -- no morning freshness, and no afternoon,
For the great, white sun in rising brings with him the heat of noon.
Dismal country for the exile, when the shades begin to fall
From the sad, heart-breaking sunset, to the new-chum, worst of all.

Dreary land in rainy weather, with the endless clouds that drift
O'er the bushman like a blanket that the Lord will never lift --
Dismal land when it is raining -- growl of floods and oh! the "woosh"

Of the rain and wind together on the dark bed of the bush --
Ghastly fires in lonely humpies where the granite rocks are pil'd
On the rain-swept wildernesses that are wildest of the wild.

Land where gaunt and haggard women live alone and work like men,
Till their husbands, gone a-droving, will return to them again --
Homes of men! if homes had ever such a God-forgotten place,
Where the wild selector's children fly before a stranger's face.
Home of tragedy applauded by the dingoes' dismal yell,
Heaven of the shanty-keeper -- fitting fiend for such a hell --
And the wallaroos and wombats, and, of course, the "curlew's call" --
And the lone sundowner tramping ever onward thro' it all!

I am back from up the country -- up the country where I went
Seeking for the Southern poets' land whereon to pitch my tent;
I have left a lot of broken idols out along the track,
Burnt a lot of fancy verses -- and I'm glad that I am back --
I believe the Southern poet's dream will not be realised
Till the plains are irrigated and the land is humanised.
I intend to stay at present -- as I said before -- in town
Drinking beer and lemon-squashes -- taking baths and cooling down.

Henry Lawson

Bound For The Lord-Knows-Where

'Where are you going with your horse and bike,
And the townsfolk still at rest?
Where are you going, with your swag and pack,
And the night still in the West?
Your clothes are worn, and your cheques are gone,
But your eyes are free from care?"
"We're bushmen down for a spree in town,
And we're bound for the Lord-knows-where,
Old chap—we're bound for the Lord-knows-where."

(There are great dark scrubs in the Lord-knows-where,
Where they fight it out alone,
There are wide wide plains in the Lord-knows-where,
Where a man's soul is his own.
There is healthy work, there is healthy rest,
There is peace from self-torture there,
And the glorious freedom from paltriness!
And they're bound for the Lord-knows-where.)

"Now, where are you going in your Sunday suit,
And a bag for your second best?
Now where are you going with your chest of tools,
And the old togs in the chest?
With your six clean shirts and a pound of 'weed',
And enough for a third-class fare?"
"Oh! I'll be afloat by the very next boat,
And I'm bound for the Lord-knows-where,
Old chap—I'm bound for the Lord-knows-where."

(There are wide wide seas to the Lord-knows-where,
Where a man might have a spell,
The things turn up in the Lord-knows-where that
We waited for too well.
There's a stranger land in the Lord-knows-where,
And a show for the stranger there.
There is war and quake more work to make,
And he's bound for the Lord-knows-where.)

"Now where are you going with your Gladstone bag,

With your shirt-case and valise?
Now where are you going with your cap and shoes,
And your looks of joyful peace?
Now where are you going with your money belts,
And your drafts on the first bank there?"
"We have made a hit,' or 'we've made a bit,'
And we're bound for the Lord-knows-where,
Old chap—we're bound for the Lord-knows-where."

(There are sinful ports in the Lord-knows-where,
There are marvellous sights to see,
There are high old games in the Lord-knows-where,
That were known to you and me.
There is love and music, and life and light from
The Heads to "Lester" Square,
There is more than space for their high young hearts
There is safety or danger there,
And they'll come back wild, or they'll come back tamed
When they've been to the Lord-knows-where.)

"Now where am I going with my whisky flask,
And with little else beside?
Now where am I going with my second shirt,
To wear while the first is dried?
I have marred my name, and I've lost my fame,
But my hope's in good repair.
There are lies about, there are warrants out—
And I'm bound for the Lord-knows-where,
Old Chap—and I'm bound for the Lord-knows-where."

(There's a rise and fall of the sloping decks,
That is good for a soul in pain;
There's the drowsy rest on the sunlight sea
Till your strength comes back again.
Oh, the wild mad spirit is hypnotized,
And nerves are tranquil there,
And the past is hushed in forgetfulness,
On the road to the Lord-knows-where.)

Henry Lawson

Bourke

I've followed all my tracks and ways, from old bark school to Leicester Square,
I've been right back to boyhood's days, and found no light or pleasure there.
But every dream and every track—and there were many that I knew—
They all lead on, or they lead back, to Bourke in Ninety-one, and two.
No sign that green grass ever grew in scrubs that blazed beneath the sun;
The plains were dust in Ninety-two, that baked to bricks in Ninety-one.
On glaring iron-roofs of Bourke, the scorching, blinding sandstorms blew,
And there was nothing beautiful in Ninety-one and Ninety-two.

Save grit and generosity of hearts that broke and healed again—
The hottest drought that ever blazed could never parch the hearts of men;
And they were men in spite of all, and they were straight, and they were true,
The hat went round at trouble's call, in Ninety-one and Ninety-two.

They drank, when all is said and done, they gambled, and their speech was
rough—
You'd only need to say of one—'He was my mate!' that was enough.
To hint a bushman was not white, nor to his Union straight and true,
Would mean a long and bloody fight in Ninety-one and Ninety-two.

The yard behind the Shearers' Arms was reckoned best of battle grounds,
And there in peace and quietness they fought their ten or fifteen rounds;
And then they washed the blood away, and then shook hands, as strong men
do—
And washed away the bitterness—in Ninety-one and Ninety-two.

The Army on the grand old creek was mighty in those days gone by,
For they had sisters who could shriek, and brothers who could testify;
And by the muddy waterholes, they tackled sin till all was blue—
They took our bobs and damned our souls in Ninety-one and Ninety-two.

By shanty bars and shearing sheds, they took their toll and did their work—
But now and then they lost their heads, and raved of hotter hells than Bourke:
The only message from the dead that ever came distinctly through—
Was—'Send my overcoat to hell'—it came to Bourke in Ninety-two.

I know they drank, and fought, and died—some fighting fiends on blazing
tracks—
I don't remember that they lied, or crawled behind each others' backs;

I don't remember that they loafed, or left a mate to battle through—
Ah! men knew how to stick to men in Ninety-one and Ninety-two.

They're scattered wide and scattered far—by fan-like tracks, north, east, and
west—

The cruel New Australian star drew off the bravest and the best.

The Cape and Klondyke claim their bones, the streets of London damned a few,
And jingo-cursed Australia mourns for Ninety-one and Ninety-two.

For ever westward in the land, Australians hear—and will not heed—

The murmur of the board-room, and the sure and stealthy steps of greed—

Bourke was a fortress on the track! and garrisons were grim and true

To hold the spoilers from Out Back, in Ninety-one and Ninety-two.

I hear it in the ridges lone, and in the dread drought-stricken wild—

I hear at times a woman's moan—the whimper of a hungry child:

And—let the cynics say the word: 'a godless gang, a drunken crew'—

But these were things I never heard in Ninety-one and Ninety-two.

They say that things have changed out there, and western towns have altered
quite:

They don't know how to drink and swear, they've half forgotten how to fight;

They've almost lost the strength to trust, the faith in mateship to be true—

The heart that grew in drought and dust in Ninety-one and Ninety-two.

We've learned to laugh the bitter laugh since then—we've travelled, you and I;

The sneaking little paragraph, the dirty trick, the whispered lie

Are known to us—the little men—whose souls are rotten through and through—

We called them scabs and crawlers then, in Ninety-one and Ninety-two.

And could I roll the summers back, or bring the dead time on again;

Or from the grave or world-wide track, call back to Bourke the vanished men,

With mind content I'd go to sleep, and leave those mates to judge me true,

And leave my name to Bourke to keep—the Bourke of Ninety-one and two.

Henry Lawson

Break O' Day

You love me, you say, and I think you do,
But I know so many who don't,
And how can I say I'll be true to you
When I know very well that I won't?
I have journeyed long and my goal is far,
I love, but I cannot bide,
For as sure as rises the morning star,
With the break of day I'll ride.
I was doomed to ruin or doomed to mar
The home wherever I stay,
But I'll think of you as the morning star
And they call me Break o' Day.

They well might have named me the Fall o' Night,
For drear is the track I mark,
But I love fair girls and I love the light,
For I and my tribe were dark.
You may love me dear, for a day and night,
You may cast your life aside;
But as sure as the morning star shines bright
With the break of day I'll ride.

There was never a lover so proud and kind,
There was never a friend so true;
But the song of my life I have left behind
In the heart of a girl like you.
There was never so deep or cruel a wrong
In the land that is far away,
There was never so bitter a broken heart
That rode at the break of day.

God bless you, dear, with your red-gold hair
And your pitying eyes of grey—
Oh! my heart forbids that a star so fair
Should be marred by the Break o' Day.
Live on, my girl, as the girl you are,
Be a good and a true man's bride,
For as sure as beckons the evening star
With the fall o' night I'll ride.

I was born to ruin or born to mar
The home wherever I light.
Oh! I wish that you were the Evening Star
And that I were the Fall o' Night.

Henry Lawson

Brighten's Sister-In-Law [or The Carrier's Story]

AT A POINT where the old road crosses
The river, and turns to the right,
I'd camped with the team; and the hosses
Was all fixed up for the night.
I'd been to the town to carry
A load to the Cudgegong;
And I'd taken the youngster, Harry,
On a trip as I'd promis'd him long.

I had seven more, and another
That died at the age of three;
But they all took arter the mother,
And Harry took arter me.
And from the tiniest laddie
'Twas always his fondest dream
To go on the roads with his daddy,
And help him to drive the team.

He was bright at the school and clever,
The best of the youngsters there;
And the teacher said there was never
A lad that promised so fair.
And I half forgot life's battle,
An' its long, hard-beaten road,
In the sound of the youngster's prattle
From his perch on top o' the load.

An' when he was tired o' ridin'
I'd lift him down for a walk,
And he'd say, at my silence chidin',
"Now, daddy tell me some talk."
And oft by the camp-fire sittin',
When the bush was round us wild,
I'd yarn by the hour, forgittin'
That Harry was only a child.

But to-day he'd been strange and quiet,
An' lay on the chaff-bags still;
An' though he'd bravely deny it,

I know'd as the boy was ill.
He said he was "only dosey",
In his queer old-fashioned way;
And I fixed him up warm an' cosey
In the hammock under the dray.

I fried him some eggs and some bakin'
Which I couldn't git him to touch;
And it set my heart a-achin
For he'd always eaten so much.
I wandered about half silly,
And thought that my heart would stop;
And the tea got cold in the billy,
For I couldn't 'a' tasted a drop.

I'd seen the same sickness of'en;
An' my spirits began to droop,
For as soon as he started coughin'
I know'd as he'd got the croup.
'Twas fifteen mile to the river;
An' Gulgong was twenty-five;
An' I thought 'twas a chance if ever
I got him back home alive.

The thought of the loss was horrid
If the young 'un was taken away;
And I went and leaned my forehead
Against the tire o' the dray.
And sudden I started cryin',
And sobbed like a woman too;
For I felt that the boy was dyin',
And I didn't know what to do.

All helpless I was, and lonely;
But I thought 'twas a coward's cry
To call on the Saviour only
When trouble or death was nigh.
But after a while I lifted
My eyes to the steely blue
Of the sky where somethin' drifted
Like a great white cockatoo.

An' nearer it came, and nearer,
Right down to the branch of the tree;
And it seemed when its shape grew clearer,
Like the form of a woman to me.
For a moment it seemed to tarry,
An' p'int away up the road,
An' then seemed pintin' at Harry,
A-coughin' beneath the load.

I don't want ter arger; there's chances
The vision was only the sky,
Or the smoke outlin'd on the branches,
Or a lonely cloud on high.
But I says 'twas a message from glory;
I sees as yer goin' to chaff;
Just wait till I done my story,
An' laugh if yer want to laugh.

Away went the vision flyin';
Up into the blue it went;
And I stood for a minute tryin'
To think what its comin' meant.
When it flashed on my brain like lightnin';
An' arter I thought it strange
I'd almost forgotten old Brighten
Who lived on the top of the range.

He lived on a small selection,
Or used ter live there I know'd;
An' it lay in a west direction,
'Bout five miles back from the road.
I harnessed the horses quicker
Than ever I'd taken 'em out;
An' they must 'a' thought me in liquor,
For the way as I shov'd 'em about.

I'd allers bin fond o' sneerin'
An' laughin' at women's ways;
I could see in their lives, I'm fearin',
But little as called for praise;
But now when I thought he'd smother
With croup in the lonely wild,

Good God, how I longed for a mother
To save the life of my child!

I seed in a vision each minit
The youngster nursed back into life;
An' the hand of a woman was in it;
An' the woman was Brighten's wife.
There's times when not knowin' a bliss is,
As Harry's school-teacher 'ud say:
And I didn't know Brighten's missis
Had gone to the town that day.

In a moment I'd lifted Harry
To the bags on top of the load;
And I flogged the weary horses
Along on the dusty road.
But ev'rything seem'd to hinder
My hopes when I reached the hut;
For there wasn't a light in the winder;
And both o' the doors was shut.

That moment my heart got hurted;
An' I felt it for many a day;
For I thought that the place was deserted,
An' Brighten had gone away.
But I called; and the door was opened,
An' I saw that the hut was alight;
It hadn't shone in the winders;
For the moon was shinin' bright.

An' there in the door, with a candle,
I saw old Brighten stand,
With his fingers grasping the handle
Of a pistol he held in his hand.
"If any one moves," he shouted,
"I'll fire if I've got to hang!"
For the moment he never doubted
'Twas a visit from Gard'ner's gang.

I didn't move in a hurry;
For a man in a fright shoots quick.
But I told him he needn't flurry,

'Twas only a youngster sick.
"Stan' back," said old Brighten, snatchin'
An' shuttin' the door in his fright;
"It's typhoid, maybe, he's catchin':
An' I can't have him here to-night."

But a woman's voice shouted, "What is it?"
I'd never seen her before;
She was only there on a visit;
'Twas Brighten's sister-in-law.
An' nothin' seemed able to frighten
This woman so pale an' thin;
She pushed from the door old Brighten,
An' carried the youngster in.

She'd bin hospital nurse in the city,
I heard, and had got the sack
For havin' a little pity,
An' exposin' a doctor quack;
Some trumped-up stories agin her
All over the town was belled;
An' in spite of the fightin' in her
They got her at last expelled.

An', talkin' o' fight, I'm fearin'
There's sudden fightin' in store
For the first as speaks in my hearin'
'Gin Brighten's sister-in-law;
For, in spite of old Brighten's cussin',
She got the youngster to bed;
And arter a week's good nussin'
She won him back from the dead.

And then I began to hanker
For a speech to tell her the joy
I felt in my heart, and to thank her
For givin' me back my boy.
The mornin' I left old Brighten's,
While puttin' the horses to,
I puzzled my brains to make up
A speech as I thought would do.

She lifted the youngster and kissed him,
And helped him into the dray;
An' I thought of how I'd 'a' missed him,
If he'd only been taken away.
An', "Mum," I sez; "I oughter—"
An' to finish the speech I tries;
But all on a sudden the water
Kem bubblin' up to my eyes.

An' down'ard, like water-courses,
The tears began to tear;
An' I had to swear at the horses
To hide my weakness from her.
But the tears was only human
An' they seem'd to ha' done some good;
For she pressed my hand like a woman,
An' said that she understood.

Henry Lawson

Broken Axletree

On the Track of Grand Endeavour, on the long track out to Bourke,
Past the Turn-Back, and past Howlong, and the pub at Sudden Jerk,
Past old Bullock-Yoke and Bog Flat, and the "Pinch" at Stick-to-me,
Lies the camp that we have christened—christened "Broken Axletree."
We were young and strong and fearless, we had not seen Mount Despair,
And the West was to be conquered, and we meant to do our share;
We were far away from cities, and were fairly off the spree
When we camped at Cart Wheel River with a broken axletree.

Oh, the pub at Devil's Crossing! and the woman that he sent!
And the hell for which we bartered horse and trap and "traps" and tent!
And the black "Since Then"—the chances that we never more may see—
Ah! the two lives that were ruined for a broken axletree!

"Fate" is but a Cart Wheel River, placed to test us by the Lord,
And the Star of Live Forever shines beyond At Blacksmith's Ford!
Shun all fatalists and "isms"—heed no talk of "destiny"!
Ride a race for life to Blacksmith's with your broken axletree.

Henry Lawson

Brother, You'll Take My Hand

NOT to the sober and staid,
Leading a quiet life,
But to men whose paths are laid
Ever through storm and strife—
Here is a song from me,
Sent to the tragic West,
Message of sympathy
To the hearts that can never rest.
This is the song I send
Out to the Western land—
Sinner, and martyr, and friend,
Brother! you'll take my hand.

To you who have loved and lost;
To you whose souls have died
Cursing a fair false face
And the red warm lips that lied;
Loved with a boyish love,
With a love that was pure and true,
That set one woman above
The world that was known to you;
Eating your heart out now
Alone on a waste of sand—
I have been played with too.
Brother! you'll take my hand.

To you who were loved too well,
And who cast that love aside
When your vanity was replete
And your passion was satisfied—
Haunted now day and night;
Haunted in every place
By the eyes of a suicide,
Set in a dead girl's face.
Crouched in your misery
Out where the stars are grand—
O I am haunted too!
Brother! you'll take my hand.

To you who had wealth or name,
Friends, love, and a future fair,
And who sacrificed all for drink
And the nights of Leicester Square:
In by the drunken town,
Out on the barren tramp,
Pacing it up and down
Alone by the listening camp;
Crouched in your agony,
Hiding your eyes with your hand—
I had the ball at my feet—
Brother! I understand.

There is a light for all;
Hold up your head and live!
Forgive the woman who wronged,
And the dead girl will forgive.
Brood not, but work for good;
Work in the world of men—
Strong is the man who fell
And rose from the depths again.
There shall be peace for you,
Sinners, who win the land.
I would fight upward too—
Brother! you'll take my hand.

Henry Lawson

Bush Hay

The stamp of Scotland is on his face,
But he sailed to the South a lad,
And he does not think of the black bleak hills
And the bitter hard youth he had;
He thinks of a nearer and dearer past
In the bright land far away,
When the teams went up and the teams came down,
In the days when they made bush hay.

The fare was rough and the bush was grim
In the "years of his pilgrimage",
But he gained the strength that is still with him
In his hale, late middle age.
He thinks of the girl at the halfway inn
They use as a barn to-day—
Oh, she was a dumpling and he was thin
In the days when they made bush hay.

The ration teams to the Bathurst Plains
Were often a fortnight full.
And they branched all ways in the early days
And back to the port with wool.
They watched for the lights of old Cobb & Co.
That flashed to the West away,
When drivers drove six on a twelve-mile stage
In the days when they made bush hay.

He has made enough, and he's sold his claim,
And he goes by the morning train,
From the gold-field town in the sultry West
To his home by the sea again,
Where a bustling old body's expecting him
Whose hair is scarcely grey,
And she was the girl of the halfway house
In the days when they made bush hay.

Henry Lawson

But What's The Use

But what's the use of writing 'bush'—
Though editors demand it—
For city folk, and farming folk,
Can never understand it.
They're blind to what the bushman sees
The best with eyes shut tightest,
Out where the sun is hottest and
The stars are most and brightest.
The crows at sunrise flopping round
Where some poor life has run down;
The pair of emus trotting from
The lonely tank at sundown,
Their snaky heads well up, and eyes
Well out for man's manoeuvres,
And feathers bobbing round behind
Like fringes round improvers.

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

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

The joy and hope the swagman feels
Returning, after shearing,
Or after six months' tramp Out Back,
He strikes the final clearing.

His weary spirit breathes again,
His aching legs seem limber
When to the East across the plain
He spots the Darling Timber!

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

Henry Lawson

By Hut, Homestead And Shearing Shed,

By hut, homestead and shearing shed,
By railroad, coach and track-
By lonely graves where rest the dead,
Up-Country and Out-Back:
To where beneath the clustered stars
The dreamy plains expand-

My home lies wide a thousand miles
In Never-Never Land.
It lies beyond the farming belt,
Wide wastes of scrub and plain,
A blazing desert in the drought,
A lake-land after rain;
To the skyline sweeps the waving grass,
Or whirls the scorching sand-
A phantom land, a mystic realm!
The Never-Never Land.

Where lone Mount Desolation lies
Mounts Dreadful and Despair-
'Tis lost beneath the rainless skies
In hopeless deserts there;
It spreads nor-west by No-Man's Land
Where clouds are seldom seen
To where the cattle stations lie
Three hundred miles between.

The drovers of the Great Stock Routes
The strange Gulf country know
Where, travelling from the southern droughts,
The big lean bullocks go;
And camped by night where plains lie wide,
Like some old ocean's bed,
The watchmen in the starlight ride
Round fifteen hundred head.

Lest in the city I forget
True mateship after all,
My water-bag and billy yet

Are hanging on the wall;
And I, to save my soul again,
Would tramp to sunsets grand
With sad-eyed mates across the plain
In Never-Never Land.

Henry Lawson

Callaghan's Hotel

There's the same old coaching stable that was used by Cobb and Co.,
And the yard the coaches stood in more than sixty years ago;
And the public-private parlour, where they serve the passing swell,
Was the shoeing forge and smithy up at Callaghan's Hotel.
There's the same old walls and woodwork that our fathers built to last,
And the same old doors and wainscot and the windows of the past;
And the same old nooks and corners where the Jim-Jams used to dwell;
But the Fantods dance no longer up at Callaghan's Hotel.

There are memories of old days that were red instead of blue;
In the time of "Dick the Devil" and of other devils too;
But perhaps they went to Heaven and are angels, doing well—
They were always open-hearted up at Callaghan's Hotel.

Then the new chum, broken-hearted, and with boots all broken too,
Got another pair of bluchers, and a quid to see him through;
And the old chum got a bottle, who was down and suffering Hell;—
And no tucker-bag went empty out of Callaghan's Hotel.

And I sit and think in sorrow of the nights that I have seen,
When we fought with chairs and bottles for the orange and the green;
For the peace of poor old Ireland, till they rang the breakfast bell—
And the honour of Old England, up at Callaghan's Hotel.

Henry Lawson

Cameron's Heart

The diggings were just in their glory when Alister Cameron came,
With recommendations, he told me, from friends and a parson `at hame';
He read me his recommendations -- he called them a part of his plant --
The first one was signed by an Elder, the other by Cameron's aunt.
The meenister called him `ungodly -- a stray frae the fauld o' the Lord',
And his aunt set him down as a spendthrift, `a rebel at hame and abroad'.

He got drunk now and then and he gambled (such heroes are often the same);
That's all they could say in connection with Alister Cameron's name.
He was straight and he stuck to his country
and spoke with respect of his kirk;
He did his full share of the cooking, and more than his share of the work.
And many a poor devil then, when his strength and his money were spent,
Was sure of a lecture -- and tucker, and a shakedown in Cameron's tent.

He shunned all the girls in the camp,
and they said he was proof to the dart --
That nothing but whisky and gaming had ever a place in his heart;
He carried a packet about him, well hid, but I saw it at last,
And -- well, 'tis a very old story -- the story of Cameron's past:
A ring and a sprig o' white heather, a letter or two and a curl,
A bit of a worn silver chain, and the portrait of Cameron's girl.

.

It chanced in the first of the Sixties that Ally and I and McKean
Were sinking a shaft on Munderoorin, near Fosberry's puddle-machine.
The bucket we used was a big one, and rather a weight when 'twas full,
Though Alister wound it up easy, for he had the strength of a bull.
He hinted at heart-disease often, but, setting his fancy apart,
I always believed there was nothing the matter with Cameron's heart.

One day I was working below -- I was filling the bucket with clay,
When Alister cried, `Pack it on, mon! we ought to be bottomed to-day.'
He wound, and the bucket rose steady and swift to the surface until
It reached the first log on the top,
where it suddenly stopped, and hung still.
I knew what was up in a moment when Cameron shouted to me:

`Climb up for your life by the footholes.
I'LL STICK TAE TH' HAUN'LE -- OR DEE!

And those were the last words he uttered.
He groaned, for I heard him quite plain --
There's nothing so awful as that when it's wrung from a workman in pain.
The strength of despair was upon me; I started, and scarcely drew breath,
But climbed to the top for my life in the fear of a terrible death.
And there, with his waist on the handle, I saw the dead form of my mate,
And over the shaft hung the bucket, suspended by Cameron's weight.

I wonder did Alister think of the scenes in the distance so dim,
When Death at the windlass that morning took cruel advantage of him?
He knew if the bucket rushed down it would murder or cripple his mate --
His hand on the iron was closed with a grip that was stronger than Fate;
He thought of my danger, not his, when he felt in his bosom the smart,
And stuck to the handle in spite of the Finger of Death on his heart.

Henry Lawson

Captain Von Esson Of The "sebastopol"

Of his beauty, or stature, or colour of hair I hadn't the slightest hint,
But he comes to me as a little man, with a scrubby beard and a squint,
With a heart somewhere if it wasn't there, and an Irish terrier nose,
With a bark or a yelp for his friends and his crew, and a bull-dog grip for his foes.

The Japs had taken a permanent fort at the price of ten thousand sons,
And they shelled the ships in the harbour there with their landed naval guns.
Through sand bags laid on the upper deck, the shells went through with a
whelt—
And some (because of ballistic curve) out under the armoured belt.

Till each was sunk that the Russians left—while the buildings reeled with the
shock,
Save the last of the Russian ships of war—the Sebastopol—in dock.
And this is the reason—told in a line—why there is a tale to tell:
The Sebastopol had a man for boss, and a crew that knew it well.

He roused them out from the dens ashore, and they didn't engage in prayer,
For dear men pray when the fight is done, and there wasn't a cheap man there.
He rooted the dock-hands out, when crouched, in deadly fear of the Jap,
But they stood in greater immediate fear of Von Esson's squint and his yap.

She groped her way in the gathering dusk, out under the time-dulled din,
And nothing was heard save a whispered word, and the laugh of a Russian Finn.
He took her out from the harbour trap, where the shells came down like hail,
For a chance to fight for the Wrong or Right round under the "Lizard's Tail."

My fathers came from the North, my friends, when there was a world to win;
And something hints of the Northern Wolf in the laugh of a Russian Finn;
A sailor he was, with gorilla arms, and a mighty, hairy chest—
'T was a laugh of love for his captain man, and a laugh of hate for the rest.

There is neither the time nor the space to tell of the deeds that those Russians
did;
Three days on the toppling lid of hell, like an ill-made cauldron's lid.
The breathless pause ere the flashlight fell where the creeping foe was hid,
The blood-streaked decks, and the grunt or yell, when the stricken slipped and
slid.

The faces white in a sudden light, and the ghostly dying grin,
The great relief when the silence broke, and they revelled in Hell's own din.
The blinding flash and the stunning crash—strained ears—strained eyes—dry
skin—
The short sharp yelp of that captain man, and—the laugh of the Russian Finn.

'T was not for Cause nor for Liberty, Religion, or Glory, or Land—
He fought for love of a captain man he could crush with his big right hand.
Till five torpedo boats round her lay, in the mud, the slush, and the ooze—
She sent them down for the Old Greek Church, with the whole of their monkey
crews.

But the last one gave her a last thrust home, and left by a friendly tide,
She lay like a man on his elbow raised, with a hand on her wounded side.
She was left to be called for later on, with a solid bank beneath—
The Japs were short of torpedo boats, and—they'd had enough of her teeth.

But, safe from the landed naval guns, and the last torpedo boat,
Von Esson worked with his squint and bark till he got his vessel afloat.
He'd marked her a grave with his level eye where the open sea was fair,
And he steered her out to the deep water, and he grimly sank her there.

(It's oh, for a chance when a man of men must live the living lie—
For a chance to live as a man might live, and die as a man might die!
When one is a slave to paltry things in a life that never can change,
It's oh! for a cause, and a decent gun, and a hundred rounds, and the range!)

The boats slipped in in the gathering dusk, and under the time-dulled din,
And vanished from us to a yap of command, and the grunt of a Russian Finn.
But somewhere down in a seamen's den (maybe, perhaps within hail),
There's a drunken rabble of sailor men, and a Finn that tells a tale.

Henry Lawson

Caricatures

There are writers great and writers small
And writers on the spree;
And writers short and writers tall,
And bards of low degree.

There are artists small and artist great,
With lines both bold and free –
It takes a Low to illustrate
Us bards of low degree.

Henry Lawson

Charley Turner

When Charley sang of Polan's Death
'Twould stir your heart and soul an'
you'd grip your seat and hold your breath.
And want to fight for Polan'

Henry Lawson

Cherry- Tree Inn

The rafters are open to sun, moon, and star,
Thistles and nettles grow high in the bar --
The chimneys are crumbling, the log fires are dead,
And green mosses spring from the hearthstone instead.
The voices are silent, the bustle and din,
For the railroad hath ruined the Cherry-tree Inn.

Save the glimmer of stars, or the moon's pallid streams,
And the sounds of the 'possums that camp on the beams,
The bar-room is dark and the stable is still,
For the coach comes no more over Cherry-tree Hill.
No riders push on through the darkness to win
The rest and the comfort of Cherry-tree Inn.

I drift from my theme, for my memory strays
To the carrying, digging, and bushranging days --
Far back to the seasons that I love the best,
When a stream of wild diggers rushed into the west,
But the `rushes' grew feeble, and sluggish, and thin,
Till scarcely a swagman passed Cherry-tree Inn.

Do you think, my old mate (if it's thinking you be),
Of the days when you tramped to the goldfields with me?
Do you think of the day of our thirty-mile tramp,
When never a fire could we light on the camp,
And, weary and footsore and drenched to the skin,
We tramped through the darkness to Cherry-tree Inn?

Then I had a sweetheart and you had a wife,
And Johnny was more to his mother than life;
But we solemnly swore, ere that evening was done,
That we'd never return till our fortunes were won.
Next morning to harvests of folly and sin
We tramped o'er the ranges from Cherry-tree Inn.

.

The years have gone over with many a change,

And there comes an old swagman from over the range,
And faint 'neath the weight of his rain-sodden load,
He suddenly thinks of the inn by the road.
He tramps through the darkness the shelter to win,
And reaches the ruins of Cherry-tree Inn.

Henry Lawson

Cinderella

A lonely child with toil o'ertaxed,
Sits Cinderella by the fire;
Her limbs in weariness relaxed,
And in her eyes a sad desire.
But soon a wreath is on her brow;
A bonny prince has claimed her hand;
And she's as proud and happy now
As any lady in the land.

Ah, then to see a fairy bright,
And to have granted what you would,
You only needed to do right,
You only needed to be good.
But this was in the days of old,
When man to wiser folk would bow;
And though you were as good as gold
You'd never see a fairy now.

And yet they must have managed well
If only half the tales are true,
The wondrous tales the writers tell
Of what the fairies used to do.
But now the world has grown so wise
It does without the fairies' aid;
And who can find a prince that tries
The shoe upon a beggar maid?

It must have been a better time
When virtue always met its due,
And "wicked men who dealt in crime"
Were punished by the fairies, too.
But never more they'll come again
To give the good what they desire;
And Cinderellas wait in vain,
And weep beside the kitchen fire.

Henry Lawson

Clinging Back

When you see a man come walking down through George Street loose and free,
Suit of saddle tweed and soft shirt, and a belt and cabbagetree,
With the careless swing and carriage, and the confidence you lack—
There is freedom in Australia! he's a man that's clinging back.

Clingin' back,

Holdin' back,

To the old things and the bold things clinging back.

When you see a woman riding as I saw one ride to-day
Down the street to Milson's Ferry on a big, upstanding bay,
With her body gently swaying to the horse-shoes' click-a-clack,
You might lift your hat (with caution)—she's a girl who's clinging back.

Clinging back,

Swinging back.

To the old things and the bold things clinging back.

When you see a rich man pulling on the harbour in a boat,
With the motor launches racing till they scarcely seem to float,
And the little skiff is lifting to his muscles tense and slack,
You say "Go it" to a sane man. He's a man that's clinging back.

Clinging back,

Swinging back,

To the old things and the bold things clinging back.

When you see two lovers strolling, arm-in-arm—or round the waist,
And they never seem to loiter, and they never seem to haste,
But indifferent to others take the rock or bush-hid track
You be sure about their future, they're a pair that's clinging back.

Clinging back,

Holding back,

To the old things and the bold things clinging back.

I, a weary picture writer in a time that's cruel plain,
Have been clinging all too sadly to what shall not come again,
To what shall not come and should not! for the silver's mostly black,
And the gold a dull red copper by the springs where I held back.

Clinging back,

Holding back,

To the old things and the cold things clinging back.

But if you should read a writer sending truths home every time,
While his every "point" goes ringing like the grandest prose in rhyme,
Though he writes the people's grammar, and he spreads the people's "clack,"
He is stronger than the Public! and he'll jerk the mad world back.
Yank it back,
Hold it back,
For the love of little children hold it back.

Henry Lawson

Constable M'carty's Investigations

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

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

He would walk the streets at midnight, when the storm-king raised his banner,
Walk without his old umbrella,—wave his arms above his head:
Or he'd fold them tight, and mutter, in a wild, disjointed manner,
While the town was wrapped in slumber and he should have been in bed.
Said the constable-on-duty: 'Shure, Oi wonther phwat his trade is?'
And the constable would watch him from the shadow of a wall,
But he never picked a pocket, and he ne'er accosted ladies,
And the constable was puzzled what to make of him at all.

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

Mac. had noticed that the lodger did a mighty lot of smoking,
And could 'stow away a long 'un,' never winking, so he could ;
And M'Carty once, at midnight, came upon the lodger poking

Round about suspicious alleys where the common houses stood.
Yet the constable had seen him in a class above suspicion—
Seen him welcomed with effusion by a dozen 'toney gents'—
Seen him driving in the buggy of a rising politician
Thro' the gateway of the member's toney private residence.

And the constable, off duty, had observed the lodger slipping
Down a lane to where the river opened on the ocean wide,
Where he'd stand for hours gazing at the distant anchor'd shipping,
But he never took his coat off, so it wasn't suicide.
For the constable had noticed that a man who's filled with loathing
For his selfish fellow-creatures and the evil things that be,
Will, for some mysterious reason, shed a portion of his clothing,
Ere he takes his first and final plunge into eternity.

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

Then the constable, retreating, scratched his head and muttered 'Sorra
'Wan of me can undershtand it. But Oi'll keep me oi on him,
'Divil take him and his tantrums; he's a lunatic, begorra!
'Or, if he was up to mischief, he'd be sure to douse the glim.'
But M'Carty wasn't easy, for he had a vague suspicion
That a 'skame' was being plotted; and he thought the matter down
Till his mind was pretty certain that the business was sedition,
And the man, in league with others, sought to overthrow the Crown.

But, in spite of observation, Mac received no information
And was forced to stay inactive, being puzzled for a charge.
That the lodger was a madman seemed the only explanation,
Tho' the house would scarcely harbour such a lunatic at large.
His appearance failed to warrant apprehension as a vagrant,
Tho' 'twas getting very shabby, as the constable could see;
But M'Carty in the meantime hoped to catch him in a flagrant
Breach of peace, or the intention to commit a felony.

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

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

'Twas a simple explanation, though M'Carty didn't know it,
Which with half his penetration he might easily have seen,
For the object of his dangerous suspicions was a poet,
Who was not so widely famous as he thought he should have been.
And the constable grew thinner, till one morning, 'little dhramin'
'Av the sword of revelation that was leapin' from its sheath,'
He alighted on some verses in the columns of the Frayman,
'Wid the christian name an' surname av the lodger onderneath!'

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

Henry Lawson

Coomera

THERE'S a pretty little story with a touch of moonlit glory
Comes from Beenleigh on the Logan, but we don't know if it's true;
For we scarcely dare to credit ev'rything they say who edit
Those unhappy country papers 'twixt the ocean and Barcoo.

'Twas the man who owned the wherry at the first Coomera ferry
Who was sitting cold and lonely while he counted out his tin;
When the cloudy curtain lifting let the moonlight on a drifting
Boat, that floated down the river with a pallid form therein.

And they say that Sergeant Carey (with the man who ran the ferry),
Started down to save the body from the cruel heartless sea,
And in spite of wind and water, soon they reached the barque and caught her;
And they tied the boat behind them while they wondered "who was he?"

O the moon shone bright as ever as they towed him up the river,
And they found within the pocket that was nearest to his breast—
Just an antidote for sorrow, that would tide him o'er the morrow—
(Flask of Brandy); but we'd better draw the curtain o'er the rest.

Yet, in case the point's too finely drawn (we know we joke divinely),
And the reader fails to see it with a magnifying glass,
We will say the man who floated, while the moonlight o'er him gloated,
Was not dead and gone to heaven—he was only drunk, alas!
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Henry Lawson

Corny Bill

His old clay pipe stuck in his mouth,
His hat pushed from his brow,
His dress best fitted for the South --
I think I see him now;
And when the city streets are still,
And sleep upon me comes,
I often dream that me an' Bill
Are humpin' of our drums.

I mind the time when first I came
A stranger to the land;
And I was stumped, an' sick, an' lame
When Bill took me in hand.
Old Bill was what a chap would call
A friend in poverty,
And he was very kind to all,
And very good to me.

We'd camp beneath the lonely trees
And sit beside the blaze,
A-nursin' of our wearied knees,
A-smokin' of our clays.
Or when we'd journeyed damp an' far,
An' clouds were in the skies,
We'd camp in some old shanty bar,
And sit a-tellin' lies.

Though time had writ upon his brow
And rubbed away his curls,
He always was -- an' may be now --
A favourite with the girls;
I've heard bush-wimmin scream an' squall --
I've see'd 'em laugh until
They could not do their work at all,
Because of Corny Bill.

He was the jolliest old pup
As ever you did see,

And often at some bush kick-up
They'd make old Bill M.C.
He'd make them dance and sing all night,
He'd make the music hum,
But he'd be gone at mornin' light
A-humpin' of his drum.

Though joys of which the poet rhymes
Was not for Bill an' me,
I think we had some good old times
Out on the wallaby.
I took a wife and left off rum,
An' camped beneath a roof;
But Bill preferred to hump his drum
A-paddin' of the hoof.

The lazy, idle loafers what
In toney houses camp
Would call old Bill a drunken sot,
A loafer, or a tramp;
But if the dead should ever dance --
As poets say they will --
I think I'd rather take my chance
Along of Corny Bill.

His long life's-day is nearly o'er,
Its shades begin to fall;
He soon must mount his bluey for
The last long tramp of all;
I trust that when, in bush an' town,
He's lived and learnt his fill,
They'll let the golden slip-rails down
For poor old Corny Bill.

Henry Lawson

Cromwell

They took dead Cromwell from his grave,
And stuck his head on high;
The Merry Monarch and his men,
They laughed as they passed by
The common people cheered and jeered,
To England's deep disgrace—
The crowds who'd ne'er have dared to look
Live Cromwell in the face.

He came in England's direst need
With law and fire and sword,
He thrashed her enemies at home
And crushed her foes abroad;
He kept his word by sea and land,
His parliament he schooled,
He made the nations understand
A Man in England ruled!

Van Tromp, with twice the English ships,
And flushed by victory—
A great broom to his masthead bound—
Set sail to sweep the sea.
But England's ruler was a man
Who needed lots of room—
So Blake soon lowered the Dutchman's tone,
And smashed the Dutchman's broom.

He sent a bill to Tuscany
For sixty thousand pounds,
For wrong done to his subjects there,
And merchants in her bounds.
He sent by Debt Collector Blake,
And—you need but be told
That, by the Duke of Tuscany
That bill was paid in gold.

To pirate ports in Africa
He sent a message grim
To have each captured Englishman

Delivered up to him;
And every ship and cargo's worth,
And every boat and gun—
And this—all this, as Dickens says—
“Was gloriously done.”

They'd tortured English prisoners
Who'd sailed the Spanish Main;
So Cromwell sent a little bill
By Admiral Blake to Spain.
To keep his hand in, by the way.
He whipped the Portuguese;
And he made it safe for English ships
To sail the Spanish seas.

The Protestants in Southern lands
Had long been sore oppressed;
They sent their earnest prayers to Noll
To have their wrongs redressed.
He sent a message to the Powers,
In which he told them flat,
All men must praise God as they chose,
Or he would see to that.

And, when he'd hanged the fools at home
And settled foreign rows,
He found the time to potter round
Amongst his pigs and cows.
Of private rows he never spoke,
That grand old Ironsides.
They said a father's strong heart broke
When Cromwell's daughter died.

(They dragged his body from its grave,
His head stuck on a pole,
They threw his wife's and daughter's bones
Into a rubbish hole
To rot with those of two who'd lived
And fought for England's sake,
And each one in his own brave way—
Great Pym, and Admiral Blake.)

From Charles to Charles, throughout the world
Old England's name was high,
And that's a thing no Royalist
Could ever yet deny.
Long shameful years have passed since then,
In spite of England's boast—
But Englishmen were Englishmen,
While Cromwell carved the roast.

And, in my country's hour of need—
For it shall surely come,
While run by fools who'll never heed
The beating of the drum.
While baffled by the fools at home,
And threatened from the sea—
Lord! send a man like Oliver—
And let me live to see.

Henry Lawson

Cypher Seven [07]

The nearer camp fires lighted,
The distant beacons bright—
The horsemen on the skyline
Are closing in to-night!
My brothers, Oh my brothers!
Lie down and rest at last—
The Years of Reparation
Have rushed upon us fast.

Oh, ride and ride, you riders,
Who rode ere I was born,
While blink-and-blink the star-dust
That blinks before the morn.
And glow and glow you camp fires,
And flash, you beacons bright!
They're riding round the wronged ones
And riding round the right!

My brothers, Oh my brothers!
With dried and haggard eyes,
In gaol for just blows stricken—
In gaol for women's lies!
Lie down and pace no longer
But bathe your eyes in tears
For Years of Retribution
That shall be seven years!

Their lovers and believers!
Their sweethearts, sisters, wives,
Their daughters, sons and mothers,
The true friends of their lives!
Hold up your heads and firmly
Look down the Crooked Seers
For Years of Justifying
That shall be seven years.

Inventors, artists, poets—
Exiled or driven mad,
Sweated, sneered at, slandered,

And driven to the bad—
Take up the tools of genius,
Freed from all paltry fears,
For Seasons of Repayment
That shall be seven years.

Oh, ride and ride, you riders,
That rode when I was born
Against a ghastly skyline
Beneath a storm-cloud torn!
I watched you through my childhood,
I saw the whip and spur,
No spy's glass could detect you
But I knew what you were!

Oh, ride and ride, my riders,
And flash my birth star bright!
The youth I never dreamed of
Is with me here to-night!
The hearing, strength and vision,
The will to do and dare,
The love I ever longed for
Is round me everywhere.

Dead Friendship—ah! Dead Friendship,
Rise up and breathe again—
I ride my rounds re-honoured
Along the ranks of men.
My old mates, Oh! my old mates,
Who fought the cur and brute—
My horsemen from the skyline
Are drawn up to salute!

My Dead Love, Oh! my Dead Love,
Who died for love of me—
Who sleeps amongst the poets
Since five years sobbed the sea.
Since five years blackened honour
And cramped and warped the pen—
There's glory to your spirit
The laurel leaves again.

My enemies, the causeless
Of vicious mysteries,
Or mad with jealous madness—
Or for the crawler's fees—
Fear ye my Cypher Seven!
For seven years to run—
The number set by Heaven
When Heaven's will is done.

So ride and ride, my riders,
And ride for men and me,
Ride close round madness yonder
And blackest treachery!
Oh! ride round little children
That sleep through all and smile!—
At daybreak I will lead you—
Now I must rest awhile.

Henry Lawson

Dan Wasn't Thrown From His Horse

THEY SAY he was thrown and run over,
But that is sheer nonsense, of course:
I taught him to ride when a kiddy,
And Dan wasn't thrown from his horse.

The horse that Dan rode was a devil—
The kind of a brute I despise,
With nasty white eyelashes fringing
A pair of red, sinister eyes.

And a queerly-shaped spot on his forehead,
Where I put a conical ball
The day that he murdered Dan Denver,
The pluckiest rider of all.

'Twas after the races were over
And Duggan (a Talbragar man)
And two of the Denvers, and Barney
Were trying a gallop with Dan.

Dan's horse on a sudden got vicious,
And reared up an' plunged in the race,
Then threw back his head, hitting Dan like
A sledge-hammer, full in the face.

Dan stopped and got down, stood a moment,
Then fell to the ground like a stone,
And died about ten minutes after;
But they're liars who say he was thrown.

Henry Lawson

Dan, The Wreck

Tall, and stout, and solid-looking,
Yet a wreck;
None would think Death's finger's hooking
Him from deck.
Cause of half the fun that's started --
'Hard-case' Dan --
Isn't like a broken-hearted,
Ruined man.

Walking-coat from tail to throat is
Frayed and greened --
Like a man whose other coat is
Being cleaned;
Gone for ever round the edging
Past repair --
Waistcoat pockets frayed with dredging
After 'sprats' no longer there.

Wearing summer boots in June, or
Slippers worn and old --
Like a man whose other shoon are
Getting soled.
Pants? They're far from being recent --
But, perhaps, I'd better not --
Says they are the only decent
Pair he's got.

And his hat, I am afraid, is
Troubling him --
Past all lifting to the ladies
By the brim.
But, although he'd hardly strike a
Girl, would Dan,
Yet he wears his wreckage like a
Gentleman!

Once -- no matter how the rest dressed --
Up or down --

Once, they say, he was the best-dressed
Man in town.
Must have been before I knew him --
Now you'd scarcely care to meet
And be noticed talking to him
In the street.

Drink the cause, and dissipation,
That is clear --
Maybe friend or kind relation
Cause of beer.
And the talking fool, who never
Reads or thinks,
Says, from hearsay: `Yes, he's clever;
But, you know, he drinks.'

Been an actor and a writer --
Doesn't whine --
Reckoned now the best reciter
In his line.
Takes the stage at times, and fills it --
'Princess May' or 'Waterloo'.
Raise a sneer! -- his first line kills it,
'Brings 'em', too.

Where he lives, or how, or wherefore
No one knows;
Lost his real friends, and therefore
Lost his foes.
Had, no doubt, his own romances --
Met his fate;
Tortured, doubtless, by the chances
And the luck that comes too late.

Now and then his boots are polished,
Collar clean,
And the worst grease stains abolished
By ammonia or benzine:
Hints of some attempt to shove him
From the taps,
Or of someone left to love him --
Sister, p'r'aps.

After all, he is a grafter,
Earns his cheer --
Keeps the room in roars of laughter
When he gets outside a beer.
Yarns that would fall flat from others
He can tell;
How he spent his `stuff', my brothers,
You know well.

Manner puts a man in mind of
Old club balls and evening dress,
Ugly with a handsome kind of
Ugliness.

.

One of those we say of often,
While hearts swell,
Standing sadly by the coffin:
'He looks well.'

.

We may be -- so goes a rumour --
Bad as Dan;
But we may not have the humour
Of the man;
Nor the sight -- well, deem it blindness,
As the general public do --
And the love of human kindness,
Or the GRIT to see it through!

Henry Lawson

Dawgs Of War

Comes the British bulldog first—solid as a log—
He's so ugly in repose that he's a handsome dog;
Full of mild benevolence as his years increase;
Silent as a china dog on the mantelpiece.

Rub his sides and point his nose,
Click your tongue and in he goes,
To the thick of Britain's foes—
Enemies behind him close—

(
Silence for a while
).

Comes a very different dog—tell him at a glance.
Clipped and trimmed and frilled all round. Dandy dog of France.
(Always was a dandy dog, no matter what his age)
Now his every hair and frill is stiff as wire with rage.

Rub his sides and point his nose,
Click your tongue and in he goes,
While behind him France's foes
Reel and surge and pack and close.

(
Silence for a while
.)

Next comes Belgium's market dog—hard to realise.
Go-cart dog and barrow dog—he's a great surprise.
Dog that never hurt a cat, did no person harm;
Friendly, kindly, round and fat as a "Johnny Darm."

Rub his sides and point his nose,
Click your tongue and in he goes,
At the flank of Belgium's foes
Who could not behind him close—

(
Silence for a while
).

Next comes Servia's mongrel pup—mongrel dawgs can fight;
Up or down, or down or up, whether wrong or right.
He was mad the other day—he is mad today,
Hustling round and raising dust in his backyard way.
Rub his sides and point his nose,
Click your tongue and in he goes,
'Twixt the legs of Servia's foes,
Biting tails and rearmost toes—
(
Silence for a while
.)

There are various terrier dawgs mixed up in the scrap,
Much too small for us to see, and too mad to yap.
Each one, on his frantic own—heard the row commence—
Tore with tooth and claw a hole in the backyard fence.
No one called, but in they go,
Dogs with many a nameless woe,
Tripping up their common foe—
(
Silence for a while
).

From the snows of Canada, dragging box and bale,
Comes the sledge-dog toiling on, sore-foot from the trail.
He'll be useful in the trench, when the nose is blue—
Winter dog that knows the French and the English too.
Rub his sides and point his nose,
Click your tongue and in he goes,
At his father's country's foes,
And his mother's country's foes.
(
Silence for a while
.)

See, in sunny Southern France a dog that runs by sight,
Lean and yellow, sharp of nose, long of leg and light,
Silent and bloodthirsty, too; Distance in his eyes,
Leaping high to gain his view, the Kangaroo Dog flies!

Rub his sides and point his nose,
Click your tongue and up he goes,
Lands amongst his country's foes—
And his country's country's foes;
While they sway and while they close—
(
Silence for a while
).

See across the early snow, far across the plain,
Where the clouds are grey and low and winter comes again;
By the sand-dune and the marsh—and forest black and dumb—
As dusky white as their winter's night, the Russian wolf-hounds come!
(
Silence for a while
.)

Henry Lawson

Divorced

TWO COUPLES are drifting the self-same way
(Men of the world know well)
From the ballroom glare as the night grows grey
(Men of the world can tell).
Many are round them who know, and knew,
But men of the world are blind;
That couple in front has nought to do
With the couple that comes behind.

The woman starts on her partner's arm,
For a reason he could not tell—
She trips and she laughs the Society laugh,
That men of the world know well.
If she laughs too suddenly, talks too fast,
We are deaf as well as blind—
'Twas only the ghosts of the girlish days
When she married the man behind.

He feels a pang where his heart had been
(For a reason he cannot tell).
A spasm that mars the cynical smile
That men of the world know well.
A spasm that's known in Society,
And by many men "out of the hunt".
'Tis only the ghosts of his boyish hopes
When he married the woman in front.

And the man in front, and the woman behind
(Oh, Society's smile and bow!)
They are too well-bred to ask even in thought
What has come to their partners now.
But the couples drift in Society's stream
To the kerb where the two cabs wait—
It was all because of what others had said,
And a word that was spoken too late.

Henry Lawson

Do You Think That I Do Not Know?

They say that I never have written of love,
As a writer of songs should do;
They say that I never could touch the strings
With a touch that is firm and true;
They say I know nothing of women and men
In the fields where Love's roses grow,
And they say I must write with a halting pen
Do you think that I do not know?

When the love-burst came, like an English Spring,
In days when our hair was brown,
And the hem of her skirt was a sacred thing
And her hair was an angel's crown.
The shock when another man touched her arm,
Where the dancers sat round in a row;
The hope and despair, and the false alarm
Do you think that I do not know?

By the arbour lights on the western farms,
You remember the question put,
While you held her warm in your quivering arms
And you trembled from head to foot.
The electric shock from her finger tips,
And the murmuring answer low,
The soft, shy yielding of warm red lips
Do you think that I do not know?

She was buried at Brighton, where Gordon sleeps,
When I was a world away;
And the sad old garden its secret keeps,
For nobody knows to-day.
She left a message for me to read,
Where the wild wide oceans flow;
Do you know how the heart of a man can bleed
Do you think that I do not know?

I stood by the grave where the dead girl lies,
When the sunlit scenes were fair,
And the white clouds high in the autumn skies,

And I answered the message there.
But the haunting words of the dead to me
Shall go wherever I go.
She lives in the Marriage that Might Have Been
Do you think that I do not know?

They sneer or scoff, and they pray or groan,
And the false friend plays his part.
Do you think that the blackguard who drinks alone
Knows aught of a pure girl's heart?
Knows aught of the first pure love of a boy
With his warm young blood aglow,
Knows aught of the thrill of the world-old joy
Do you think that I do not know?

They say that I never have written of love,
They say that my heart is such
That finer feelings are far above;
But a writer may know too much.
There are darkest depths in the brightest nights,
When the clustering stars hang low;
There are things it would break his strong heart to write
Do you think that I do not know?

Henry Lawson

Down The River

I'VE done with joys an' misery,
An' why should I repine?
There's no one knows the past but me
An' that ol' dog o' mine.
We camp an' walk an' camp an' walk,
An' find it fairly good;
He can do anything but talk,
An' he wouldn't if he could.

We sits an' thinks beside the fire,
With all the stars a-shine,
An' no one knows our thoughts but me
An' that there dog o' mine.
We has our Johnny-cake an' "scrag,"
An' finds 'em fairly good;
He can do anything but talk,
An' he wouldn't if he could.

He gets a 'possum now an' then,
I cooks it on the fire;
He has his water, me my tea—
What more could we desire?
He gets a rabbit when he likes,
We finds it pretty good;
He can do anything but talk,
An' he wouldn't if he could.

I has me smoke, he has his rest,
When sunset's gettin' dim;
An' if I do get drunk at times,
It's all the same to him.
So long's he's got me swag to mind,
He thinks that times is good;
He can do anything but talk,
An' he wouldn't if he could.

He gets his tucker from the cook,
For cook is good to him,
An' when I sobers up a bit,

He goes an' has a swim.
He likes the rivers where I fish,
An' all the world is good;
He can do anything but talk,
An' he wouldn't if he could.

Henry Lawson

Eureka

Roll up, Eureka's heroes, on that grand Old Rush afar,
For Lalor's gone to join you in the big camp where you are;
Roll up and give him welcome such as only diggers can,
For well he battled for the rights of miner and of Man.
In that bright golden country that lies beyond our sight,
The record of his honest life shall be his Miner's Right;
But many a bearded mouth shall twitch, and many a tear be shed,
And many a grey old digger sigh to hear that Lalor's dead.
Yet wipe your eyes, old fossickers, o'er worked-out fields that roam,
You need not weep at parting from a digger going home.
Now from the strange wild seasons past, the days of golden strife,
Now from the Roaring Fifties comes a scene from Lalor's life:
All gleaming white amid the shafts o'er gully, hill and flat
Again I see the tents that form the camp at Ballarat.
I hear the shovels and the picks, and all the air is rife
With the rattle of the cradles and the sounds of digger-life;
The clatter of the windlass-boles, as spinning round they go,
And then the signal to his mate, the digger's cry, "Below!"
From many a busy pointing-forge the sound of labour swells,
The tinkling of the anvils is as clear as silver bells.
I hear the broken English from the mouth of many a one
From every state and nation that is known beneath the sun;
The homely tongue of Scotland and the brogue of Ireland blend
With the dialects of England, right from Berwick to Lands End;
And to the busy concourse here the States have sent a part,
The land of gulches that has been immortalised by Harte;
The land where long from mining-camps the blue smoke upward curled;
The land that gave the "Partner" true and "Miss" unto the world;
The men from all the nations in the New World and the Old,
All side by side, like brethren here, are delving after gold.
But suddenly the warning cries are heard on every side
As closing in around the field, a ring of troopers ride,
Unlicensed diggers are the game--their class and want are sins,
And so with all its shameful scenes, the digger hunt begins.
The men are seized who are too poor the heavy tax to pay,
Chained man to man as convicts were, and dragged in gangs away.
Though in the eyes of many a man the menace scarce was hid,
The diggers' blood was slow to boil, but scalded when it did.

But now another match is lit that soon must fire the charge
"Roll up! Roll up!" the poignant cry awakes the evening air,
And angry faces surge like waves around the speakers there.
"What are our sins that we should be an outlawed class?" they say,
"Shall we stand by while mates are seized and dragged like lags away?
Shall insult be on insult heaped? Shall we let these things go?"
And with a roar of voices comes the diggers' answer--"No!"
The day has vanished from the scene, but not the air of night
Can cool the blood that, ebbing back, leaves brows in anger white.
Lo, from the roof of Bentley's Inn the flames are leaping high;
They write "Revenge!" in letters red across the smoke-dimmed sky.
"To arms! To arms!" the cry is out; "To arms and play your part;
For every pike upon a pole will find a tyrant's heart!"
Now Lalor comes to take the lead, the spirit does not lag,
And down the rough, wild diggers kneel beneath the Diggers' Flag;
Then, rising to their feet, they swear, while rugged hearts beat high,
To stand beside their leader and to conquer or to die!
Around Eureka's stockade now the shades of night close fast,
Three hundred sleep beside their arms, and thirty sleep their last.

About the streets of Melbourne town the sound of bells is borne
That call the citizens to prayer that fateful Sabbath morn;
But there upon Eureka's hill, a hundred miles away,
The diggers' forms lie white and still above the blood-stained clay.
The bells that toll the diggers' death might also ring a knell
For those few gallant soldiers, dead, who did their duty well.
The sight of murdered heroes is to hero-hearts a goad,
A thousand men are up in arms upon the Creswick road,
And wildest rumours in the air are flying up and down,
'Tis said the men of Ballarat will march on Melbourne town.
But not in vain those diggers died. Their comrades may rejoice,
For o'er the voice of tyranny is heard the people's voice;
It says: "Reform your rotten law, the diggers' wrongs make right,
Or else with them, our brothers now, we'll gather to the fight."

'Twas of such stuff the men were made who saw our nation born,
And such as Lalor were the men who led the vanguard on;
And like such men may we be found, with leaders such as they,
In the roll-up of Australians on our darkest, grandest day!

Henry Lawson

Eurunderee

There are scenes in the distance where beauty is not,
On the desolate flats where gaunt appletrees rot.
Where the brooding old ridge rises up to the breeze
From his dark lonely gullies of stringy-bark trees,
There are voice-haunted gaps, ever sullen and strange,
But Eurunderee lies like a gem in the range.

Still I see in my fancy the dark-green and blue
Of the box-covered hills where the five-corners grew;
And the rugged old sheoaks that sighed in the bend
O'er the lily-decked pools where the dark ridges end,
And the scrub-covered spurs running down from the Peak
To the deep grassy banks of Eurunderee Creek.

On the knolls where the vineyards and fruit-gardens are
There's a beauty that even the drought cannot mar;
For I noticed it oft, in the days that are lost,
As I trod on the siding where lingered the frost,
When the shadows of night from the gullies were gone
And the hills in the background were flushed by the dawn.

I was there in late years, but there's many a change
Where the Cudgegong River flows down through the range,
For the curse of the town with the railroad had come,
And the goldfields were dead. And the girl and the chum
And the old home were gone, yet the oaks seemed to speak
Of the hazy old days on Eurunderee Creek.

And I stood by that creek, ere the sunset grew cold,
When the leaves of the sheoaks are traced on the gold,
And I thought of old things, and I thought of old folks,
Till I sighed in my heart to the sigh of the oaks;
For the years waste away like the waters that leak
Through the pebbles and sand of Eurunderee Creek.

Henry Lawson

Every Man Should Have A Rifle

So I sit and write and ponder, while the house is deaf and dumb,
Seeing visions "over yonder" of the war I know must come.
In the corner - not a vision - but a sign for coming days
Stand a box of ammunition and a rifle in green baize.
And in this, the living present, let the word go through the land,
Every tradesman, clerk and peasant should have these two things at hand.

No - no ranting song is needed, and no meeting, flag or fuss -
In the future, still unheeded, shall the spirit come to us!
Without feathers, drum or riot on the day that is to be,
We shall march down, very quiet, to our stations by the sea.
While the bitter parties stifle every voice that warns of war,
Every man should own a rifle and have cartridges in store!

Henry Lawson

Everyone's Friend

"Nobody's enemy save his own"—
(What shall it be in the end?)—
Still by the nick-name he is known—
"Everyone's Friend."

"Nobody's Enemy" stands alone
While he has money to lend,
"Nobody's Enemy" holds his own,
"Everyone's Friend"

"Nobody's Enemy" down and out—
Game to the end—
And he mostly dies with no one about—
"Everyone's Friend."

Henry Lawson

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Henry Lawson

Faces In The Street

They lie, the men who tell us in a loud decisive tone
That want is here a stranger, and that misery's unknown;
For where the nearest suburb and the city proper meet
My window-sill is level with the faces in the street --
 Drifting past, drifting past,
 To the beat of weary feet --
While I sorrow for the owners of those faces in the street.

And cause I have to sorrow, in a land so young and fair,
To see upon those faces stamped the marks of Want and Care;
I look in vain for traces of the fresh and fair and sweet
In sallow, sunken faces that are drifting through the street --
 Drifting on, drifting on,
 To the scrape of restless feet;
I can sorrow for the owners of the faces in the street.

In hours before the dawning dims the starlight in the sky
The wan and weary faces first begin to trickle by,
Increasing as the moments hurry on with morning feet,
Till like a pallid river flow the faces in the street --
 Flowing in, flowing in,
 To the beat of hurried feet --
Ah! I sorrow for the owners of those faces in the street.

The human river dwindles when 'tis past the hour of eight,
Its waves go flowing faster in the fear of being late;
But slowly drag the moments, whilst beneath the dust and heat
The city grinds the owners of the faces in the street --
 Grinding body, grinding soul,
 Yielding scarce enough to eat --
Oh! I sorrow for the owners of the faces in the street.

And then the only faces till the sun is sinking down
Are those of outside toilers and the idlers of the town,
Save here and there a face that seems a stranger in the street,
Tells of the city's unemployed upon his weary beat --
 Drifting round, drifting round,
 To the tread of listless feet --

Ah! My heart aches for the owner of that sad face in the street.

And when the hours on lagging feet have slowly dragged away,
And sickly yellow gaslights rise to mock the going day,
Then flowing past my window like a tide in its retreat,
Again I see the pallid stream of faces in the street --
 Ebbing out, ebbing out,
 To the drag of tired feet,
While my heart is aching dumbly for the faces in the street.

And now all blurred and smirched with vice the day's sad pages end,
For while the short `large hours' toward the longer `small hours' trend,
With smiles that mock the wearer, and with words that half entreat,
Delilah pleads for custom at the corner of the street --
 Sinking down, sinking down,
 Battered wreck by tempests beat --
A dreadful, thankless trade is hers, that Woman of the Street.

But, ah! to dreader things than these our fair young city comes,
For in its heart are growing thick the filthy dens and slums,
Where human forms shall rot away in sties for swine unmeet,
And ghostly faces shall be seen unfit for any street --
 Rotting out, rotting out,
 For the lack of air and meat --
In dens of vice and horror that are hidden from the street.

I wonder would the apathy of wealthy men endure
Were all their windows level with the faces of the Poor?
Ah! Mammon's slaves, your knees shall knock, your hearts in terror beat,
When God demands a reason for the sorrows of the street,
 The wrong things and the bad things
 And the sad things that we meet
In the filthy lane and alley, and the cruel, heartless street.

I left the dreadful corner where the steps are never still,
And sought another window overlooking gorge and hill;
But when the night came dreary with the driving rain and sleet,
They haunted me -- the shadows of those faces in the street,
 Flitting by, flitting by,
 Flitting by with noiseless feet,
And with cheeks but little paler than the real ones in the street.

Once I cried: `Oh, God Almighty! if Thy might doth still endure,
Now show me in a vision for the wrongs of Earth a cure.'
And, lo! with shops all shuttered I beheld a city's street,
And in the warning distance heard the tramp of many feet,
 Coming near, coming near,
 To a drum's dull distant beat,
And soon I saw the army that was marching down the street.

Then, like a swollen river that has broken bank and wall,
The human flood came pouring with the red flags over all,
And kindled eyes all blazing bright with revolution's heat,
And flashing swords reflecting rigid faces in the street.
 Pouring on, pouring on,
 To a drum's loud threatening beat,
And the war-hymns and the cheering of the people in the street.

And so it must be while the world goes rolling round its course,
The warning pen shall write in vain, the warning voice grow hoarse,
But not until a city feels Red Revolution's feet
Shall its sad people miss awhile the terrors of the street --
 The dreadful everlasting strife
 For scarcely clothes and meat
In that pent track of living death -- the city's cruel street.

Henry Lawson

Fall In, My Men, Fall In

The short hour's halt is ended,
The red gone from the west,
The broken wheel is mended,
And the dead men laid to rest.
Three days have we retreated
The brave old Curse-and-Grin –
Outnumbered and defeated –
Fall in, my men, fall in.

Poor weary, hungry sinners,
Past caring and past fear,
The camp-fires of the winners
Are gleaming in the rear.
Each day their front advances,
Each day the same old din,
But freedom holds the chances –
Fall in, my men, fall in.

Despair's cold fingers searches
The sky is black ahead,
We leave in barns and churches
Our wounded and our dead.
Through cold and rain and darkness
And mire that clogs like sin,
In failure in its starkness –
Fall in, my men, fall in.

We go and know not whither,
Nor see the tracks we go –
A horseman gaunt shall tell us,
A rain-veiled light shall show.
By wood and swamp and mountain,
The long dark hours begin –
Before our fresh wounds stiffen –
Fall in, my men, fall in.

With old wounds dully aching –
Fall in, my men, fall in –
See yonder starlight breaking

Through rifts where storm clouds thin!
See yonder clear sky arching
The distant range upon?
I'll plan while we are marching –
Move on, my men - march on!

Henry Lawson

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Through cold and rain and darkness
And mire that clogs like sin,
In failure in its starkness –
Fall in, my men, fall in.

We go and know not whither,
Nor see the tracks we go –
A horseman gaunt shall tell us,
A rain-veiled light shall show.
By wood and swamp and mountain,
The long dark hours begin –
Before our fresh wounds stiffen –
Fall in, my men, fall in.

With old wounds dully aching –
Fall in, my men, fall in –
See yonder starlight breaking

Through rifts where storm clouds thin!
See yonder clear sky arching
The distant range upon?
I'll plan while we are marching –
Move on, my men - march on!

Henry Lawson

Fighting Hard

Rolling out to fight for England, singing songs across the sea;
Rolling North to fight for England, and to fight for you and me.
Fighting hard for France and England, where the storms of Death are hurled;
Fighting hard for Australasia and the honour of the World!

Fighting hard.

Fighting hard for Sunny Queensland—fighting for Bananaland,
Fighting hard for West Australia, and the mulga and the sand;
Fighting hard for Plain and Wool-Track, and the haze of western heat—
Fighting hard for South Australia and the bronze of Farrar's Wheat!

Fighting hard.

Fighting hard for fair Victoria, and the mountain and the glen;
(And the Memory of Eureka—there were other tyrants then),
For the glorious Gippsland forests and the World's great Singing Star—
For the irrigation channels where the cabbage gardens are—
Fighting hard.

Fighting hard for gale and earthquake, and the wind-swept ports between;
For the wild flax and manuka and the terraced hills of green.
Fighting hard for wooden homesteads, where the mighty kauris stand—
Fighting hard for fern and tussock!—Fighting hard for Maoriland!
Fighting hard.

Fighting hard for little Tassy, where the apple orchards grow;
(And the Northern Territory just to give the place a show),
Fighting hard for Home and Empire, while the Commonwealth prevails—
And, in spite of all her blunders, dying hard for New South Wales.
Dying hard.

Fighting for the Pride of Old Folk, and the people that you know;
And the girl you left behind you—(ah! the time is passing slow).
For the proud tears of a sister! come you back, or never come!
And the weary Elder Brother, looking after things at home—
Fighting Hard!
You Lucky Devils
!
Fighting hard.

Henry Lawson

For All The Land To See: A Song Of The Tools

THE CROSS-CUT and the crowbar cross, and hang them on the wall,
And make a greenhide rack to fit the wedges and the maul,
The "done" long-handled shovel and the thong-bound axe that fell,
The crowbar, pick-axe and the "throw"—the axe that morticed well.
The old patched tent and "fly", bag bunk and pillow of sugee,
The frying-pan and billy-can, for all the land to see.

The cross-cut, after pounds of files, is narrowed down and thin,
With here and there a tooth cut out as th' curve straightened in,
The axe close to the iron ground, the shovel to the shaft,
The handle from the first worn smooth with sweat and dust and graft.
The maul and wedges burred and split, spell bravest history—
These were the arms our fathers bore, for none but they to see.

Then look you round on all that is, on cities proud and fair,
And look you westward from the range—towns, farms and homesteads there.
Then hurry to a place you know lest you should be too late,
And clear the scrub some little space—small place, say—three-by eight.
A blackened post stump stands where four rough panels used to be
And there take off your panama where none but God might see.

Henry Lawson

For Australia

Now, with the wars of the world begun, they'll listen to you and me,
Now while the frightened nations run to the arms of democracy,
Now, when our blathering fools are scared, and the years have proved us right –
All unprovided and unprepared, the Outpost of the White!

"Get the people – no matter how," that is the way they rave,
Could a million paupers aid us now, or a tinpot squadron save?
The "loyal" drivel, the blatant boast are as shames that used to be –
Our fight shall be a fight for the coast, with the future for the sea!

We must turn our face to the only track that will take us through the worst –
Cable to charter that we lack, guns and cartridges first,
New machines that will make machines till our factories are complete –
Block the shoddy and Brummagem, pay them with wool and wheat.

Build to-morrow the foundry shed ['tis a task we dare not shirk],
Lay the runs and the engine-bed, and get the gear to work.
Have no fear when we raise the steam in the hurried factory –
We are not lacking in the brains that teem with originality.

Have no fear for the way is clear – we'll shackle the hands of greed –
Every lad is an engineer in his country's hour of need;
Many are brilliant, swift to learn, quick at invention too,
Born inventors whose young hearts burn to show what the South can do!

To show what the South can do, done well, and more than the North can do.
They'll make us the cartridge and make the shell, and the gun to carry true,
Give us the gear and the South is strong - and the docks shall yield us more;
The national arm like the national song comes with the first great war.

Books of science from every land, volumes on gunnery,
Practical teachers we have at hand, masters of chemistry.
Clear young heads that will sift and think in spite of authorities,
And brains that shall leap from invention's brink at the clash of factories.
Still be noble in peace or war, raise the national spirit high;
And this be our watchword for evermore: "For Australia – till we die!"

Henry Lawson

For He Was A Jolly Good Fellow

THEY CHEERED him from the wharf—it was a glorious day:
His hand went to his scarf—his thoughts were far away.
Oh, he was “Jolly Good”, they sang it long and loud—
The money lender stood unknown amongst the crowd.
He’d taken him aside, while trembling fit to fall,
No friendly eye espied the last farewell of all!

He held a peevish kid—another at his knee;
The wife whom he could bid farewell—eternally
Stood nagging at his side in tones that none could hear,
And deared him, tender eyed, when passengers came near
(The cabin waits below the row and children’s squall,
And not a soul to know the bitter farce of all).

Their hearts were good as gold, each pocket spared a “tray”,
They pooled them as of old to drink him on his way.
His pile of luggage rose, as bravely as the best—
He had two suits of clothes, his wife and kids the rest.
He’d “stood ‘em up” a sov., for fear of seeming small,
And he was thinking of that worst farewell of all.

They cheered from cargo ways and ballast heap and pile,
To last him all his days—they sent him off in style.
(He only took his book.) He only turned his head
In one last hopeless look towards a cargo shed
Where one stood brimming eyed in silence by the wall—
No jealous eyes espied that last farewell of all.

The ship is out of sight and out of memory clean,
He’s rolling through the Bight on board the All Serene.
His heart’s like half a brick, the voice of hope is dumb,
He’s handicapped and sick with fear of what’s to come.
They’re passing Cape Leuwin, the half-brick starts to fall,
But with a fiendish grin, he curses land and all.

Henry Lawson

For'Ard

It is stuffy in the steerage where the second-classers sleep,
For there's near a hundred for'ard, and they're stowed away like sheep, --
They are trav'lers for the most part in a straight 'n' honest path;
But their linen's rather scanty, an' there isn't any bath --
Stowed away like ewes and wethers that is shore 'n' marked 'n' draft.
But the shearers of the shearers always seem to travel aft;
 In the cushioned cabins, aft,
 With saloons 'n' smoke-rooms, aft --
There is sheets 'n' best of tucker for the first-salooners, aft.

Our beef is just like scrapin's from the inside of a hide,
And the spuds were pulled too early, for they're mostly green inside;
But from somewhere back amidships there's a smell o' cookin' waft,
An' I'd give my earthly prospects for a real good tuck-out aft --
 Ham an' eggs 'n' coffee, aft,
 Say, cold fowl for luncheon, aft,
Juicy grills an' toast 'n' cutlets -- tucker a-lor-frongsy, aft.

They feed our women sep'rate, an' they make a blessed fuss,
Just as if they couldn't trust 'em for to eat along with us!
Just because our hands are horny an' our hearts are rough with graft --
But the gentlemen and ladies always DINE together, aft --
 With their ferns an' mirrors, aft,
 With their flow'rs an' napkins, aft --
'I'll assist you to an orange' -- 'Kindly pass the sugar', aft.

We are shabby, rough, 'n' dirty, an' our feelin's out of tune,
An' it's hard on fellers for'ard that was used to go saloon;
There's a broken swell among us -- he is barracked, he is chaffed,
An' I wish at times, poor devil, for his own sake he was aft;
 For they'd understand him, aft,
 (He will miss the bath-rooms aft),
Spite of all there's no denyin' that there's finer feelin's aft.

Last night we watched the moonlight as it spread across the sea --
'It is hard to make a livin',' said the broken swell to me.
'There is ups an' downs,' I answered, an' a bitter laugh he laughed --
There were brighter days an' better when he always travelled aft --
 With his rug an' gladstone, aft,

With his cap an' spyglass, aft --
A careless, rovin', gay young spark as always travelled aft.

There's a notice by the gangway, an' it seems to come amiss,
For it says that second-classers `ain't allowed abaft o' this';
An' there ought to be a notice for the fellows from abaft --
But the smell an' dirt's a warnin' to the first-salooners, aft;
With their tooth and nail-brush, aft,
With their cuffs 'n' collars, aft --
Their cigars an' books an' papers, an' their cap-peaks fore-'n'-aft.

I want to breathe the mornin' breeze that blows against the boat,
For there's a swellin' in my heart -- a tightness in my throat --
We are for'ard when there's trouble! We are for'ard when there's graft!
But the men who never battle always seem to travel aft;
With their dressin'-cases, aft,
With their swell pyjamas, aft --
Yes! the idle and the careless, they have ease an' comfort, aft.

I feel so low an' wretched, as I mooch about the deck,
That I'm ripe for jumpin' over -- an' I wish there was a wreck!
We are driven to New Zealand to be shot out over there --
Scarce a shillin' in our pockets, nor a decent rag to wear,
With the everlastin' worry lest we don't get into graft --
There is little left to land for if you cannot travel aft;
No anxiety abaft,
They have stuff to land with, aft --
Oh, there's little left to land for if you cannot travel aft;

But it's grand at sea this mornin', an' Creation almost speaks,
Sailin' past the Bay of Islands with its pinnacles an' peaks,
With the sunny haze all round us an' the white-caps on the blue,
An' the orphan rocks an' breakers -- Oh, it's glorious sailin' through!
To the south a distant steamer, to the west a coastin' craft,
An' we see the beauty for'ard, better than if we were aft;
Spite of op'ra-glasses, aft;
But, ah well, they're brothers aft --
Nature seems to draw us closer -- bring us nearer fore-'n'-aft.

What's the use of bein' bitter? What's the use of gettin' mad?
What's the use of bein' narrer just because yer luck is bad?
What's the blessed use of frettin' like a child that wants the moon?

There is broken hearts an' trouble in the gilded first saloon!
We are used to bein' shabby -- we have got no overdraft --
We can laugh at troubles for'ard that they couldn't laugh at aft;
 Spite o' pride an' tone abaft
 (Keepin' up appearance, aft)
There's anxiety an' worry in the breezy cabins aft.

But the curse o' class distinctions from our shoulders shall be hurled,
An' the influence of woman revolutionize the world;
There'll be higher education for the toilin' starvin' clown,
An' the rich an' educated shall be educated down;
An' we all will meet amidships on this stout old earthly craft,
An' there won't be any friction 'twixt the classes fore-'n'-aft.
 We'll be brothers, fore-'n'-aft!
 Yes, an' sisters, fore-'n'-aft!
When the people work together, and there ain't no fore-'n'-aft.

Henry Lawson

Foreign Lands

You may roam the wide seas over, follow, meet, and cross the sun,
Sail as far as ships can sail, and travel far as trains can run;
You may ride and tramp wherever range or plain or sea expands,
But the crowd has been before you, and you'll not find 'Foreign Lands';
For the Early Days are over,
And no more the white-winged rover
Sinks the gale-worn coast of England bound for bays in Foreign Lands.
Foreign Lands are in the distance dim and dreamlike, faint and far,
Long ago, and over yonder, where our boyhood fancies are,
For the land is by the railway cramped as though with iron bands,
And the steamship and the cable did away with Foreign Lands.
Ah! the days of blue and gold!
When the news was six months old—
But the news was worth the telling in the days of Foreign Lands.

Here we slave the dull years hopeless for the sake of Wool and Wheat
Here the homes of ugly Commerce—niggard farm and haggard street;
Yet our mothers and our fathers won the life the heart demands—
Less than fifty years gone over, we were born in Foreign Lands.

When the gipsies stole the children still, in village tale and song,
And the world was wide to travel, and the roving spirit strong;
When they dreamed of South Sea Islands, summer seas and coral strands—
Then the bravest hearts of England sailed away to Foreign Lands,
'Fitting foreign'—flood and field—
Half the world and orders sealed—
And the first and best of Europe went to fight in Foreign Lands.

Canvas towers on the ocean—homeward bound and outward bound—
Glint of topsails over islands—splash of anchors in the sound;
Then they landed in the forests, took their strong lives in their hands,
And they fought and toiled and conquered—making homes in Foreign Lands,
Through the cold and through the drought—
Further on and further out—
Winning half the world for England in the wilds of Foreign Lands.

Love and pride of life inspired them when the simple village hearts
Followed Master Will and Harry—gone abroad to 'furrin parts'
By our townships and our cities, and across the desert sands

Are the graves of those who fought and died for us in Foreign Lands—
Gave their young lives for our sake
(Was it all a grand mistake?)
Sons of Master Will and Harry born abroad in Foreign Lands!

Ah, my girl, our lives are narrow, and in sordid days like these,
I can hate the things that banished 'Foreign Lands across the seas,'
But with all the world before us, God above us—hearts and hands,
I can sail the seas in fancy far away to Foreign Lands.

Henry Lawson

Freedom On The Wallaby

Australia's a big country
An' Freedom's humping bluey,
An' Freedom's on the wallaby
Oh! don't you hear 'er cooey?
She's just begun to boomerang,
She'll knock the tyrants silly,
She's goin' to light another fire
And boil another billy.

Our fathers toiled for bitter bread
While loafers thrived beside 'em,
But food to eat and clothes to wear,
Their native land denied 'em.
An' so they left their native land
In spite of their devotion,
An' so they came, or if they stole,
Were sent across the ocean.

Then Freedom couldn't stand the glare
O' Royalty's regalia,
She left the loafers where they were,
An' came out to Australia.
But now across the mighty main
The chains have come ter bind her –
She little thought to see again
The wrongs she left behind her.

Our parents toil'd to make a home –
Hard grubbin 'twas an' clearin' –
They wasn't crowded much with lords
When they was pioneering.
But now that we have made the land
A garden full of promise,
Old Greed must crook 'is dirty hand
And come ter take it from us.

So we must fly a rebel flag,
As others did before us,
And we must sing a rebel song

And join in rebel chorus.
We'll make the tyrants feel the sting
O' those that they would throttle;
They needn't say the fault is ours
If blood should stain the wattle!

Henry Lawson

From The Bush

The Channel fog has lifted –
And see where we have come!
Round all the world we've drifted,
A hundred years from "home".
The fields our parents longed for –
Ah! we shall ne'er know how –
The wealth that they were wronged for
We'll see as strangers now!

The Dover cliffs have passed on –
In the morning light aglow –
That our fathers looked their last on
A weary time ago.
Now grin, and grin your bravest!
We need be strong to fight;
For you go home to picture
And I go home to write.

Hold up your head in England,
Tread firm on London streets;
We come from where the strong heart
Of all Australia beats!
Hold up your head in England
However poor you roam!
For no men are your betters
Who never sailed from home!

From a hundred years of hardships –
'Tis ours to tell the cost –
From a thousand miles of silence
Where London would be lost;
From where the glorious sunset
On sweeps of mulga glows –
Ah! we know more than England,
And more than Europe knows!

Hold up your head in London,
However poor you come,
For no man is your better

Who never sailed from home!
Our "home" and foreign fathers,
Where none but men dared go,
Have done more for the White Man
Than England e'er shall know!

Henry Lawson

Genoa

A long farewell to Genoa
That rises to the skies,
Where the barren coast of Italy
Like our own coastline lies.
A sad farewell to Genoa,
And long my heart shall grieve,
The only city in the world
That I was loath to leave.

No sign of rush or strife is there,
No war of greed they wage.
The deep cool streets of Genoa
Are rock-like in their age.
No garish signs of commerce there
Are flaunting in the sun.
A rag hung from a balcony
Is by an artist done.

And she was fair in Genoa,
And she was very kind,
Those pale blind-seeming eyes that seem
Most beautifully blind.
Oh they are sad in Genoa,
Those poor soiled singing birds.
I had but three Italian words
And she three English words.

But love is cheap in Genoa,
Aye, love and wine are cheap,
And neither leaves an aching head,
Nor cuts the heart too deep;
Save when the knife goes straight, and then
There's little time to grieve—
The only city in the world
That I was loath to leave.

I've said farewell to tinted days
And glorious starry nights,
I've said farewell to Naples with

Her long straight lines of lights;
But it is not for Naples but
For Genoa that I grieve,
The only city in the world
That I was loath to leave.

Henry Lawson

Gettin Back

When we've arrived by boat or rail, and feeling pretty well,
And humped our heavy gladstones to the Great Norsouth Hotel;
And when we've had a wash and brush and changed biled rags for soft —
And ate a hearty country meal — our spirits go aloft!
(Damn the city!)

When we've walked out a mile and back along the old bush track,
And dropped into the letter-box our last damned letters back;
When we've turned in and slept half through the soft white beds all night
To start, at daylight toy the coach — we're getting back all right.
(Damn the city!)

When we have crossed the nearer heights through box and stringy-bark,
And traced the newer tree-marked track above the gullies dark;
When we begin to ask how far it is to tucker yet —
Where clear streams whet our appetites — we're getting back, don't fret.
(Damn the city!)

We try to draw the driver out (a 'case' as like as not),
For we don't know how much he knows, or how much we've forgot.
And we make bloomers, and the seats seem narrow slippery shelves —
Until we find he's just a liar, like ourselves.
(Damn the city!)

When we can take an interest in all and everything,
When we begin to drop the 'g' in words that end in 'ing',
When good old oaths come 'back again, and we can sleep at night,
And eat our fish with knives and forks — we're gettin' back all right.
(Damn the city!)

I'm staying at a lake-side home, down here at Nevermind,
The small hand 'separator' is the only change I find,
And there's a girl with kind grey eyes and hair of reddish gold,
And she's read somewhere in a book that poets don't grow old.
(Damn the city!)

She's twenty-two, I'm forty-three; but, ere the week is done,
She's only in her eighteenth year, and I am twenty-one!
I'm younger than the younger men, who can't be young — or won't —

She heard that poets don't grow old — and now she knows they don't.
(DAMN THE CITY!)

The dandy tourists wonder how the old town had got in —
The straight young bushmen wonder how that poet bloke could win.
But the grand old bush life backed me up, when they were hard to rouse,
And I turned out at six o'clock and helped her milk the cows!
(DAMN THE CITY!)

Henry Lawson

Gipsy Too

If they missed my face in Farmers' Arms
When the landlord lit the lamp,
They would grin and say in their country way,
'Oh! he's down at the Gipsy camp!'
But they'd read of things in the Daily Mail
That the wild Australians do,
And I cared no day what the world might say,
For I came of the Gipsies too.
'Oh! the Gipsy crowd are a mongrel lot,
'And a thieving lot and sly!'
But I'd dined on fowls in the far-off south,
And a mongrel lot was I.
'Oh! the Gipsy crowd are a roving gang,
'And a sulky, silent crew!'
But they managed a smile and a word for me,
For I came of the Gipsies too.

And the old queen looked in my palm one day—
And a shrewd old dame was she:
'My pretty young gent, you may say your say,
'You may laugh your laugh at me;
'But I'll tell you the tale of your dead, dead past!'
And she told me all too true;
And she said that I'd die in a camp at last,
For I came of the Gipsies too.

And the young queen looked in my eyes that night,
In a nook where the hedge grew tall,
And the sky was swept and the stars were bright,
But her eyes had the sheen of all.
The spring was there, and the fields were fair,
And the world to my heart seemed new.
'Twas 'A Romany lass to a Romany lad!'
But I came of the Gipsies too.

Now a Summer and Winter have gone between
And wide, wild oceans flow;
And they camp again by the sad old Thames,

Where the blackberry hedges grow.
'Twas a roving star on a land afar
That proved to a maid untrue,
But we'll meet when they gather the Gipsy souls,
For I came of the Gipsies too.

Henry Lawson

Give Yourself A Show: New Year's Eve

TO my fellow sinners all, who, in hope and doubt,
Through the Commonwealth to-night watch the Old Year out,
New Year's Resolutions are jerry-built I know,
But I want to say to you, "Give yourselves a show".

You who drink for drinking's sake, love for lust alone,
Thinking heaven is a myth and the world your own—
Dancing gaily down to hell in the devil's dance—
This I have to say to you: "Give your souls a chance".

You who drink because of shame that you think will last,
Or because of wrong done you—trouble in the past—
"Nothing left to live for now," you will say, I know;
But you have your own self yet, give that self a show!

You who want all things on earth—money, love, and fame
Having the advantage of worldly place or name—
You who have more than you want, even than you know,
In the glorious New Year give someone else a show.

You, the mischief-makers all, who in secret glee
Love to tell the villainies of a scamp like me;
There are things he'll never tell—things you'll never know—
Look into your own lives first—give the man a show.

You, the politician, who, for jealousy or gold,
Or for mean ambition, sell, or see your country sold,
Pandering to the hollow crowd, toadying to the low,
For shame's sake banish selfishness—give your land a show.

Henry Lawson

Golden Gully

No one lives in Golden Gully, for its golden days are o'er,
And its clay shall never sully blucher-boots of diggers more,
For the diggers long have vanished — nought but broken shafts remain,
And the bush, by diggers banished, fast reclaims its own again.
Now, when dying Daylight slowly draws her fingers from the "Peak",
The Weird Empress Melancholy rises from the reedy creek —
In the gap above the gully, while the dismal curlews scream
Loud to welcome her as ruler of the dreary night supreme —
Takes her throne, and by her presence fills the strange, uncertain air
With a ghostly phosphorescence of the horrors hidden there.
None would think, by camp-fire blazy, lighting fitfully the scene,
In the seasons that are hazy, how in seasons gone between,
Diggers yarned or joined in jolly ballads of the field and foam,
Or grew sad and melancholy over songs like "Home, Sweet Home" —
Songs of other times, demanding sullen tears that would not start,
Every digger understanding what was in his comrade's heart.
It may seem to you a riddle how a poet's fancies roam,
But methinks I hear a fiddle softly playing "Home, Sweet Home"
'Mid the trees, while meditative diggers round the camp-fire stand.
(Those were days before Australians learned to love their native land.)
Now the dismal curlew screeches round the shafts when night winds sough;
Startling murmurs, broken speeches, shake each twisted, tangled bough,
And whene'er the night comes dreary, darkened by the falling rain,
Voices, loud and dread and eerie, come again and come again —
Come like troubled souls forbidden rest until their tales are told —
Tales of deeds of darkness hidden in the whirl of days of gold —
Come like troubled spirits telling tales of dire and dread mishaps,
Kissing, falling, rising, swelling, dying in the dismal gaps.
When the coming daylight slowly lays her fingers on the "Peak"
Then the Empress Melancholy hurries off to swamps that reek.
But the scene is never cheery, be it sunshine, be it rain,
For the Gully keeps its dreary look till darkness comes again.
As you stand beside the broken shafts, where grass is growing thick,
You can almost hear a spoken word, or hear a thudding pick;
And your very soul seems sinking, foetid grows the morning air,
For you cannot help believing that there's something buried there.
There's a ring amid the saplings by a travelling circus worn,
That amused the noisy diggers e'er the rising race was born;
There's a road where scrub encroaches that was once the main highway,

Over which two rival coaches dashed in glory twice a day;
Gone — all gone from Golden Gully, for its golden days are o'er,
And its clay shall never sully wheels of crowded coaches more.

Henry Lawson

Grace Jennings Carmicheal

I hate the pen, the foolscap fair,
The poet's corner, and the page,
For Grief and Death are written there,
In every land and every age.
The poets sing and play their parts,
Their daring cheers, their humour shines,
But, ah! my friends! their broken hearts
Have writ in blood between the lines.
They fought to build a Commonwealth,
They write for women and for men,
They give their youth, we give their health
And never prostitute the pen.
Their work in other tongues is read,
And when sad years wear out the pen,
Then they may seek their happy dead
Or go and starve in exile then.

A grudging meed of praise you give,
Or, your excuse, the ready lie—
(O! God, you don't know how they live!
O! God, you don't know how they die!)
The poetess, whose gentle tone
Oft cheered your mothers' hearts when down;
A lonely woman, fought alone
The bitter fight in London town.

Your rich to lilac lands resort,
And old-world luxuries they buy;
You pour out gold to Cant and Sport
And give a million to a lie.
You give to cheats who rant and rave
With eyes that glare and arms that whirl,
But not a penny that might save
The children of the Gippsland girl.

Henry Lawson

Grey Wolves Grey

The Russian march is soft and slow,
Through dust and heat, or slush and snow,
When the Russian skies hang grey and low
To the frontiers far where the Russians go;
And they march to-night and they march to-day
Like the grey wolves grey, like the grey wolves grey.
Nor song nor sound their track reveals,
Save the ceaseless "clock" of the waggon wheels;
But a rift in the mist shows a glint of sun
On the long, dark shape of a toiling gun;
And they strain by night and they drag by day
To a distant goal, like the grey wolves grey.

As the horses toil at the ends of trains,
And the ends of roads on the Blacksoil Plains.
And Ivan digs in the frozen clay,
And he rolls the logs a bed to lay
For a gun that's five hundred miles away,
But as sure to come as the grey wolves grey.

He is marching on with a purpose grand,
For brother Slav in another land;
Whose tongue, perchance, he cannot understand.—
But he knows the cry from the far-away,
And he smells the blood like the grey wolves grey.

And Ivan's wife in her den at home,
While hunger looms and his lean wolves come—
With her grey-black bread like the Darling mud,
And her tea-bricks bound with the bullock's blood—
She shields her cubs by night and day
Like the crouching sluts of the grey wolves grey.

And I march with Ivan where'er he be,
With the foreign blood that is strong in me,
And the love and the hate that is fantasy,
Like the ghosts of a father's memory.
With the blood that is strange to us to-day
As the strange wild blood of the grey wolves grey.

Grey wolves,
Grey wolves—
The strange wild blood of the grey wolves grey.

Henry Lawson

Gs [or The Fourth Cook]

He has notions of Australia from the tales that he's been told—
Land of leggings and revolvers, land of savages and gold;
So he begs old shirts, and someone patches up his worn-out duds.
He is shipped as 'general servant,' scrubbing pots and peeling spuds
(In the steamer's grimy alley, hating man and peeling spuds).
There is little time to comfort, there is little time to cry—
He will come back with a fortune—'We'll be happy by-and-by!'
Scarcely time to kiss his sweetheart, barely time to change his duds,
Ere they want him at the galley, and they set him peeling spuds
(With a butcher's knife, a bucket, and, say, half a ton of spuds).

And he peels 'em hard to Plymouth, peels 'em fast to drown his grief,
Peels 'em while his stomach sickens on the road to Teneriffe;
Peels 'em while the donkey rattles, peels 'em while the engine thuds,
By the time they touch at Cape Town he's a don at peeling spuds
(And he finds some time for dreaming as he gets on with the spuds).

In the steamer's slushy alley, where the souls of men are dead,
And the adjectives are crimson if the substances are red,
He's perhaps a college black-sheep, and, maybe, of ancient blood—
Ah! his devil grips him sometimes as he reaches for a spud
(And he jerks his head and sadly gouges dry-rot from a spud).

And his brave heart hopes and sickens as the weary days go round;
There is lots o' time for blue-lights ere they reach King George's Sound.
But he gets his best suit ready—two white shirts and three bone studs!
He will face the new world bravely when he's finished with the spuds
(And next week, perhaps, he'll gladly take a job at peeling spuds).

There were heroes in Australia went exploring long ago;
There are heroes in Australia that the world shall never know;
And the men we use for heroes in the land of droughts and floods
Often win their way to Sydney scrubbing pots and peeling spuds
(Plucky beggars! brave, poor devils! gouging dry-rot from their spuds).

Henry Lawson

Hannah Thomburn

They lifted her out of a story
Too sordid and selfish by far,
They left me the innocent glory
Of love that was pure as a star;
They left me all guiltless of "evil"
That would have brought years of distress
When the chance to be man, god or devil,
Was mine, on return from Success.

With a name and a courage uncommon
She had come in the soul striving days,
She had come as a child, girl and woman—
Come only to comfort and praise.
There was never a church that could marry,
For never a court could divorce,
In the season of Hannah and Harry
When the love of my life ran its course.

Her hair was red gold on head Grecian,
But fluffed from the parting away,
And her eyes were the warm grey Venetian
That comes with the dawn of the day.
No Fashion nor Fad could entrap her,
And a simple print work dress wore she,
But her long limbs were formed for the "wrapper"
And her fair arms were meant to be free.

(Oh, I knew by the thrill of pure passion
At the touch of her elbow, or hand—
By the wife's loveless eyes that would flash on
The feeling I could not command.
Oh, I knew when revulsion came rushing—
Oh, I knew by the brush strokes that hurt
At the sight of a sculptor friend brushing
The clay from the hem of her skirt.)

She was mine on return from succeeding
In a struggle that no one shall know;

She only knew my heart was bleeding,
She only knew what dealt the blow.
I had fought back the friends that were clutching,
I had forced back the heart-scalding tears
Just to lay my hot head to her touching
And to weep for Two Terrible Years.

Oh! the hand on my hair that was greying!
Oh! the kiss on my brow that was lined!
Oh! the peace when my reason was straying
And the rest and relief for my mind.
Till, no longer world shackled or frightened,
The voice of the past would be stilled,
Hearts quickened, cheeks flushed and eyes brightened,
And the love of our lives be fulfilled!

It was Antwerp, and Plymouth—th' Atlantic
And, so well had Love's network been laid,
That I heard of her illness, grown frantic,
At Genoa, Naples—Port Said.
I was mad just to reach her and "tell her",
But a sandbank at Suez tripped me,
And we limped, with a crippled propeller,
Through all Hades adown the Red Sea.

Through the monsoon we rolled like a Jumbo
With a second blade shaken away,
There was never a dock in Colombo
So the captain drank hard to Bombay.
Then a "point" in the south like an anthill
Or seawastes—then hove into sight—
I called for no news at Fremantle
For I wanted to hope through the Bight.

There's a gentleman, reading, shall know it,
There's an earl who will now understand
Why I "slighted" the son of their poet
(And a vice regal lord of the land)—
Semaphore—and a burst through the wicket
On platform left guards in distress—
A run without luggage or ticket,
A cab, and the Melbourne Express.

'Twas a brother-in-grief of mine told me
With harsh eyes unwontedly dim,
With a hand on my shoulder to hold me
And a grip on my own—to hold him.
A dry choke, and words cracked and hurried,
A stare, as of something afraid,
And he told me that Hannah was buried
On the day I reached Port Adelaide.

They could greet me—let Heaven or Hell come,
They could weep—for the grave by the sea
Oh! the mother and father could welcome
And the kinsfolk without fear of me.
For they watched her safe out of a story
Where she slaved and suffered alone—
They could weep to the tune of the hoary
Old lie "If we only had known".

But I have the letter that followed
That she wrote to England and me—
That crossed us perchance as we wallowed
That birthday of mine on the sea,
That she wrote on the eve of her going,
Hopeful and loving and brave,
To keep me there, prosperous, knowing,
No care save the far away grave.

They have lifted her out of a story
Too sordid and selfish by far,
And left me the innocent glory
Of love that was pure as a star:
That was human and strong though she hid it
To write before death in last lines—
And I kneel to the angels who did it
And I bow to the fate that refines.

Henry Lawson

Harry Stephens

So the world of odds and evens ceased to trouble Harry Stephens,
and the niggard road no longer echoes to his lonely tread.

For another bushman found him with his 'bluey' wrapped around him, sleeping
like a bushman, only sleeping with the mighty dead.

And the shadows were upon him, and they found a ticket on him – just a relic of
a battle that was lately lost and won.

And it told the stray Camboonian he'd been loyal to his union (right or wrong) –
he had been loyal to the strike of '91'.

Henry Lawson

Hawkers

Dust, dust, dust and a dog –
Oh! The sheep-dog won't be last.
When the long, long, shadow of the old bay horse
With the shadow of his mate is cast.
A brick-brown woman with the brick-brown kids,
And a man with his head half-mast,
The feed-bags hung and the bedding slung,
And the blackened bucket made fast
Where the tailboard clings to the tucker and things –
So the hawker's van goes past.

Henry Lawson

He Had So Much Work To Do

Tell a simple little story of a settler in the West,
Where the soldier birds and farmers, and selectors never rest
While the sun shines—and they often work in rainy weather, too:
But it's all about a young man who had so much work to do.
One of Mason's sons, Jim Mason, and the straightest of the lot,
(They were all straight for that matter) Jim was working for old Scott—
(Scott that fired at Brummy Hughson, when the "stick-ups" used to be),
Jim was courting Mary Kelly down at Lowes, at Wilbertree.

Jim was trucking for a sawmill to make money for the home,
He was making, out of Mudgee, for the family to come,
And a load-chain snapped the switch-bar, and Black Anderson found Jim,
In the morning, in a creek-bed, with a log on top of him.

There was riding for the doctor—just the same old reckless race:
And a spring cart with a mattress came and took him from the place,
To the hospital at Gulgong—but they couldn't pull him through—
And Jim said "It seems a pity—I—had so much work to do."

"There's the hut—it's close-up finished; and the forty acres fenced;
And—I've cleared enough for ploughin', but the dam is just commenced!"
Then he said—and for a moment from the nurse his eyes he hid—
"But I'm glad we wasn't married, for there might have been a kid."

That was all—at least it wasn't for he didn't die until
He had "fixed it up for Mary with a proper lawyer will,"
And the "Forty acre paddick," "And I only hope," said he,
"That she'll get some decent feller when she's quite got over me."

Poor old broken-hearted Mason and his "missus" took their spell,
But another son and Mary finished Jim's work very well.
They have grown-up sons and daughters—some on new selections, too,
And their hands and hearts are fitted for the work they have to do.

Now, my brothers! see the moral, lest the truth should come too late!
We are far too apt to quarrel with the writer's fancied fate—
Damn the Past! and leave to-morrow: millions are worse off than you!
Think, ere you would "drown your sorrow," of the work that you should do.

Though the fates have seemed unkind to our unhappy brotherhood,
We are too apt to be blind to our great power to do good;
Many thousands, starved and stinted, for a line of comfort come,
We can write, and have it printed—They must suffer and be dumb.

Think not of the hours we wasted in "oblivion" foully won,
Or the bitter cups we tasted. Let us work! that, when life's done,
We shall have in bush or city, shaped our future course so true
That they'll say "It is a pity—they had so much more to do."

Henry Lawson

He Mourned His Master

INTRODUCTION

The theme is ancient as the hills,
With all their prehistoric glory;
But yet of Corney and his friend,
We've often longed to tell the story;
And should we jar the reader's ear,
Or fail to please his eye observant,
We only trust that he'll forgive
The bush muse and—your humble servant.

THE STORY

Old Corney built in Deadman's Gap
A hut, where mountain shades grow denser,
And there he lived for many years,
A timber-getter and a fencer.
And no one knew if he'd a soul
Above long sprees, or split-rail fences,
Unless, indeed, it was his friend,
Who always kept his confidences.

There was a saw-pit in the range;
'Twas owned by three, and they were brothers,
And visitors to Corney's hut—
'Twas seldom visited by others.
They came because, as they averred,
"Old Corney licked—a gent infernal."
"His yarns," if I might trust their word,
"Would made the fortune of a journal."

In short, the splitter was a "cure",
Who brightened up their lives' dull courses;
And so on Sunday afternoons,
At Corney's hut they'd hang their horses.

They'd have a game of cards and smoke,
And sometimes sing, which was a rum thing—
Unless, in spite of legal folk,
The splitter kept a "drop of something".

If, as 'twas said, he was "a swell"
Before he sought these sombre ranges,
'Twixt mother's arms and coffin gear
He must have seen a world of changes.
But from his lips would never fall
A hint of home, or friends, or brothers;
And if he told his tale at all,
He must have told it as another's.

Though he was good at telling yarns,
At listening he excelled not less so,
And greatly helped the bushman's tales
With "yes", "exactly so", or "jes' so".
In short, the hut became a club
Like our Assembly Legislative,
Combining smokeroom, hall, and "pub",
Political and recreative.

Old Corney lived and Corney died,
As we will, too, on some to-morrow,
But not as Corney died, we hope,
Of heart disease, and rum, and sorrow.
(We hope to lead a married life,
At times the cup of comfort quaffing;
And when we leave this world of strife
We trust that we may die of laughing.)

One New Year's Eve they found him dead—
For rum had made his life unstable—
They found him stretched upon his bed,
And also found, upon the table,
The coloured portrait of a girl—
Blue eyes of course. The hair was golden,
A faded letter and a curl,
And—well, we said the theme was olden.

The splitter had for days been dead

And cold before the sawyers found him,
And none had witnessed how he died
Except the friend who whimpered round him;
A noble friend, and of a kind
Who stay when other friends forsake us;
And he at last was left behind
To greet the rough bush undertakers.

This was a season when the bush
Was somewhat ruled by time and distance,
And bushmen came and tried the world,
And "gave it best" without assistance.
Then one might die of heart disease,
And still be spared the inquest horrors.
And when the splitter lay at ease,
So, also, did his sins and sorrows.

"Ole Corey's dead," the bushmen said;
"He's gone at last, an' ne'er a blunder."
And so they brought a horse and dray,
And tools to "tuck the old cove under."
The funeral wended through the range,
And slowly round its rugged corners;
The reader will not think it strange
That Corney's friend was chief of mourners.

He must have thought the bushmen hard,
And of his misery unheeding,
Because they shunned his anxious eyes,
That seemed for explanation pleading.
At intervals his tongue would wipe
The jaws that seemed with anguish quaking;
As some strong hand impatiently
Might chide the tears for prison breaking.

They reached by rugged ways at last,
A desolate bush cemetery,
Where now (our tale is of the past),
A thriving town its dead doth bury.
And where the bones of pioneers
Are found and thrown aside unheeded—
For later sleepers, blessed with tears

Of many friends, the graves are needed.

The funeral reached the bushmen's graves,
Where these old pioneers were sleeping,
And now while down the granite ridge
The shadow of the peak was creeping,
They dug a grave beneath a gum
And lowered the dead as gently may be
As Corney's mother long before
Had laid him down to "hush-a-baby".

A bushman read the words to which
The others reverently listened,
Some bearded lips were seen to twitch,
Some shaded eyes with moisture glistened.
Perhaps this weakness was because
Their work reminded them in sorrow
Of other burials long ago,
When friends "turned in to wait the morrow."

The boys had brought the splitter's tools,
And now they split and put together
Four panels such as Corney made,
To stand the stress of western weather.
Perhaps this second weakness rose,
From some good reason undetected;
They may have thought of other graves
Of dearer friends they left neglected.

"Old Corney's dead, he paid his bills"
(These words upon the tree were graven)
"And oft a swagman down in luck,
At Corey's mansion found a haven."
If this an explanation needs,
We greatly fear we can't afford it;
Unless they thought of other dead,
Whose virtues they had not recorded.

The day had crossed the homeward track,
And as the bushmen turned to tread it,
They thought and spoke of many things,
Remembered now to Corney's credit;

And strange to say, above their heads
The kookaburra burst with laughter.
(Perhaps he thought of other friends
Whose virtues they remembered—after.)

But now the bushmen hurried on
Lest darkness in the range should find them;
And strange to say they never saw
That Corney's friend had stayed behind them.
If one had thrown a backward glance
Along the rugged path they wended,
He might have seen a darker form
Upon the damp cold mound extended.

But soon their forms had vanished all,
And night came down the ranges faster,
And no one saw the shadows fall
Upon the dog that mourned his master.

Henry Lawson

He's Gone To England For A Wife

HE'S GONE to England for a wife
Among the ladies there;
And yet I know a lass he deemed
The rarest of the rare.
He's gone to England for a wife;
And rich and proud is he.
But he was poor and toiled for bread
When first he courted me.

He said I was the best on earth;
He said I was "his life";
And now he thinks of noble birth,
And seeks a lady wife!
He said for me alone he'd toil
To win an honest fame;
But now no lass on southern soil
Is worthy of his name!

I think I see his lady bride,
A fair and faultless face,
And nothing in her heart beside
The empty pride of race.
And she will grace his gilded home,
The wife his gold shall buy;
But will she ever dream of him,
Or love as well as I?

Henry Lawson

Heed Not!

Heed not the cock-sure tourist,
Seeing with English eyes;
Stroked at the banquet table
Still, with the old stock lies—
Pet of a social circle,
Guest in a garden fair—
Free of the first-class carriage—
He learns no Australia there.
Heed not the Southern humbugs
By the first saloons who come—
From his work in the wide, hot scrub-lands
The Australian goes not home.
Give them the toadies' knighthood,
Fit for the souls they've got;
Fear not to shame Australia
For Australia knows them not.

Heed not the Sydney 'dailies,'
Naught for the land they do;
Heed not the Melbourne street crowd,
For they know no more than you!
Pent in the coastal cities,
Still on the old-world track—
They know naught of Australia,
Of the heart of the great Out-Back.

But wait for the voice that gathers
Strength by the western creeks!
Heed ye the Out-Back shearers—
List when the Great Bush speaks!
Heed ye the black-sheep, working
His own salvation free—
And Oh! heed ye the sons of the exiles
When they speak of the things to be!

Henry Lawson

Here Died

There's many a schoolboy's bat and ball that are gathering dust at home,
For he hears a voice in the future call, and he trains for the war to come;
A serious light in his eyes is seen as he comes from the schoolhouse gate;
He keeps his kit and his rifle clean, and he sees that his back is straight.

But straight or crooked, or round, or lame – you may let these words take root;
As the time draws near for the sterner game, all boys should learn to shoot,
From the beardless youth to the grim grey-beard, let Australians ne'er forget,
A lame limb never interfered with a brave man's shooting yet.

Over and over and over again, to you and our friends and me,
The warning of danger has sounded plain – like the thud of a gun at sea.
The rich man turns to his wine once more, and the gay to their worldly joys,
The "statesman" laughs at a hint of war – but something has told the boys.

The schoolboy scouts of the White Man's Land are out on the hills to-day;
They trace the tracks from the sea-beach sand and sea-cliffs grim and grey;
They take the range for a likely shot by every cape and head,
And they spy the lay of each lonely spot where an enemy's foot might tread.

In the cooling breeze of the coastal streams, or out where the townships bake,
They march in fancy, and fight in dreams, and die for Australia's sake.
They hold the fort till relief arrives, when the landing parties storm,
And they take the pride of their fresh young lives in the set of a uniform.

Where never a loaded shell was hurled, nor a rifle fired to kill,
The schoolboy scouts of the Southern World are choosing their Battery Hill.
They run the tapes on the flats and fells by roads that the guns might sweep,
They are fixing in memory obstacles where the firing lines shall creep.

They read and they study the gunnery - they ask till the meaning's plain,
But the craft of the scout is a simple thing to the young Australian brain.
They blaze the track for a forward run, where the scrub is everywhere,
And they mark positions for every gun and every unit there.

They trace the track for a quick retreat – and the track for the other way round,
And they mark the spot in the summer heat where the water is always found.
They note the chances of cliff and tide, and where they can move, and when,
And every point where a man might hide in the days when they'll fight as men.

When silent men with their rifles lie by many a ferny dell;
And turn their heads when a scout goes by, with a cheery growl "All's well";
And scouts shall climb by the fisherman's ways, and watch for a sign of ships,
With stern eyes fixed on the threatening haze where the blue horizon dips.

When men shall camp in the dark and damp by the bough-marked battery,
Between the forts and the open ports where the miners watch the sea;
And talk perhaps of their boy-scout days, as they sit in their shelters rude,
While motors race to the distant bays with ammunition and food.

When the city alight shall wait by night for news from a far-out post,
And men ride down from the farming town to patrol the lonely coast –
Till they hear the thud of a distant gun, or the distant rifles crack,
And Australians spring to their arms as one to drive the invaders back.

There'll be no music or martial noise, save the guns to help you through,
For a plain and shirt-sleeve job, my boys, is the job that we'll have to do.
And many of those who had learned to shoot – and in learning learned to teach –

To the last three men, and the last galoot, shall die on some lonely beach.

But they'll waste their breath in no empty boast, and they'll prove to the world
their worth,
When the shearers rush to the Eastern Coast, and the miners rush to Perth.
And the man who fights in a Queenscliff fort, or up by Keppel Bay,
Will know that his mates at Bunbury are doing their share that day.

There was never a land so great and wide, where the foreign fathers came,
That has bred her children so much alike, with their hearts so much the same.
And sons shall fight by the mangrove creeks that lie on the lone East Coast,
Who never shall know (or not for weeks) if the rest of Australia's lost.

And far in the future (I see it well, and born of such days as these),
There lies an Australia invincible, and mistress of all her seas;
With monuments standing on hill and head, where her sons shall point with pride

To the names of Australia's bravest dead, carved under the words "Here died."

Henry Lawson

Here's Luck

Old Time is tramping close to-day—you hear his bluchers fall,
A mighty change is on the way, an' God protect us all;
Some dust'll fly from beery coats—at least it's been declared.
I'm glad that wimin has the votes—but just a trifle scared.
I'm just a trifle scared—For why? The wimin mean to rule;
It makes me feel like days gone by when I was caned at school.
The days of men is nearly dead—of double moons and stars—
They'll soon put out our pipes, 'tis said, an' close the public bars.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Henry Lawson

His Brother's Keeper

By his paths through the parched desolation,
Hot rides and the terrible tramps;
By the hunger, the thirst, the privation
Of his work in the further most camps.

By his worth in the light that shall search men
And prove – ay! And justify each –
I place him in front of all churchmen
Who feel not, who know not – but preach!

Henry Lawson

How The Land Was Won

The future was dark and the past was dead
As they gazed on the sea once more –
But a nation was born when the immigrants said
"Good-bye!" as they stepped ashore!
In their loneliness they were parted thus
Because of the work to do,
A wild wide land to be won for us
By hearts and hands so few.

The darkest land 'neath a blue sky's dome,
And the widest waste on earth;
The strangest scenes and the least like home
In the lands of our fathers' birth;
The loneliest land in the wide world then,
And away on the furthest seas,
A land most barren of life for men –
And they won it by twos and threes!

With God, or a dog, to watch, they slept
By the camp-fires' ghastly glow,
Where the scrubs were dark as the blacks that crept
With "nulla" and spear held low;
Death was hidden amongst the trees,
And bare on the glaring sand
They fought and perished by twos and threes –
And that's how they won the land!

It was two that failed by the dry creek bed,
While one reeled on alone –
The dust of Australia's greatest dead
With the dust of the desert blown!
Gaunt cheek-bones cracking the parchment skin
That scorched in the blazing sun,
Black lips that broke in a ghastly grin –
And that's how the land was won!

Starvation and toil on the tracks they went,
And death by the lonely way;

The childbirth under the tilt or tent,
The childbirth under the dray!
The childbirth out in the desolate hut
With a half-wild gin for nurse –
That's how the first were born to bear
The brunt of the first man's curse!

They toiled and they fought through the shame of it –
Through wilderness, flood, and drought;
They worked, in the struggles of early days,
Their sons' salvation out.
The white girl-wife in the hut alone,
The men on the boundless run,
The miseries suffered, unvoiced, unknown –
And that's how the land was won.

No armchair rest for the old folk then –
But, ruined by blight and drought,
They blazed the tracks to the camps again
In the big scrubs further out.
The worn haft, wet with a father's sweat,
Gripped hard by the eldest son,
The boy's back formed to the hump of toil –
And that's how the land was won!

And beyond Up Country, beyond Out Back,
And the rainless belt, they ride,
The currency lad and the ne'er-do-well
And the black sheep, side by side;
In wheeling horizons of endless haze
That disk through the Great North-west,
They ride for ever by twos and by threes –
And that's how they win the rest.

Henry Lawson

I'm An Older Man Than You

WHEN you've managed with the tailor for a rig-out of a sort
And you find the coat or trousers are an inch or so too short,
Do not fret and swear and worry, make the tailor see you through—
I have been through many new suits, I'm an older man than you.

When your girl is interfering with your appetite and work,
With your sleep and time and reason till the jealous demons lurk;
When your girl is playing with you, leave her for a week or two:
If in vain, then quit for ever!—I'm an older man than you.

When your wife deceives or leaves you for a "blackguard", "brute", and "sot",
And when not a soul believes you when you say that you were not;
Do not rave or brood and weaken, and the years will prove you true,
Let your own self be the beacon!—I'm an older man than you.

Do not take a silly mistress in your vanity accursed,
And a second wife (or husband) but reminds you of the first;
Banish mutual friends, and pity (kill or cure relations, too),
Shun false "reconciliation"—I'm an older man than you.

Be the cause however worthy, and your case however strong,
Be your wrong however cruel, drink will put you in the wrong.
Drink will neutralize and murder all the good that time can do
(Though our birthdays come together, I'm an older man than you).

But for ever and for ever, over seas and through the lands,
Go the hand laid on the shoulder and the silent grip of hands
With a world of human feeling—men who know and men who knew:
Clear your soul of pessimism—I'm an older man than you.

Henry Lawson

I'D Back Again The World

She's not like an empress,
And crowned with raven hair,
She is not "pert an' bonny,"
Nor "winsome, wee, an' fair."
But when a man's in trouble,
And darkest shadows fall,
She's just a little woman
I'd back against them all.
I'd back against them all,
When friends on rocks are hurled—
Oh, she's the little woman
I'd back against the world.

She has her little temper
(As all the world can know)
When things are running smoothly,
She sometimes lets it go;
But when the sea is stormy,
And clouds are like a pall,
Oh, she's the little woman
I'd back against them all.

I'd back against the world,
When darkest shadows fall—
Oh, she's the little woman
I'd back against them all.

She's had to stand at business
Till she was fit to drop;
She has to count the pennies
When she goes to the shop.
She has no land or terrace,
Nor money in the bank,
And, save what's in her ownself,
No influence nor rank.

No influence nor rank
While darker shadows fall—
Oh, she's a little woman

I'd back against them all.

It will not last for ever,
As old time goes his rounds,
Where now she counts the pennies
She yet shall count the pounds.
And those who laugh to see her,
Or pass her unawares,
Shall stand beside her motor car,
And bow her up the stairs.

And bow her up the stairs,
When foes on rocks are hurled—
For she's the little woman
I'll back against the world.

Or may I slave in prisons,
In mental misery,
And no one write a letter,
And no one visit me!
And may I rot with paupers,
A ditch without a stone,
My work be never quoted,
And my grave be never known.

My work be never quoted,
When friends on rocks are hurled—
Ah! she's a little woman
I'd back against the world.

Henry Lawson

I'LI Tell You What You Wanderers

I'll tell you what you wanderers, who drift from town to town;
Don't look into a good girl's eyes, until you've settled down.
It's hard to go away alone and leave old chums behind-
It's hard to travel steerage when your tastes are more refined-
To reach a place when times are bad, and to be standing there,
No money in your pocket nor a decent rag to wear.
But be forced from that fond clasp, from that last clinging kiss-
By poverty! There is on earth no harder thing than this.

Henry Lawson

In Possum Land

In Possum Land the nights are fair,
The streams are fresh and clear;
No dust is in the moonlit air;
No traffic jars the ear.

With Possums gambolling overhead,
'Neath western stars so grand,
Ah! would that we could make our bed
Tonight in Possum Land.

Henry Lawson

In The Days When The World Was Wide

The world is narrow and ways are short, and our lives are dull and slow,
For little is new where the crowds resort, and less where the wanderers go;
Greater, or smaller, the same old things we see by the dull road-side --
And tired of all is the spirit that sings
of the days when the world was wide.

When the North was hale in the march of Time,
and the South and the West were new,
And the gorgeous East was a pantomime, as it seemed in our boyhood's view;
When Spain was first on the waves of change,
and proud in the ranks of pride,
And all was wonderful, new and strange in the days when the world was wide.

Then a man could fight if his heart were bold,
and win if his faith were true --
Were it love, or honour, or power, or gold, or all that our hearts pursue;
Could live to the world for the family name, or die for the family pride,
Could fly from sorrow, and wrong, and shame
in the days when the world was wide.

They sailed away in the ships that sailed ere science controlled the main,
When the strong, brave heart of a man prevailed
as 'twill never prevail again;
They knew not whither, nor much they cared --
let Fate or the winds decide --
The worst of the Great Unknown they dared
in the days when the world was wide.

They raised new stars on the silent sea that filled their hearts with awe;
They came to many a strange countree and marvellous sights they saw.
The villagers gaped at the tales they told,
and old eyes glistened with pride --
When barbarous cities were paved with gold
in the days when the world was wide.

'Twas honest metal and honest wood, in the days of the Outward Bound,
When men were gallant and ships were good -- roaming the wide world round.
The gods could envy a leader then when `Follow me, lads!' he cried --

They faced each other and fought like men
in the days when the world was wide.

They tried to live as a freeman should -- they were happier men than we,
In the glorious days of wine and blood, when Liberty crossed the sea;
'Twas a comrade true or a foeman then, and a trusty sword well tried --
They faced each other and fought like men
in the days when the world was wide.

The good ship bound for the Southern seas when the beacon was Ballarat,
With a `Ship ahoy!' on the freshening breeze,
`Where bound?' and `What ship's that?' --
The emigrant train to New Mexico -- the rush to the Lachlan Side --
Ah! faint is the echo of Westward Ho!
from the days when the world was wide.

South, East, and West in advance of Time -- and, ay! in advance of Thought
Those brave men rose to a height sublime -- and is it for this they fought?
And is it for this damned life we praise the god-like spirit that died
At Eureka Stockade in the Roaring Days
with the days when the world was wide?

We fight like women, and feel as much; the thoughts of our hearts we guard;
Where scarcely the scorn of a god could touch,
the sneer of a sneak hits hard;
The treacherous tongue and cowardly pen, the weapons of curs, decide --
They faced each other and fought like men
in the days when the world was wide.

Think of it all -- of the life that is! Study your friends and foes!
Study the past! And answer this: `Are these times better than those?'
The life-long quarrel, the paltry spite, the sting of your poisoned pride!
No matter who fell it were better to fight
as they did when the world was wide.

Boast as you will of your mateship now -- crippled and mean and sly --
The lines of suspicion on friendship's brow
were traced since the days gone by.
There was room in the long, free lines of the van
to fight for it side by side --
There was beating-room for the heart of a man
in the days when the world was wide.

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With its dull, brown days of a-shilling-an-hour
the dreary year drags round:
Is this the result of Old England's power?
-- the bourne of the Outward Bound?
Is this the sequel of Westward Ho! -- of the days of Whate'er Betide?
The heart of the rebel makes answer `No!
We'll fight till the world grows wide!

The world shall yet be a wider world -- for the tokens are manifest;
East and North shall the wrongs be hurled that followed us South and West.
The march of Freedom is North by the Dawn! Follow, whate'er betide!
Sons of the Exiles, march! March on! March till the world grows wide!

Henry Lawson

In The Day's When We Are Dead

Listen! The end draws nearer,
Nearer the morning—or night—
And I see with a vision clearer
That the beginning was right!
These shall be words to remember
When all has been done and said,
And my fame is a dying ember
In the days when I am dead.

Listen! We wrote in sorrow,
And we wrote by candle light;
We took no heed of the morrow,
And I think that we were right—
(To-morrow, but not the day after,
And I think that we were right).

We wrote of a world that was human
And we wrote of blood that was red,
For a child, or a man, or a woman—
Remember when we are dead.

Listen! We wrote not for money,
And listen! We wrote not for fame—
We wrote for the milk and the honey
Of Kindness, and not for a name.

We paused not, nor faltered for any,
Though many fell back where we led;
We wrote of the few for the many—
Remember when we are dead.

We suffered as few men suffer,
Yet laughed as few men laugh;
We grin as the road grows rougher,
And a bitterer cup we quaff.

We lived for Right and for Laughter,
And we fought for a Nation ahead—
Remember it, friends, hereafter,
In the years when I am dead—

For to-morrow and not the day after,
For ourselves, and a Nation ahead.

Henry Lawson

In The Height Of Fashion

SO at last a toll they'll levy
For the passing fool who sings—
Take the harp grown dull and heavy
(With the dried blood on the strings)
Let us sing, and sing right gaily,
For the wreath is on our brow—
Are you hearin', Victor Daley?
We are fashionable now!

Once the greatest earl could flout us,
And the meanest scribe could sneer—
Nought too bad to say about us,
Nought too hard for us to hear.
Slaves to journal-owning Neroes,
And we died—no matter how—
We're sweet singers now and heroes,
We are fashionable now.

Once we suffered all save gaol, if
We'd no rich admirers near;
And our sole guest was the bailiff
And our only comfort beer.
Now we'll dine with toffs and "ladies",
Who shall clasp our hands and bow.
Let the pale muse go to Hades!
We are fashionable now.

Once we had to be contented
With the "Palace of the Mind",
While our coats were washed and mended,
And our pants were patched behind;
Now by goose-knights we are measured,
While the lordly tailors bow;
And our worn-out pants are treasured—
We are fashionable now!

Once, when stony-broke and mournful,
We put our petition clear,
Then our country, cold and scornful,

Answered, "Go and get a beer!"
And it threw the tray bit at us
Just to stop our "silly row",
Now it's champagne spreads and—satis!
We are fashionable now.

Once our grandest lines were drivel,
And our wisest words were rot,
All our teachings false and evil,
To be sneered at and forgot;
Now our silliest clack delights 'em,
Doggerel their feelings plow,
And our shallow bluff affrights 'em—
We are fashionable now!

"I adore the Swagman—Drover—
'When the World was Round!'—But ah!
'While the Billy's Boiling Over'
Is too awfully hurrah!"
Thus the maiden trills and gushes
While her johnnie knots his brow,
And the fair young maiden blushes—
We are fashionable now!

"I like your book, Mr Lawson,
'Clancy of the Overflow',
Better far than Mr Banjo's—
'When Your Pants Begin to Go'."
No! I am no longer snarling,
Long ago we had our row—
Don't be angry, Banjo, darling,
Though I'm fashionable now.

I am feeling young and restive—
Skittish more than I can tell,
Skipping with a skip that's festive,
Singing with a gladsome yell.
I will let my hair grow longer,
Storm-tossed from my stormy brow,
I am going strong and stronger—
For I'm fashionable now.

We shall write lines to their poodles—
Darlings of Society—
Praise the blatant cad who boodles,
Write odes to the Divorcee.
Let, at last Australia know its
Brilliant circles anyhow,
We're the Doo-dah, Doo-dah! Poets—
We are fashionable now.

Henry Lawson

In The Storm That Is To Come

By our place in the midst of the furthest seas we were fated to stand alone -
When the nations fly at each other's throats let Australia look to her own;
Let her spend her gold on the barren west, let her keep her men at home;
For the South must look to the South for strength in the storm that is to come.

Now who shall gallop from cape to cape, and who shall defend our shores -
The crowd that stand on the kerb agape and glares at the cricket scores?
And who will hold the invader back when the shells tear up the ground -
The weeds that yelp by the cycling track while a nigger scorches round?

There may be many to man the forts in the big towns beside the sea -
But the East will call to the West for scouts in the storm that is to be:
The West cries out to the East in drought, but the coastal towns are dumb;
And the East must look to the West for food in the war that is to come.

The rain comes down on the Western land and the rivers run to waste,
When the city folk rush for the special tram in their childless, senseless haste,
And never a pile of a lock we drive - but a few mean tanks we scratch -
For the fate of a nation is nought compared with the turn of a cricket match!

There's a gutter of mud where there spread a flood from the land-long western
creeks,
There is dust and drought on the plains far out where the water lay for weeks,
There's a pitiful dam where a dyke should stretch and a tank where a lake should
be,
And the rain goes down through the silt and sand and the floods waste into the
seas.

We'll fight for Britain or for Japan, we will fling the land's wealth out;
While every penny and every man should be used to fight the drought.
God helps the nation that helps itself, and the water brings the rain,
And a deadlier foe than the world could send is loose on the western plain.

I saw a vision in days gone by and would dream that dream again
Of the days when the Darling shall not back her billabongs up in vain.
There were reservoirs and grand canals where the Dry Country had been,
And a glorious network of aqueducts, and the fields were always green.

I have seen so long in the land I love what the land I love might be,

Where the Darling rises from Queensland rains and the floods run into the sea.
And it is our fate that we'll wake to late to the truth that we were blind,
With a foreign foe at our harbour gate and a blazing drought behind!

Henry Lawson

In The Street

Where the needle-woman toils
Through the night with hand and brain,
Till the sickly daylight shudders like a spectre at the pain –
Till her eyes seem to crawl,
And her brain seems to creep –

And her limbs are all a-tremble for the want of rest and sleep!
It is there the fire-brand blazes in my blood; and it is there
That I see the crimson banner of the Children of Despair!
That I feel the soul and music in a rebel's battle song,
And the greatest love for justice and the hottest hate for wrong!

When the foremost in his greed
Presses heavy on the last –
In the brutal spirit rising from the grave-yard of the past –
Where the poor are trodden down
And the rich are deaf and blind!

It is there I feel the greatest love and pity for mankind:
There – where heart to heart is saying, though the tongue and lip be still:
We've been through it all and know it! brother, we've been through the mill!
There the spirits of my brothers rise the higher for defeat,
And the drums of revolution roll for ever in the street!

Christ is coming once again,
And his day is drawing near;
He is leading on the thousands of the army of the rear!
We shall know the second advent
By the lower skies aflame

With the signals of his coming, for he comes not as he came –
Not humble, meek, and lowly, as he came in days of old,
But with hatred, retribution for the worshippers of gold!
And the roll of battle music and the steady tramp of feet
Sound for ever in the thunder and the rattle of the street!

Henry Lawson

Introduction – A Glimpse Of Boyhood

“Boys out there by the western creeks,
Who hurry away from school,
To climb the spurs of the breezy peaks,
Or dive in the shaded pool”

Henry Lawson

Ireland Shall Rebel

WHILE tyrants rule the land,
Beneath the Irish skies;
While e'er the iron hand
Upon our people lies;
While sons are driven forth
In other lands to dwell,
Still in the South and North
Old Ireland will rebel!
Rebel, rebel!
Old Ireland will rebel!

While fanlike from below,
And pale against the skies,
That light of shame—the glow
Of burning homes—shall rise;
While hot indignant tears
From Irish hearts shall swell:—
Be it a thousand years,
Old Ireland will rebel!
Rebel, rebel!
Old Ireland will rebel!

Until the tyrant's rod
Shall broken be in twain,
And on the dear old sod
Blest freedom treads again;
Or till our masters learn
To rule our country well,
The fires of hate shall burn!—
Old Ireland will rebel!
Rebel, rebel!
Old Ireland will rebel!

Henry Lawson

Jack Cornstalk

Jack Cornstalk as a drover born,
Jack Cornstalk gaunt and tan,
Jack Cornstalk leaves his love forlorn,
Jack Cornstalk man to man.
Jack Cornstalk as a careless scamp,
With day-dreams in his head;
Jack Cornstalk on his lone, wide camp,
Jack Cornstalk with his dead,
Jack Cornstalk at his best and worst.
The day dawns on his brow,
Jack Cornstalk's country must be first –
Advance Australia now!

Henry Lawson

Jack Cornstalk As A Drover

"Dry scrub and dusty clearing
The long, hot, drowsy day;
The land line ever nearing
And ever far away.

Henry Lawson

Jack Cornstalk As A Lover

'For he rides hard to dull the pain,
Who rides from him who loves him best;
But he rides slowly home again,
Whose restless heart must rove for rest.'

Henry Lawson

Jack Cornstalk As A Poet

“Not from the seas does he draw inspiration,
Not from the rivers that croon on their bars;
But a wide, a world-old desolation –
On a dead land alone with the stars.

The long hot day gone over,
And starlight come again;
And I, weary rover,
Lie camped on One Tree Plain.

My saddle for a pillow,
I lie beneath the tree,
That softens to a willow,
In the moonlight over me.

I dream that I remember
A dim and distant day,
Beyond yon misty timber,
In the Home-world far away.

Henry Lawson

Jack Cornstalk In His Teens

"If not in the Garden, he had in the ark,
To neither the beasts' nor the passengers' joy.
Full many a boyish and monkeyish lark,
The sandy-complexioned, the freckle-faced boy.

And down through the ages he rattles the drums,
While armies and nations each other destroy;
The century goes, and the century comes
But he lives on forever, the freckle-faced boy.

All over the world are the lands of his birth;
And when Time and Transgression this planet destroy
He will come to advise the last man on earth
The fatherly, chummy, the freckle-faced boy."

Henry Lawson

Jack Dunn Of Nevertire

It chanced upon the very day we'd got the shearing done,
A buggy brought a stranger to the West-o'-Sunday Run;
He had a round and jolly face, and he was sleek and stout,
He drove right up between the huts and called the super out.
We chaps were smoking after tea, and heard the swell enquire
For one as travelled by the name of `Dunn of Nevertire'.

Jack Dunn of Nevertire,
Poor Dunn of Nevertire;
There wasn't one of us but knew Jack Dunn of Nevertire.

`Jack Dunn of Nevertire,' he said; `I was a mate of his;
And now it's twenty years since I set eyes upon his phiz.
There is no whiter man than Jack -- no straighter south the line,
There is no hand in all the land I'd sooner grip in mine;
To help a mate in trouble Jack would go through flood and fire.
Great Scott! and don't you know the name of Dunn of Nevertire?

Big Dunn of Nevertire,
Long Jack from Nevertire;
He stuck to me through thick and thin, Jack Dunn of Nevertire.

`I did a wild and foolish thing while Jack and I were mates,
And I disgraced my guv'nor's name, an' wished to try the States.
My lamps were turned to Yankee Land, for I'd some people there,
And I was right when someone sent the money for my fare;
I thought 'twas Dad until I took the trouble to enquire,
And found that he who sent the stuff was Dunn of Nevertire,

Jack Dunn of Nevertire,
Soft Dunn of Nevertire;
He'd won some money on a race -- Jack Dunn of Nevertire.

`Now I've returned, by Liverpool, a swell of Yankee brand,
To reckon, guess, and kalkilate, 'n' wake my native land;
There is no better land, I swear, in all the wide world round --
I smelt the bush a month before we touched King George's Sound!
And now I've come to settle down, the top of my desire
Is just to meet a mate o' mine called `Dunn of Nevertire'.

Was raised at Nevertire --
The town of Nevertire;

He humped his bluey by the name of `Dunn of Nevertire'.

`I've heard he's poor, and if he is, a proud old fool is he;
But, spite of that, I'll find a way to fix the old gum-tree.
I've bought a station in the North -- the best that could be had;
I want a man to pick the stock -- I want a super bad;
I want no bully-brute to boss -- no crawling, sneaking liar --
My station super's name shall be `Jack Dunn of Nevertire'!
 Straight Dunn of Nevertire,
 Old Dunn of Nevertire;
I guess he's known up Queensland way -- Jack Dunn of Nevertire.'

The super said, while to his face a strange expression came:
`I THINK I've seen the man you want, I THINK I know the name;
Had he a jolly kind of face, a free and careless way,
Gray eyes that always seem'd to smile, and hair just turning gray --
Clean-shaved, except a light moustache, long-limbed, an' tough as wire?'
`THAT'S HIM! THAT'S DUNN!' the stranger roared, `Jack Dunn of Nevertire!
 John Dunn of Nevertire,
 Jack D. from Nevertire,
They said I'd find him here, the cuss! -- Jack Dunn of Nevertire.

`I'd know his walk,' the stranger cried, `though sobered, I'll allow.'
`I doubt it much,' the boss replied, `he don't walk that way now.'
`Perhaps he don't!' the stranger said, `for years were hard on Jack;
But, if he were a mile away, I swear I'd know his back.'
`I doubt it much,' the super said, and sadly puffed his briar,
`I guess he wears a pair of wings -- Jack Dunn of Nevertire;
 Jack Dunn of Nevertire,
 Brave Dunn of Nevertire,
He caught a fever nursing me, Jack Dunn of Nevertire.'

We took the stranger round to where a gum-tree stood alone,
And in the grass beside the trunk he saw a granite stone;
The names of Dunn and Nevertire were plainly written there --
`I'm all broke up,' the stranger said, in sorrow and despair,
`I guess he has a wider run, the man that I require;
He's got a river-frontage now, Jack Dunn of Nevertire;
 Straight Dunn of Nevertire,
 White Jack from Nevertire,
I guess Saint Peter knew the name of `Dunn of Nevertire'.'

Henry Lawson

John Cornstalk

Jack Cornstalk lives in the Southern Land—
What says Cornstalk John?
Jack Cornstalk says in a loud firm voice:
“Land of the South, lead on.”

CHORUS:

Land of the South, lead on, lead on,
Land of the South, lead on!
Land of the South, lead on, lead on,
Lead on, Land of the South!

John Bull lays claim to the Southern Land.
Jack, is the South Land thine?
John Cornstalk cries in a loud, firm voice:
“The Land of the South is mine!”

Land of the South, lead on, lead on,
Land of the South, lead on!
Land of the South, lead on, lead on,
Lead on, Land of the South!

“By the long, long years my father toiled
In the pioneering band;
By the hardships of those early days,
I claim the Southern Land!”

Land of the South, lead on, lead on,
Land of the South, lead on!
Land of the South, lead on, lead on,
Lead on, Land of the South!

But where shall the Land of the South lead to?
Where lead the nation’s van?
Jack Cornstalk cries from his strong young heart:
“To the Dynasty of Man.”

Land of the South, lead on, lead on,
Land of the South, lead on!
Land of the South, lead on, lead on,

Lead on, Land of the South!

Henry Lawson

Johnson, Alias Crow

Where the seasons are divided and the bush begins to change,
and the links are rather broken in the Great Dividing Range;
where the atmosphere is hazy underneath the summer sky,
lies the little town of Eton, rather westward of Mackay.
Near the township, in the graveyard, where the dead of Eton go,
lies the body of a sinner known as "Johnson alias Crow".
He was sixty-four was Johnson, and in other days, lang syne,
was apprenticed to a ship-wright in the land across the Rhine;
but, whatever were his prospects in the days of long ago,
things went very bad with Johnson—Heinrich Johnson (alias Crow).
He, at Eton—where he drifted in his age, a stranded wreck—
got three pounds by false pretences, in connection with a cheque.
But he didn't long enjoy it, the police soon got to know;
and the lockup closed on Johnson, lonely Johnson alias Crow.
Friday night, and Crow retired, feeling, as he said, unwell;
and the warder heard the falling of a body in the cell.
Going in, the warder saw him bent with pain and crouching low—
Death had laid his hand on Johnson, Heinrich Johnson, alias Crow.
Then the constable bent o'er him—asked him where he felt the pain. Johnson
only said, "I'm dying"—and he never spoke again.
They had waited for a witness, and the local people say
Johnson's trial would have ended on that very Saturday;
but he took his case for judgment where our cases all must go,
and the higher court is trying Heinrich Johnson (alias Crow).

Henry Lawson

Joseph's Dreams And Reuben's Brethren [a Recital In Six Chapters]

CHAPTER I

I cannot blame old Israel yet,
For I am not a sage—
I shall not know until I get
The son of my old age.
The mysteries of this Vale of Tears
We will perchance explain
When we have lived a thousand years
And died and come again.

No doubt old Jacob acted mean
Towards his father's son;
But other hands were none too clean,
When all is said and done.
There were some things that had to be
In those old days, 'tis true—
But with old Jacob's history
This tale has nought to do.

(They had to keep the birth-rate up,
And populate the land—
They did it, too, by simple means
That we can't understand.
The Patriarchs' way of fixing things
Would make an awful row,
And Sarah's plain, straightforward plan
Would never answer now.)
his is a tale of simple men
And one precocious boy—
A spoilt kid, and, as usual,
His father's hope and joy
(It mostly is the way in which
The younger sons behave
That brings the old man's grey hairs down
In sorrow to the grave.)

Old Jacob loved the whelp, and made,
While meaning to be kind,
A coat of many colours that
Would strike a nigger blind!
It struck the brethren green, 'twas said—
I'd take a pinch of salt
Their coats had coloured patches too—
But that was not their fault.

Young Joseph had a soft thing on,
And, humbugged from his birth,
You may depend he worked the thing
For all that it was worth.
And that he grafted not but crowed,
You don't need to be told,
And he was mighty cocky, with
His "Lo!" and his "Behold!"

He took in all his brothers said,
And went and told his Dad,
And then, when someone split on him,
No wonder they were mad.
But still he wasn't satisfied,
And it would almost seem
He itched to rile his brethren, for
He went and dreamed a dream,

And told it to his brothers straight
(So Genesis believes):—
"Lo! we were working in the field,
And we were binding sheaves,
And my sheaf rose and stood upright,
And, straightway, for a sign,
Your sheaves came round about and made
Obeisance to mine!"

The brethren stared and made comment
In words that were not mild,
And when the meaning dawned on them
You bet that they were wild!
And Joseph left those angry men
To boil and blow off steam,

And ambled, chuckling, home agen
To dream another dream.

“Behold! I’ve dreamed a dream once more!”

He told ‘em, frank and free—

“The sun, moon, and eleven stars
Have likewise bowed to me!”

(Perhaps Astronomy has changed
Since Joseph saw the light,
But I have wondered what the sun
Was doing out at night.)

And when they dropped!—you never heard,
In sheds or shanty bars,
Such awful language as escaped
From those eleven stars.

You know how Jacob-Israel loved
His hopeful youngest pup;
But, when he heard the latest dream,
It shook the old man up.

But Joseph talked his father round,
Who humoured every whim
(Perhaps old Jacob half-believed
They would bow down to him):
But, anyway, as always was,
He backed the youngest son,
And sent the others with the sheep
Out to the Check-’em run.

CHAPTER II

Now Jacob, with that wondrous tact
That doting parents show,
Or, anxious for his sons out back,
Sent, of all others, Joe!
To see if it was well with them
(And they were not asleep),
With one eye on his brothers’ camp,
And one eye on the sheep.

He drew a blank on Check-'em run—
Got bushed, too, you'll be bound.
A certain cove—there's always one—
Saw Joseph mooning round.
He asked him how it came to pass,
And what it was about,
And said, "They're trav-lin' now for grass
In Doothen—further out."

He also muttered, "Strike me blue!"
While staring at the clothes—
He'd never seen a jackaroo
With such a coat as Joe's.
He set the nameless on the track,
And scratched his head to think,
But gave it best, and, riding back,
Said firmly, "Strike me pink!"

'Twas blazing hot in Doothen then,
The sweat ran down in streams—
It melted out the memory
Of even Joseph's dreams!
They'd had some trouble with the sheep,
Some Arabs and a "shirk"—
It was a favourable time
For Joe to get to work.

They saw him coming, "afar off"—
In this case, you might note,
Their eyesight wasn't wonderful,
Considering the coat.
And what with sheep, and dust, and flies,
And damned shirks in the swim
With sheep stealers, the brethren were
For absenteeing him.

And, add to that, he scared the kine
With his infernal coat—
They trampled on the sheep and swine
And startled every goat.
The brethren had to round up then

As fast as ass could go,
And when they got to camp agen
They'd fixed it up for Joe.

Save poor old Rube—he had the blight,
But, grafting all the same,
He only looked on family rows
As just a blooming shame.
Like many an easy-going man,
He had a cunning soul.
He said, "We will not kill the kid,
But shove him in a hole,

And leave him there to dream o' things"—
There's not the slightest doubt
He meant to slip round after dark
And pull the youngster out,
And fill his gourd and tucker-bag,
And tell him "Not to mind",
And start him on the back-track with
A gentle kick behind.

Some Tothersider prospectors
Had been there poking round;
You may depend that Reuben knew
'Twas "dry and shallow ground".
They dropped young Joseph in a hole—
The giddy little goat—
And left him there, to cool his heels,
Without his overcoat.

(Don't think that Moses, such a whale
On dry facts, thought it wet
To say, when they'd chucked Joseph in,
It was an empty pit!
So many things are preached and said
Where'er the Bible is
To prove that Moses never read
The "proofs" of Genesis.)

But let's get on. While having grub,
A brethren sniffed and "seen"

Some Ishmaelites pass through the scrub—
Or O-asses, I mean.
They'd been right out to Gilead—
A rather longish trip—
For camel-loads of balm, and myrrh,
And spicery for 'Gyp.

(I've often seen the Afghans pass
With camel strings out back,
And thought 'twas somewhat similar
On that old Bible track.
I don't know much of balm and myrrh,
Whatever they may be,
But e'en when sheepskins were not there,
I've smelt the spicery.)

It was the same in Canaan then
As it is here to-day:
A sudden thought jerked Judah up
For "brofit " straight away.
The brethren got on one end too
When Judah jumped and said,
"We'll sell the kid for what he brings!
He's no good when he's dead."

And, to be short, they being Jews—
The "chosing" of the earth—
They sold him to the Ishmaelites
For more than twice his worth.
(Some Midianitish auctioneers
Were also on the job.)
'Twas "twenty bits of silver", which
I s'pose was twenty bob.

So they most comfortably got
Young Joseph off their hands,
For Ishmael never bothered much
About receipts or brands.
(They spake not of his dreams and cheek,
His laziness, or "skite";
No doubt they thought the Ishmaelites
Would see to that all right.)

Then Reuben came; he'd been around
To watch the sheep a bit,
And on his way back to the camp
He slipped round by the pit
To give young Joe a drink. He stared,
And, thinking Joe was dead,
He rent his gown like mad, and ran
For ashes for his head.

(As if that would do any good!
I only know that I
Cannot afford to rend my clothes
When my relations die.
I don't suppose they would come back,
Or that the world would care,
If I went howling for a year
With ashes in my hair.)

You say he counted on a new
Rig-out? Yes? And you know
That Jacob tore his garment too,
So that old cock won't crow.
Look here! You keep your smart remarks
Till after I am gone.
I won't have Reuben silver-tailed—
Nor Pharaoh, later on.

The brethren humbugged Reuben well,
For fear he'd take the track,
And sneak in on the Ishmaelites,
And steal young Joseph back,
Or fight it out if he was caught,
And die—as it might be—
Or, at the best, go down with Joe
And into slavery.

Young Simeon slipped into the scrub,
To where the coat was hid,
And Judah stayed and wept with Rube,
While Levi killed a kid.
So they fixed up the wild-beast yarn,

And Hebrews sadly note—
Considering the price of cloth—
They had to spoil the coat.

(There was a yam about old Rube
That all true men despise,
Spread by his father's concubines—
A vicious strumpet's lies.
But I believe old Moses was,
As we are, well aware
That Reuben stood in this last scene
The central figure there.)

I feel for poor old Israel's grief,
Believing all the same
(And not with atheist unbelief)
That Jacob was to blame.
'Twas ever so, and shall be done,
While one fond fool has breath—
Fond folly drives the youngest son
To ruin and to death.

The caravan went jogging on
To Pharaoh's royal town,
But Genesis gives no account
Of Joseph's journey down.
I wouldn't be surprised to hear
He found it pretty rough,
But there's a bare chance that his hide,
As well as cheek, was tough.

I see them toiling through the heat,
In patches and in dirt,
With sand-grooved sandals on their feet,
And slaves without a shirt—
The dust-caked thirst, the burning ground,
The mad and maddening flies,
That gathered like black goggles round
The piccaninnies' eyes.

The Ishmaelites had tempers brief,
And whips of hide and gut,
And sometimes, p'raps, for Hagar's sake,
Gave Joe an extra cut.
When, fainting by the way, he felt
The stimulating touch,
I have no doubt he often wished
He hadn't dreamed so much.

He didn't dream much on that trip,
Although he thought a lot.
However, they got down to 'Gyp
In good time, where he got
A wash and rest—he needed both—
And in the old slave-yard
Was sold to Captain Potiphar,
Of Pharaoh's body-guard.

INTERLUDE

I PAUSE to state that later on
(And it seems worth the halt)
Smart Judah gat into a mess,
Though it was not his fault.
And I would only like to say,
In this most thankless task,
Wives sell to husbands every day,
And that without a mask.

But, what with family rows and drought,
And blessed women too,
The fathers of terrestrial tribes
Had quite enough to do.
They had to graft both day and night,
With no rest, save the last,
For when they were not grafting they
Were populating fast.

CHAPTER III

The Captain was a casual man,
But seemed a shrewd one too;
He got young Joseph's measure soon,
And saw what he could do.
The Lord was with Joe, Moses said—
I know that Joe had pluck—
But I believe 'twas mostly check,
And his infernal luck.

The Captain made him manager,
Housekeeper, overseer,
And found that this arrangement paid—
That much at least is clear.
And what with merchants, clerks, and slaves,
Joe led a busy life,
With one eye on the maid-servants,
And "Jeames" and Potty's wife.

The Captain seemed a casual man,
And "'Gyp" was on the glide:
There was a growing tendency
To live and let things slide.
He left all things in Joseph's hands—
According to old Mose—
And knew not what he had besides
His tucker and his clothes.

I guess he had a shrewd idea,
For it is now, as then—
The world most often makes mistakes
With easy-going men.
The Captain often went away
For quietness and rest,
And, maybe, for some other things—
Well, Potiphar knew best.

Perhaps the missus knew it too—

At least, she should have known—
And Joe was handsome, strange, and new,
And she was much alone.
It seems a funny business now,
But I was never there—
Perhaps so long as cheques came in
The Captain didn't care.

'Tis strange that Moses, such a whale
On details out of joint,
Should always come, in such a case,
So bluntly to the point.
He says Joe had a goodly form—
Or person it should be—
He says that she cast eyes on Joe,
And she said, "Lie with me."

It took young Joseph sudden like.
He'd heard, while on the run,
Of other women who could lie,
And in more ways than one;
Of men who had been gaoled or hanged—
As they are here to-day—
(Likewise of lovers who were banged),
And so he edged away.

She never moved, and so he stayed
While she was there to hear,
For his infernal vanity
Was stronger than his fear.
He bragged his opportunity,
His strength, and godliness:
"There is no greater in the house
Than I." (She made him less.)

'Twas cant to brag of purity
And right in that household,
For what was he if not a slave,
And basely bought and sold?
Unmanly for a man to treat
A love-starved woman so,
And cowardly to humiliate

A spirit thrust so low.

She knew that Joseph was a spy
On her and all the rest,
And this, with his outspoken "scorn",
Made reasons manifest.
She had her passions (don't be shocked,
For you have yours, no doubt),
And meant to take young Joseph down
And pay her husband out.

He was a slave, and bought and sold,
And I will say right here
His preaching was too manifold
And glib to be sincere,
When youth and "looks" turn goody-good—
You'll see it at a glance—
They have one eye to woman's help
And both on the main chance.

Now, had old Rube been in his place
(All honour to his name),
I'll swear he would have taken things
Exactly as they came,
And kept it dark—or fought it out,
As the ungodly can—
But, whatsoe'er he might have done,
He would have been a man!

Howbeit, the missus stuck to Joe,
Vindictive, vicious, grim,
And bore his sermons and rebuffs
Until she cornered him. . . .
He left his garment in her hand,
And gat him out of that. . . .
About the merits of the case
I'll say no more—that's flat.

(He knew all right what she was at,
And Potiphar was out,
He went alone into the house
When no one was about.

He may have been half-drunk or mad,
He certainly was blind,
To run no further than the yard,
And leave his coat behind!)

But, seeing how our laws are fixed,
If I get in such dirt,
I'll straightway get me out of that
If—I've to leave my shirt.
But I will keep the running up,
If I have common-sense,
Nor stop this side of Jericho
To think of my defence.

Joe should have streaked for Suez straight,
And tried his luck in flight
For Canaan, where they looked on things
In quite another light.
Old Jacob had experience,
And he'd have stuck to Joe.
He was a match for women's lies
That flabbergast us so.

The missus told the self-same tale,
And in the self-same way,
As our enfranchised females do
In police courts every day.
Too cowardly to breathe a breath
Against the vilest rip,
We send straight men to gaol or death,
Just as they did in 'Gyp.

Now, Potiphar was wondrous mild—
Suspiciously, to say
The least. He didn't operate
On Joseph straight away.
Perhaps he knew his wife no less
Than Joe, yet had regard
For his own peace and quietness—
So Joe got two years' hard.

CHAPTER IV

The Lord was with him, Moses said,
Yet his luck didn't fail,
For he got on the right side of
The governor of the gaol.
Perhaps he'd heard of Mrs P.,
And cases like to Joe's,
And knew as much of woman's work
As anybody knows.

He made Joe super-lag—a sort
Of deputy-retained
(The easy-going tendency
In Egypt seemed ingrained)—
Left everything in Joseph's hands,
Except, maybe, the keys;
And thereafter he let things slide,
And smoked his pipe in peace.

Now Pharaoh had some trouble with
His butler and his cook,
But Pharaoh seemed most lenient
With asses bought to book—
He didn't cut the weak end off
Each absent-minded wretch,
But mostly sent the idiots up
To "chokey" for a "stretch".

They found themselves in Joseph's care,
And it would almost seem
They'd got wind of his weaknesses,
For each one dreamed a dream.
"They dreamed a dream; both of them. Each
Man his dream in one night:
Each man according to his dream"
(And his own dream)—that's right.

Next morning they made up their "mugs",
And Joseph, passing through,
Asked them if they were feeling cronk,

And why they looked so blue?
They told him they had dreamed two dreams
(One each), and any dunce
Can understand how such remarks
Would int'rest Joe at once.

And there was no interpreter,
They said—and that was why
Joe said that that belonged to God—
But he would have a try.
I've noticed this with "Christians" since,
And often thought it odd—
They cannot keep their hands from things
They say belong to God.

The butler dreamed—or, anyway,
He said so (understand)—
He'd made some wine in Pharaoh's cup,
And placed it in his hand—
And Pharaoh placed the wine inside,
I s'pose. But, anyways,
There were three branches in the dream,
Which were, of course, three days.

The butler might have one again,
And Joseph, going strong,
By evil chance get wind of it,
And diagnose it wrong!
The cook had been the butler's mate,
And he thought (was it odd?)
That nightmare students such as Joe
Were safer far in quod.

He did repent him of his fault—
Though it was rather late—
For Pharaoh's dreams had called a halt,
A reason of some weight.
The butler hoped to score, but 'twas
A risky thing to do,
And you will wonder, later on,
If Joe "forgot" him too.

'Twas plain to any fool, so Joe
Said: "Yet within three days
Shall Pharaoh lift thine head up, and
Restore thee to thy place.
Thou shalt deliver Pharaoh's cup
Into his hand once more.
(And he shall drink the liquor down
Just as it was before.)

"But promise, when thou art all right,
And nothing is amiss,
To speak to Pharaoh of my case,
And get me out of this.
For I was kidnapped, likewise gaoled,
For nothing that I know."
(And, granting his celibacy,
'Twould seem that that was so.)

The cook, he was a godless cook,
But quietly he stood,
'Til Joseph's inspiration came—
And he saw it was good.
And then his dream he did unfold,
All straight and unrehearsed
(Without a "Lo!" or a "Behold!"
Or windmill business first):

"I'd three old baskets on me 'ed—
Now I ain't tellin' lies!—
The top 'un full of fancy bread
An' pork 'n' kidney pies.
I didn't bother looking up,
For it was blazin' 'ot—
There come a flock of crimson crows
And scoffed the bleedin' lot."

The cook he was a clever cook,
But he'd been on the spree—
He put the case as man to man,
And put it frank and free.
He patted Joseph on the back,
Told him to go ahead,

And Joseph met the cook half way,
And (man to man) he said:

“Within three days shall Pharaoh lift
Thine head from off of thee,
And he shall hang thee by the heels
To the most handy tree.
A flock of crows shall pick thy bones
(And, to be trebly sure,
His slaves shall pound them up with stones
And use them for manure).”

The butler passed an anxious night—
He wanted matters fixed—
For what if Joe’s prescriptions should
By some fool chance get mixed?
The cook—who was a careless cook—
Wrote scoff words on the wall,
But, when the time was up, he wished
He hadn’t dreamed at all.

And Pharaoh gave a feast—he’d got
Another chef this trip—
And his old butler he restored
Unto his butlership;
But hanged the cook. And after that—
Or this is how it seems—
The butler straight away forgat
Young Joseph and his dreams.

And maybe he was wise, for all
That anybody knows,
He’d seen the headless baker hanged,
And picked clean by the crows.
It struck him, too, when looking back
While calm and free from cares,
That Joseph had an off hand way
Of fixing up nightmares.

CHAPTER V

The gaol did Joseph little good,
Except by starts and fits,
But saved old Egypt for a while,
And brightened up his wits.
And, lest you thought me most unjust
In matters lately gone,
You read and know how holy Joe
Sold Egypt later on.

Her weather prophets were as good
As ours are, every bit,
But Pharaoh took to dreaming dreams,
And made a mess of it.
(And but for that—I do not care
What anybody thinks—
I'd not have lost my overcoat,
And watch and chain, and links.)

Now Joseph's and the prisoners' dreams
Were plain as dreams could be,
And more especially Pharaoh's dreams,
As far as I can see—
The same man who invented them
Could well have read them too,
But any third-rate showman knows
That that would never do.

There must be "Lo's", "Beholds", and "Yets",
And "It must come to pass",
'Til floods are gone, and tanks are dry,
And there's no crops nor grass.
And "Likewise", "Alsoes", "Says unto",
And countless weary "Ands",
Until Japan sends Chinamen
To irrigate the lands.

And Pharaoh must take off his ring
(The one from off his hand),
To put upon Joe's little fin,
That all might understand.
And they must ride in chariots,
Have banquets everywhere,

And launch trips up the Hawkesbury,
To see Australia there.

(I dreamed last night that cattle fed
Along the river flats,
They bore the brands of all the States,
And looked like "Queensland fats".
And lo! a mob of strangers came,
All bones, from horn to heel,
But they had nostrils breathing flame,
And they had horns of steel.

I dreamed that seven sheep were shorn
That went by seven tracks,
And strove to live the winter through
With sackcloth on their backs.
And lo! I dreamed, from east and west
There came two blades of heat—
One blackened all the towns like fire,
Like drought one burnt the wheat.

A black slave and a white slave laid
A golden carpet down,
And yellow guards stood round about,
And he that came was brown.
Men slaved beneath the whip in pits,
Who now slave willingly—
They sold their birthright for a "score".
Now read those dreams for me!)

But Joseph fixed up Pharaoh's dreams
As quick as I can tell—
And, for Australia's sake, I wish
That mine were fixed as well,
And nationalized from trusts and rings
And shady covenants;
But—we have thirteen little kings
Of thirteen Parliaments.

The years of plenty soon run out,
And, from the cricket score,
We'll turn to face the years of drought

And might-be years of war.
With neither money, men, nor guns,
With nothing but despair—
But I get tired of printing truths
For use—no matter where.

Joe said to seek a wise man out,
And Pharaoh took the Jew—
Adventurers fix up our dreams,
And we elect them too.
I mean no slur on any tribe
(My best friend was a Yid),
But we let boodlers shape our ends,
And just as Pharaoh did.

But Joseph did spy out the land,
If not for his own good
(He only boodled on the grand,
It must be understood).
He made a corner first in wheat,
And did it thoroughly—
No “trust” has ever seen since then
So great a shark as he.

And when the fearful famine came,
And corn was in demand,
He grabbed, in God’s and Pharaoh’s name,
The money, stock, and land.
(He knew the drought was very bad
In Canaan; crops were gone;
But never once inquired how his
Old Dad was getting on.)

CHAPTER VI

And after many barren years
Of spirit-breaking work,
I see the brethren journeying down
From Canaan’s West-o’-Bourke
And into Egypt to buy corn—

As, at this very hour,
My brethren toil through blazing heat
The weary miles for flour.

'Twas noble of our Joseph then,
The Governor of the land,
To bait those weary, simple men,
With "monies" in their hand;
To gratify his secret spite,
As only cowards can;
And preen his blasted vanity,
And strike through Benjamin.

He put a cup in Benny's sack,
And sent them on their way,
And sent the Pleece to bring 'em back
Before they'd gone a day.
The constable was well aware
Of Joseph's little plan,
And most indignant when he caught
The wretched caravan.

He yelled: "Have such things come to pass?
Howld hard there! Jerk 'em up!
Put down yer packs from every ass,
And fork out Phairey's cup!
It makes me sick, upon my soul,
The gratichood of man!
Ye had the feast, and then ye shtole
His silver billy-can."

They swore that they had seen no cup,
And after each had sworn
They said the sandstorm coming up
Would simply spoil the corn.
They begged that he would wait until
They reached the nearest barn.
He said, "O that's a wind that shook
The barley sort of yarn!

"(Now I'm no sergeant, understand—
Ye needn't call me that—

Oi want no sugar wid me sand
Whin Joseph smells a rat.)
Take down yer sacks from off yer backs—
The other asses too—
And rip the neck of every sack—
The boys will see yer through.”

The cup was found in Benjamin’s,
As all the world’s aware—
The constable seemed most surprised,
Because he’d put it there.
“A greenhorn raised on asses’ milk!
Well, this beats all I know!”
And then, when he had cautioned them,
He took the gang in tow.

And when they started out to rend
Their turbans and their skirts,
He said, “Ye drunken lunatics,
Ye needn’t tear yer shirts—
Ye’re goin’ where there’s ladies now,
So keep yer shirts on, mind.
(The Guvnor got in trouble wanst
For leavin’ his behind.)”

And Joseph gaoled and frightened them.
(The “feast” was not amiss:
It showed him most magnanimous
With all that wasn’t his.)
He took some extra graveyard pulls
At his old Dad’s grey hairs,
’Til Judah spoke up like a man—
And spoke up unawares.

Then Joseph said that he was Joe,
With Egypt in his clutch—
You will not be surprised to know
It didn’t cheer them much.
And when he saw they were afraid,
And bowed beneath the rod,
He summoned snuffle to his aid,
And put it all on God.

And now the brethren understood,
With keen regret, no doubt,
That sin is seldom any good
Unless it's carried out.
For after that heart-breaking trip
Across the scorching sands
They found themselves in Joseph's grip,
With Benny on their hands.

(Poor Reuben, to persuade his dad
To let the youngster come,
Had left his own sons' lives in pledge
For Benjamin, at home.
But life is made of many fires
And countless frying-pans—
As fast as we get rid of Joe's
We're plagued by Benjamin's.)

Joe had a use for them, so he
Bade them to have no fear.
He said to them, "It was not you,
But God, who sent me here.
He sent me on to save your lives;
He hath sent you to me,
To see to you and all your wives,
And your posterity.

"The Lord God hath exalted me,
And made me His right hand—
A father unto Pharaoh, and
A ruler in the land,
And likewise lord of Egypt"—
He said a few things more,
And then he got to business straight—
I've heard such cant before.

Those who have read will understand
I never mean to scoff,
But I hate all hypocrisy
And blasted showing-off.
How cunningly our holy Joe

Fixed up his tribe's affairs
For his own ends, and sprang the job
On Pharaoh unawares.

"The fame was heard in Pharaoh's house,"
Where peace and kindness thrived,
Saying, "Joseph's brethren are come"
(Joe's brothers have arrived).
And Pharaoh heard, and was well pleased,
For he was white all through.
(And Moses says, without remark,
It pleased the servants too.)

But Pharaoh promptly put an end
To Joseph's mummery.
He said, "Send waggons up, and bid
Thy people come to me.
Thou art commanded! Furnish them
With money and with food;
And say that I will give them land,
And see that it is good."

And Jacob's sons chucked up their runs
With blessings short and grim,
And Jacob took the stock and gear
And all his seed with him.
They sent the family tree ahead,
And Pharaoh read that same
(They found him very tired, 'twas said,
And misty when they came).

And Pharaoh unto Joseph spake
Most kind, though wearily:
"Thy father and thy brethren all
Are now come unto thee;
And Egypt is before thee now,
So in the best land make
Thy father and thy brethren dwell—
The land of Goshen take;

"And there, unhindered, let them thrive,
In comfort let them dwell,

Apart and free. My people love
All shepherds none too well—
But if thou knowest amongst them men
Of proved activity,
Then make them rulers over all
My flocks and herds for me.”

They brought five brethren unto him,
And he was very kind—
Perhaps he looked those brethren through,
And saw what lay behind.
His head he rested on his hand,
And smoothed his careworn brow,
He gazed on Israel thoughtfully,
And asked, “How old art thou?”

And Jacob told him, and was touched.
He said his days were few
And evil. They had not attained
To those his father knew.
But Jacob only had himself,
And no one else, to thank
If Joe had given his grey hairs
A second graveyard yank.

I think that Pharaoh was a man
Who always understood,
But was content to stand aside
If for his people’s good,
And seem not missed the while. He knew
His merits—and no pride—
And ’twas a grievous day for Jew
And Gentile when he died.

You know the rest of Joseph’s tale,
And well the poor Egyptians knew—
House agent on the grand old scale,
He boodled till the land was blue.
He squeezed them tight, and bled them white—

.

Until a Pharaoh came in sight
Who didn't know him from a crow.

The Patriarchs, right back from Dad
To where the line begins,
Were great at passing "blessings" on,
Together with their sins.
Old Noah was about the first—
Cursed Ham till all was blue,
But 'twas with some effect he cursed,
And with good reason too.

And when the time had come to pass
For Jacob to be gone,
He polished up his father's sins
And calmly passed them on.
He called his twelve sons round his bed
(Lest some good might befall),
He called his twelve sons to be blessed,
And cursed them, one and all

Save Joseph; and the rest had cause
To curse him ere they got
The English, who have every day
More cause to damn the lot.
And if they crossed the Red Sea now,
I guess we'd let them go,
With "Satan hurry Kohenstein"
And "God speed Ikey Mo!"

And lest my Jewish friends be wroth—
As they won't be with me—
I'll say that there is Jewish blood
In my posterity.
This verse, I trust, shall profit him
When he has ceased to grow—
My firstborn, who was known as "Jim",
But whose true name is "Joe".

AFTERWORD

I've written much that is to blame,
But I have only sought to show
That hearts of men were just the same
Some forty centuries ago.
All kindness comes with woman's love—
That which she claims is due to her—
Not man! not man! but God above
Dare judge the wife of Potiphar.

And Jacob shall be ever blind
To reason and posterity,
In that "fond folly" of mankind
That is born of impotency.
No parents' love or parents' wealth
Shall ever fairly portioned be,
Faith shall not come, except by stealth,
Nor justice in one family.

And Joseph proved unto this hour—
Just what he was in Holy Writ—
A selfish tyrant in his power,
And, up or down, a hypocrite.
And Joseph still, whate'er befall,
But gives his place to Benjamin,
And Reuben bears the brunt of all,
Though Judah does the best he can.

The hearts of men shall never change
While one man dies and one is born,
We journey yet, though ways seem strange,
Down into Egypt to buy corn.
Some prosper there, and they forget;
And some go down, and are forgot;
And Pride and Self betray us yet,
Till Pharaohs rise that know us not.

But kindness shall live for aye,
And, though we well our fate deserve,
Samaritans shall pass that way,
And kings like Pharaoh rule to serve.
We're fighting out of Egypt's track—

And, ah! the fight is ever grand—
Although, in Canaan or Out Back,
We never reach the Promised Land.

Henry Lawson

Kangaroo Power

NOW, Yankee inventors can beat a retreat,
And German professors may take a back seat,
For their colours we're going to lower:
They've invented a wonderful plough in the West,
The scientists call it "the latest and best";
It ploughs, sows, and reaps without taking a rest,
And they drive it by kangaroo power.

Sing hey!

Sing ho!

Then it's bully for kangaroo power!

O wondrous the changes our children shall meet,
For soon we may travel the principal street
In something far short of an hour.
The traffic shall flow without stoppage or jams
And sharp little screeches and naughty big damns,
For soon all the hansoms and 'busses and trams
Shall travel by kangaroo power.

Sing hey!

Sing ho!

Then it's bully for kangaroo power!

Advance, Young Australia, thy banner unfurled,
And jump through the years and astonish the world;
Thou art of all nations the flower.
And Bismarck with envy shall grind his old stumps,
And Yankee inventors shall sit in the dumps,
To see young Australia advancing by jumps,
When driven by kangaroo power.

Sing hey!

Sing ho!

Then it's bully for kangaroo power!

Henry Lawson

Keeping His First Wife Now

IT'S OH! for a rivet in marriage bonds,
And a splice in the knot untied—
The sanctity of the marriage tie
Is growing more sanctified!
They're getting mixed up in society,
There's an awful family row,
For Reginald Jones of "The Fernery"
Is "keeping" his first wife now!

Oh! she belonged to the smart, smart set
(Where reasons are far to seek)—
And the wedding and "crush" are remembered yet
As the "smart" things of the week.
Never an atom of love had she,
But they had a child somehow—
And Reginald Jones of "The Fernery"
Has the love of his first wife now.

Mad for "notice" and "talk" was she—
A butterfly blind as a bat—
She would flaunt for a season a divorcee,
Or divorce him, failing that.
He played his part and she held his heart
As light as her marriage vow—
But Reginald Jones of "The Fernery"
Has a hold on his first wife now.

She swore in Court what the world knew false,
With never a thought of shame—
She was free to flaunt to her heart's content,
But she found it mighty tame:
The talk of the "town" for a week or two—
The gush, the smirk and the bow—
But Reginald Jones of "The Fernery"
Is the God of his first wife now!

Her soul grew sick of the smart, smart set,
Or her conscience drove her wild—
Or she craved for "notice" and "talk" once more—

Or perhaps because of the child;
But they met at last and they met again—
No matter the where or how—
And Reginald Jones of "The Fernery"
Is in love with his first wife now.

'Tis a "terrible life" for the second young wife,
But she married him too for "place";
And she mustn't forget that a smarting set
Belongs to the human race.
They say it's fixed up in camera,
And, if that is the case, I'll vow,
That Reginald Jones of "The Fernery"
Will marry his first wife now.

And there is a song of the English world
And a song for the English race:
The second husband and second wife
Must ever take second place.
So cherish the best that you find in the first,
And a margin of width allow:
The future looks after itself too well!
Look after the first ones now.

Henry Lawson

Kerosine Bay

'Tis strange on such a peaceful day
With white clouds flying o'er,
That foreign boats are in the bay
As prisoners of war.
The Harbour, where they quietly lay;
Smiles brightly as of yore.

Where never angry shot was fired
To alter peaceful plans;
Where British lumpers worked till tired
With Yacob and with Hans,
And 'shouted' when their work was done
For other 'sailormans'.

And while we think of other lands
And what is doing there,
And while we think of what red hands
May wreak in our despair –
How can the Harbour be so blue,
And the sky above so fair?

Henry Lawson

Knocked Up

I'm lyin' on the barren ground that's baked and cracked with drought,
And dunno if my legs or back or heart is most wore out;
I've got no spirits left to rise and smooth me achin' brow --
I'm too knocked up to light a fire and bile the billy now.

Oh it's trampin', trampin', tra-a-mpin', in flies an' dust an' heat,
Or it's trampin' trampin' tra-a-a-mpin'
through mud and slush 'n sleet;
It's tramp an' tramp for tucker -- one everlastin' strife,
An' wearin' out yer boots an' heart in the wastin' of yer life.

They whine o' lost an' wasted lives in idleness and crime --
I've wasted mine for twenty years, and grafted all the time
And never drunk the stuff I earned, nor gambled when I shore --
But somehow when yer on the track yer life seems wasted more.

A long dry stretch of thirty miles I've tramped this broilin' day,
All for the off-chance of a job a hundred miles away;
There's twenty hungry beggars wild for any job this year,
An' fifty might be at the shed while I am lyin' here.

The sinews in my legs seem drawn, red-hot -- 'n that's the truth;
I seem to weigh a ton, and ache like one tremendous tooth;
I'm stung between my shoulder-blades -- my blessed back seems broke;
I'm too knocked out to eat a bite -- I'm too knocked up to smoke.

The blessed rain is comin' too -- there's oceans in the sky,
An' I suppose I must get up and rig the blessed fly;
The heat is bad, the water's bad, the flies a crimson curse,
The grub is bad, mosquitoes damned -- but rheumatism's worse.

I wonder why poor blokes like me will stick so fast ter breath,
Though Shakespeare says it is the fear of somethin' after death;
But though Eternity be cursed with God's almighty curse --
What ever that same somethin' is I swear it can't be worse.

For it's trampin', trampin', tra-a-mpin' thro' hell across the plain,
And it's trampin' trampin' tra-a-mpin' thro' slush 'n mud 'n rain --

A livin' worse than any dog -- without a home 'n wife,
A-wearin' out yer heart 'n soul in the wastin' of yer life.

Henry Lawson

Knockin' Around

Weary old wife, with the bucket and cow,
'How's your son Jack? and where is he now?'
Haggard old eyes that turn to the west—
'Boys will be boys, and he's gone with the rest!'
Grief without tears and grief without sound;
'Somewhere up-country he's knocking around.'
Knocking around with a vagabond crew,
Does for himself what a mother would do;
Maybe in trouble and maybe hard-up,
Maybe in want of a bite or a sup;
Dead of the fever, or lost in the drought,
Lonely old mother! he's knocking about.

Wiry old man at the tail of the plough,
'Heard of Jack lately? and where is he now?'
Pauses a moment his forehead to wipe,
Drops the rope reins while he feels for his pipe,
Scratches his grey head in sorrow or doubt:
'Somewheers or others he's knocking about.'

Knocking about on the runs of the West,
Holding his own with the worst and the best
Breaking in horses and risking his neck,
Droving or shearing and making a cheque;
Straight as a sapling—six-foot and sound,
Jack is all right when he's knocking around

Henry Lawson

Lachlan Side

REGION of damper and junk and tea,
Region of pastures wide!
The fairest spots in the world to me
Are out on the Lachlan Side.

CHORUS:

I'm off to the Lachlan Side,
Where the bright lagoons are wide;
I long for river and grass and tree,
And someone dearer than all to me,
Far out on the Lachlan Side.

My heart was hardened against advice
And reason I would not see,
For by the ocean a paradise
The city appeared to me.

CHORUS:

I'm off to the Lachlan Side, etc.

"Not I for a bumpkin's fate," I cried,
"I'll not be a country clown!
A life's too slow on the Lachlan Side;
I'll go to the shining town!"

CHORUS:

I'm off to the Lachlan Side, etc.

I've lost the battle, I strike the flag,
The town may sink in the tide;
A wiser head and a lighter swag
I take to the Lachlan Side.

CHORUS:

I'm off to the Lachlan Side, etc.

When crops of wool on the plains shall grow,
Shall flourish in drought or rain,
And when the shearers begin to mow

I'll come to the town again.

CHORUS:

I'm off to the Lachlan Side, etc.

But now I go to a kinder fate,
If her love still conquers pride;
Her heart was true when she sobbed, "I'll wait
For you on the Lachlan Side."

CHORUS:

I'm off to the Lachlan Side,
Where the bright lagoons are wide;
I long for river and grass and tree,
And someone dearer than all to me,
Far out on the Lachlan Side.

Henry Lawson

Lake Eliza

THE SAND was heavy on our feet,
A Christmas sky was o'er us,
And half a mile through dust and heat
Lake 'Liza lay before us.
'You'll have a long and heavy tramp'—
So said the last adviser—
'You can't do better than to camp
To-night at Lake Eliza.'

We quite forgot our aching shanks,
A cheerful spirit caught us;
We thought of green and shady banks,
We thought of pleasant waters.
'Neath sky as niggard of its rain
As of his gold the miser,
By mulga scrub and lignum plain
We'd tramp'd to Lake Eliza.

A patch to grey discoloured sand,
A fringe of tufty grasses,
A lonely pub in mulga scrub
Is all the stranger passes.
He'd pass the Lake a dozen times
And yet be none the wiser;
I hope that I shall never be
As dry as Lake Eliza.

No patch of green or water seen
To cheer the weary plodder;
The grass is tough as fencing-wire,
And just as good for fodder.
And when I see it mentioned in
Some local ADVERTISER,
'Twill make me laugh, or make me grin—
The name of 'Lake Eliza.'

Henry Lawson

Laughing And Sneering

WHAT tho' the world does me ill turns
And cares my life environ;
I'd sooner laugh with Bobbie Burns
Than sneer with titl'd Byron.

The smile has always been the best;
'Tis stronger than the frown, sirs:
And Venus smiled the waves to rest;
She didn't sneer them down, sirs.

Henry Lawson

Lay Your Ears Back And Fight

WHEN you drink of what the poets rave about as "sorrer's cup",
And yer mouth, in spite of laughin', gits a curve the wrong way up,
Do not whine for help or pity; never cringe at fortunes frown—
Lay yer list'ners back and fight until you fight yer sorrers down!

Though the world on empty pockets is at times a little harsh
And the weights of care are clinging to the ends of your mustarsh,
Never let yer grief boil over; it is nothing to the town—
Lay yer list'ners back and battle till you fight yer sorres down!

When the law of gravitation lays a hand upon yer heart,
An' the "slings an' arrers" fetch yer and you feel 'em pretty smart,
When you cannot find a billet, and you haven't half-a-crown—
Lay yer list'ners hack and fight until you fight yer sorrers down!

When the guilt upon the future wears in places very thin,
Look as if there's nothink crooked, try an' summon up a grin;
There's a mask that you must always wear the other way about—
Lay yer list'ners back and battle till you knock yer sorrers out.

Henry Lawson

Let's Be Fools To-Night

We, three men of commerce,
Striving wealth to raise,
See but little promise
In the coming days;
Though our hearts are brittle,
Hardened near to stone,
We can think a little
Of the seasons flown.

Lily days and rose days:
Youthful days so bright;
We were fools in those days,
Let's be fools to-night.

We, three men of commerce,
Men of business we,
Gave but little promise
Of what we would be
When we wandered urchins—
Foes of law and rule—
Fearing only birchings
And the village school.

Lily days and rose days,
Boyhood's days so bright;
We were fools in those days,
Let's be fools to-night.

We, three men of commerce,
Men of business we,
Gave but little promise
Of ability
When we lived in riot;
Never drew the line,
Hating peace and quiet,
Loving maids and wine.

Days when money goes—days
When men's hearts are right;

We were fools in those days,
Let's be fools to-night.

We must wear to-morrow
All our worldly marks,
Calm looks for our sorrow,
Stern looks for our clerks,
Who, from trouble shrinking,
Tasting earthly joys,
Hate us, little thinking
Ever we were boys.

Days when kindness flows—days
When men's hearts are white;
We've been wise since those days,
Let's be fools to-night.

Henry Lawson

Lily

I scorn the man—a fool at most,
And ignorant and blind—
Who loves to go about and boast
“He understands mankind.”
I thought I had that knowledge too,
And boasted it with pride—
But since, I’ve learned that human hearts
Cannot be classified.

In days when I was young and wild
I had no vanity—
I always thought when women smiled
That they were fooling me.
I was content to let them fool,
And let them deem I cared;
For, tutored in a narrow school,
I held myself prepared.

But Lily had a pretty face,
And great blue Irish eyes—
And she was fair as any race
Beneath the Northern skies—
The sweetest voice I ever heard,
Although it was unschooled.
So for a season I preferred
By Lily to be fooled.

A friend embittered all my life
With careless words of his;
He said I’d “never win a wife
With such an ugly phiz.”
I laughed the loudest at the wit.
Though loud the laughter rung—
So be it to his credit writ—
He never knew it stung.

As far as human nature goes,
The cynic I would teach
That fruit’s not always sour to those

For whom none hangs in reach.
I only gazed as captives might
Gaze through their prison bars—
Fair women seemed to me as bright
Though far away, as stars.

And Lily was to me a star
As fair as those above,
As beautiful but just as far
From my revengeful love.
The love I bore was not exempt
From hate, if this might be;
I hated her for that contempt
I thought she had for me.

The "sour grapes" are often sweet
To lips that cannot touch,
And it is soothing to repeat:
"It does not matter much."
But O to think that fruit so dear
To me in manhood's prime,
Though seeming far, was clustered near
And red-ripe all the time.

My fault, perhaps, in Heav'n above
May not be deemed a sin.
I never thought that she would love
Or I'd the power to win.
And even now it puzzles me—
The butt of station chaff,
For I was plain as man could be
And awkward as a calf.

I would have liked to break the bow
That Lily never bent—
I thought she'd only laugh to know
How well her shafts were sent.
If my contempt had power to gall
Or careless sneers to touch
The heart that loved me after all,
She must have suffered much.

Ah! I was blind, and could not see
The plain things in my way.
When Lily's mistress twitted me
About the "wedding day",
I answered with a careless word
And half-unconscious sneer—
I never thought that Lily heard,
Nor dreamed that she was near.

We talked of other things and joked,
Till tongues began to tire—
Then I and Lily's master smoked
Our pipes beside the fire.
The day wore on, and then she brought
The kettle to the hob,
And as she turned to go I thought
I heard a stifled sob.

I spoke; she never answered me.
I sneered, "I'll not forget;
Above all things I hate to see
A woman in a pet!"—
Those cruel words, that were the last
That Lily ever heard—
I've heard them shrieking in the blast
And twittered by the bird.

Deep in the creek that wandered near
There lay a grassy pool,
'Neath oaks that sighed through all the year
And kept the water cool.
The stars that pierced the reedy bower
Made water lilies bright,
And underneath her sister flower
Our Lily slept that night.

She'd brought a pole the pool to sound
(It must have tried her strength).
We found it lying on the ground
And wet for half its length.
We found it there upon the grass,
But ah! it was not all!

An open prayer book lay, alas!
Beside poor Lily's shawl.

We drew her out and laid her down
Upon a granite ledge—
The water from her dripping gown
Went trickling o'er the edge.
Like drops into a pool of fears
I saw the crystals dart,
Or one by one like scalding tears
That plash upon the heart.

The circles died upon the shore,
The frogs began to croak.
The wind that passed to list once more
Went sighing through the oak—
The oak that seemed to say to me
(I think I hear it yet),
"Above all things I hate to see
A woman in a pet!"

The blackest thoughts are swift to fill
The evil minds of men—
I knew the meaning of the looks
They bent upon me then;
And then I did as cowards do:
I vanished like a cur;
For many years I never knew
Where they had buried her.

But, drawn by that same power that brings
The slayer to the slain,
Or driven like the bird that wings
Against the storm in vain,
I journeyed from another shore
Across the weary wave
And wandered by the creek once more,
And sought for Lily's grave.

I rode across the ridges brown
And through a rocky pass,
And took the track that led me down

To great white flats of grass.
I passed the homestead's skeleton
That rotted in the sun,
And by the broken stockyards on
The long-deserted run.

Whole beds of reeds were covered o'er
With coats of yellow mud,
And all along the creek I saw
The traces of a flood.
I reached the place where Lily died.
The banks were washed away;
Before me on the other side
There rose a wall of clay.

I saw a thing that seemed a weed
Outgrowing from the "face";
I stood and marvelled that a seed
Had grown in such a place.
I climbed the bank, and with a rod
I pushed the weed about—
And from the dry and crumbling sod
I saw a skull roll out!

I started back from where I stood,
For she was buried there!
I'd seen the coffin's rotting wood.
The weed was Lily's hair!
They'd laid her in the rushes dank
Upon a sandy bend;
The floods had washed away the bank
And reached the coffin's end.

Ah, coward heart and conscience, too!
Did I reclaim the dead?
Ah, no, I did as cowards do—
A second time I fled!
And still I see the flying form,
I see myself again—
A madman riding through the storm
With terror in his brain.

That night the rain in torrents dashed,
The sky seemed flushed with blood,
And here and there the she-oaks crashed
Beneath the yellow flood.
And still I see the murderous sky
That never seems to change,
And hear the flood go growling by
That thundered from the range.

My inner sight as years went o'er
Grew sharp instead of dull,
And nearly every night I saw
The coffin and the skull.
Three ghastly things, unaltered still,
I knew would haunt my night—
I knew would fill my dreams until
I buried them from sight.

I journeyed to the creek once more
When five long years had flown,
And buried in the sand I saw
A piece of fashioned stone:
And bit by bit and bone by bone
In those long years of rain,
The cruel creek had claimed its own
And buried it again!

I clambered down the bank and knelt
And scraped away the sand,
And graven on the stone, I felt
Her name beneath my hand;
And in the she-oak over me
The wind was sneering yet:
"Above all things I hate to see
A woman in a pet."

Henry Lawson

Macleay Street And Red Rock Lane

Macleay Street looks to Mosman,
Across the other side,
With brave asphalted pavements
And roadway clean and wide.
Macleay Street hath its mansions,
Its grounds and greenery;
Macleay Street hath its terraces
As terraces should be.

Red Rock Lane looks to nowhere,
With pockets into hell;
Red Rock Lane is a horror
Of heat and dirt and smell.
Red Rock Lane hath its brothels,
Of houses one in three;
Red Rock Lane hath its corner pubs
As fourth-rate pubs should be.

Macleay Street, cool and quiet,
Is marked off from the town,
And standing in the centre
The tall arc lamps look down.
The jealous closed cabs vanish
That stole from out the row,
Fair women stroll bareheaded,
And theatre parties go.

Red Rock Lane, hot with riot,
Hides things that none should know;
The furtive couples vanish
Through doorways dark and low.
Lust, thievery, drink and madness
In one infernal stew—
And Mrs Johnson, raving,
Walks out—bareheaded too.

Macleay Street hath its swindles,
But on a public scale;
Macleay Street hath its razzles

Until the night grows pale.
Macleay Street hath its scandals,
But—only this is plain,
That nothing is a scandal
Down there in Red Rock Lane.

Macleay Street looks to Mosman
In morning's rosy glow,
And freshly to the city
The summer-suited go
While wild-eyed, foul and shaking,
Red Rock Lane wakes again.
This morning at the Central
They're fining Red Rock Lane.

The Central says "the risin'",
"Seven days", or what you will;
Macleay Street says, "Drive slowly"
When any one is ill.
The law sends Black Maria
When Red Rock Lane is dead.
But doctors come in motor cars
When Macleay Street's got a head.

The grey-faced, weedy parents
Sunk in Red Rock Lane holes—
They worry, pinch, and perish
To save their children's souls.
The fairy of Macleay Street
Shall never soil her hands—
Her Pa is independent,
Or high up in "the Lands".

And—well, there seems no moral,
And nothing more to tell,
But because of that fierce sympathy
Of souls to souls in hell;
And because of that wild kindness
To souls in sordid pain,
My soul I'd rather venture
With some in Red Rock Lane.

Marshall's Mate

You almost heard the surface bake, and saw the gum-leaves turn --
You could have watched the grass scorch brown had there been grass to burn.
In such a drought the strongest heart might well grow faint and weak --
'Twould frighten Satan to his home -- not far from Dingo Creek.

The tanks went dry on Ninety Mile, as tanks go dry out back,
The Half-Way Spring had failed at last when Marshall missed the track;
Beneath a dead tree on the plain we saw a pack-horse reel --
Too blind to see there was no shade, and too done-up to feel.
And charcoaled on the canvas bag ('twas written pretty clear)
We read the message Marshall wrote. It said: 'I'm taken queer --
I'm somewhere off of Deadman's Track, half-blind and nearly dead;
Find Crowbar, get him sobered up, and follow back,' it said.

'Let Mitchell go to Bandicoot. You'll find him there,' said Mack.
'I'll start the chaps from Starving Steers, and take the dry-holes back.'
We tramped till dark, and tried to track the pack-horse on the sands,
And just at daylight Crowbar came with Milroy's station hands.
His cheeks were drawn, his face was white, but he was sober then --
In times of trouble, fire, and flood, 'twas Crowbar led the men.
'Spread out as widely as you can each side the track,' said he;
'The first to find him make a smoke that all the rest can see.'

We took the track and followed back where Crowbar followed fate,
We found a dead man in the scrub -- but 'twas not Crowbar's mate.
The station hands from Starving Steers were searching all the week --
But never news of Marshall's fate came back to Dingo Creek.
And no one, save the spirit of the sand-waste, fierce and lone,
Knew where Jack Marshall crawled to die -- but Crowbar might have known.

He'd scarcely closed his quiet eyes or drawn a sleeping breath --
They say that Crowbar slept no more until he slept in death.
A careless, roving scamp, that loved to laugh and drink and joke,
But no man saw him smile again (and no one saw him smoke),
And, when we spelled at night, he'd lie with eyes still open wide,
And watch the stars as if they'd point the place where Marshall died.

The search was made as searches are (and often made in vain),

And on the seventh day we saw a smoke across the plain;
We left the track and followed back -- 'twas Crowbar still that led,
And when his horse gave out at last he walked and ran ahead.
We reached the place and turned again -- dragged back and no man spoke --
It was a bush-fire in the scrubs that made the cursed smoke.
And when we gave it best at last, he said, `I'LL see it through,'
Although he knew we'd done as much as mortal men could do.
`I'll not -- I won't give up!' he said, his hand pressed to his brow;
`My God! the cursed flies and ants, they might be at him now.
I'll see it so in twenty years, 'twill haunt me all my life --
I could not face his sister, and I could not face his wife.
It's no use talking to me now -- I'm going back,' he said,
`I'm going back to find him, and I will -- alive or dead!'

.

He packed his horse with water and provisions for a week,
And then, at sunset, crossed the plain, away from Dingo Creek.
We watched him tramp beside the horse till we, as it grew late,
Could not tell which was Bonypart and which was Marshall's mate.
The dam went dry at Dingo Creek, and we were driven back,
And none dared face the Ninety Mile when Crowbar took the track.

They saw him at Dead Camel and along the Dry Hole Creeks --
There came a day when none had heard of Marshall's mate for weeks;
They'd seen him at No Sunday, he called at Starving Steers --
There came a time when none had heard of Marshall's mate for years.
They found old Bonypart at last, picked clean by hungry crows,
But no one knew how Crowbar died -- the soul of Marshall knows!

And now, way out on Dingo Creek, when winter days are late,
The bushmen talk of Crowbar's ghost `what's looking for his mate';
For let the fools indulge their mirth, and let the wise men doubt --
The soul of Crowbar and his mate have travelled further out.
Beyond the furthest two-rail fence, Colanne and Nevertire --
Beyond the furthest rabbit-proof, barbed wire and common wire --
Beyond the furthest `Gov'ment' tank, and past the furthest bore --
The Never-Never, No Man's Land, No More, and Nevermore --
Beyond the Land o' Break-o'-Day, and Sunset and the Dawn,
The soul of Marshall and the soul of Marshall's mate have gone
Unto that Loving, Laughing Land where life is fresh and clean --
Where the rivers flow all summer, and the grass is always green.

Henry Lawson

Mary Called Him 'Mister'

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

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

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

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

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

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

Henry Lawson

Mary Lemaine

Jim Duff was a 'native,'as wild as could be;
A stealer and duffer of cattle was he,
But back in his youth he had stolen a pearl—
Or a diamond rather—the heart of a girl;
She served with a squatter who lived on the plain,
And the name of the girl it was Mary Lemaine.
'Twas a drear, rainy day and the twilight was done,
When four mounted troopers rode up to the run.
They spoke to the squatter—he asked them all in.
The homestead was small and the walls they were thin;
And in the next room, with a cold in her head,
Our Mary was sewing on buttons—in bed.

She heard a few words, but those words were enough—
The troopers were all on the track of Jim Duff.
The super, his rival, was planning a trap
To capture the scamp in Maginnis's Gap.
'I've warned him before, and I'll do it again;—
I'll save him to-night,' whispered Mary Lemaine.

No petticoat job—there was no time to waste,
The suit she was mending she slipped on in haste,
And five minutes later they gathered in force,
But Mary was off, on the squatter's best horse;
With your hand on your heart, just to deaden the pain,
Ride hard to the ranges, brave Mary Lemaine!

She rode by the ridges all sullen and strange,
And far up long gullies that ran through the range,
Till the rain cleared away, and the tears in her eyes
Caught the beams of the moon from Maginnis's Rise.
A fire in the depths of the gums she espied,
'Who's there?' shouted Jim. 'It is Mary!'she cried.

Next morning the sun rose in splendour again,
And two loving sinners rode out on the plain.
And baffled, and angry, and hungry and damp,
The four mounted troopers rode back to the camp.
But they hushed up the business—the reason is plain,

They all had been 'soft' on fair Mary Lemaine.

The squatter got back all he lost from his mob,
And old Sergeant Kennedy winked at the job.
Jim Duff keeps a shanty far out in the west,
And the sundowners call it the 'Bushranger's Rest.'
But the bushranger lives a respectable life,
And the law never troubles Jim Duff or his wife,

Henry Lawson

Middleton's Rouseabout

Tall and freckled and sandy,
Face of a country lout;
This was the picture of Andy,
Middleton's Rouseabout.

Type of a coming nation,
In the land of cattle and sheep,
Worked on Middleton's station,
' Pound a week and his keep.'

On Middleton's wide dominions
Plied the stockwhip and shears;
Hadn't any opinions,
Hadn't any 'idears'.

Swiftly the years went over,
Liquor and drought prevailed;
Middleton went as a drover,
After his station had failed.

Type of a careless nation,
Men who are soon played out,
Middleton was: -- and his station
Was bought by the Rouseabout.

Flourishing beard and sandy,
Tall and robust and stout;
This is the picture of Andy,
Middleton's Rouseabout.

Now on his own dominions
Works with his overseers;
Hasn't any opinions,
Hasn't any 'idears'.

Henry Lawson

Mostly Slavonic

I.—

Peter Michaelov

It was Peter the Barbarian put an apron in his bag
And rolled up the honoured bundle that Australians call a swag;
And he tramped from Darkest Russia, that it might be dark no more,
Dreaming of a port, and shipping, as no monarch dreamed before.
Of a home, and education, and of children staunch and true,
Like my father in the fifties—and his name was Peter, too.
(He could build a ship—or fiddle, out of wood, or bark, or hide—
Sail one round the world and play the other one at eventide.)

Russia's Peter (not my father) went to Holland in disguise,
Where he laboured as a shipwright underneath those gloomy skies;
Later on he went to England (which the Kaiser now—condemns)
Where he studied as a ship-smith by old Deptford on the Thames—
And no doubt he knew the rope-walk—(and the rope's end too, he knew)—
Learned to build a ship and sail it—learned the business through and through.
And I'd like to say my father mastered navigation too.
(He was born across in Norway, educated fairly well,
And he grafted in a ship-yard by the Port of Arundel.)

"Peter Michaelov" (not Larsen) his work was by no means done;
For he learned to make a ploughshare, and he learned to make a gun.
Russian soldiers must have clothing, so he laboured at the looms,
And he studied, after hours, building forts and building booms.
He would talk with all and sundry, merchants and adventurers—
Whaling men from Nova Scotia, and with ancient mariners.
Studied military systems (of which Austria's was the best).
Hospitals and even bedlams—class distinctions and the rest.

There was nothing he neglected that was useful to be known—
And he even studied Wowsers, who had no creed of his own.
And, lest all that he accomplished should as miracles appear,
It must always be remembered he'd a secret Fund for Beer.
When he tramped to toil and exile he was only twenty-five,
With a greater, grander object than had any man alive.
And perhaps the lad was bullied, and was sad for all we know—
Though it isn't very likely that he'd take a second blow.

He had brains amongst the brainless, and, what that thing means I knew,
For before I found my kingdom, I had slaved in workshops too.

But they never dreamed, the brainless, boors that used to sneer and scoff,
That the dreamy lad beside them—known as “Dutchy Mickyloff”—
Was a genius and a poet, and a Man—no matter which—
Was the Czar of all the Russias!—Peter Michaelovich.

Sweden struck ere he was ready—filled the land with blood and tears—
But he broke the power of Sweden though it took him nine long years.
For he had to train his army—He was great in training men—
And no foreign foe in Russia have had easy times since then.

Then the Port, as we must have one—His a work of mighty drains—
(Ours of irrigation channels—or it should be, on the plains).
So he brought from many countries strong adventures with brains.
It was marshes to horizons, it was pestilential bogs;
It was stoneless, it was treeless, so he brought Norwegian logs.
’Twas a land without a people, ’twas a land without a law;
But the lonely Gulf of Finland heard the axe and heard the saw;
He compelled the population to that desert land and lone—
Shifted them by tens of thousands as we’ll have to shift our own.
He imported stone and mortar (he supplied the labouring gang),
Brought his masons from all Russia—let the other towns go hang;
Brought his carpenters from Venice—they knew how to make a port!
Till he heard the church bells ringing in the town of Petersfort!
Brought his shipbuilders from Holland, built his navy feverishly—
Till the Swedish fleet was shattered and the Baltic routes were free,
And his Port was on the Neva and his Ships were on the sea!

Petrograd upon the Neva! and the Man who saw it through!—
Stately Canberra on the Cotter!—and the men who build it too!

Russian Peter was “inhuman,” so the wise historians say—
What’s the use of being human in a land like ours to-day,
Till a race of stronger people wipe the Sickly Whites away?
Let them have it, who will have it—those who do not understand—
“Peter lived and died a savage”—but he civilized the land.
And, as it is at present, so ’twas always in the past—
’Twas his nearest and his dearest that broke Peter’s heart at last.

He was more than half a heathen, if historians are true;
But he used to whack his missus as a Christian ought to do—
And he should have done it sooner—but that trouble isn't new.
We'd have saved a lot of bother had we whacked our women, too.
Peter more than whacked his subjects, ere the change was brought about.
And, in some form or another, we shall have to use the knout,
If we wish to build a nation—else we'll have to do without.
And be wretched slaves and exiles, homeless in the Southern Sea,
When an Asiatic Nation hath "rough hewn" our destiny.

II.—

The Brandenburgers

Things have been mixed up in Europe till there's nothing in a name,
So it doesn't really matter whence the Brandenburgers came;
But they did no pioneering as our fathers did of old—
Only bullied, robbed and murdered till they bought the land with gold.
And they settled down in Prussia to the bane of Germany,
With a spike upon the helmet where three brazen balls should be.
And they swaggered, swigged and swindled, and by bullying held sway,
And they blindly inter-married till they're madmen to this day.
And the lovely nights in Munich are as memories of the dead;
Night is filled with nameless terrors, day is filled with constant dread.
But Bavaria the peaceful, ere the lurid star is set,
She shall lead her neighbours on to pluck the Prussian Eagles yet.

We'll pass over little Denmark, as the brave historians can,
Austria suffered at Sadowa, France was sorry at Sedan.
And for England's acquiescence in the crime she suffers too.
Meanwhile Denmark drained her marshes, planted grain and battled through.
(We, who never knew what war is—who had gold without the pain—
Never locked a western river that might save a western plain.)
You may say the Danes were pirates, and so leave them on the shelf?
Given youth and men and money, I would pirate some myself!
Why should I be so excited for another nation's pains?
I am prejudiced and angry, for my forefathers were Danes.
What have I to do with nations? Or the battle's lurid stars?—
I am Henry, son of Peter, who was Peter, son of Lars;
Lars the son of Nils—But never mind from whence our lineage springs—
Yes, my forefathers wore helmets, but their helmets wore the wings—

(There's a feather for your bonnet, there is unction for your souls!)
And the wings bore us to England, and Australia and the Poles.
What did we for little Denmark? Well, we sent our thousands through;
But, without the guns or money, what could Scandinavia do?
(It is true of some Australians, by the sea or sandwaste lone,
That they hold their father's country rather dearer than their own.
But the track is plain before them, and they know who blazed the track,
To the work our Foreign Fathers did in Early Days, Out Back.
As a mate can do no mean thing in the bushman's creed and song,
So a fellow's father's country [seems to me] can do no wrong.)

Where was I? The Wrong of Denmark—or the chastening of her soul?
And perhaps her rulers "got it" where 'twas needed, on the whole.
'Twas the gentlemen of Poland crushed the spirit of the Pole,
Till he didn't care which nation he was knouted by, and served;
So the gentlemen of Poland got wiped out, as they deserved.
Freedom shrieked (where was no freedom), and perhaps she shrieked for shame.
But let Kosciusko slumber—we've immortalised his name.
By the poets and the tenors have our tender souls been wrenched;
And, on many a suffering Christian, Polish Jews have been avenged.

III.—

The Blue Danube

Where the skies are blue in winter by the Adriatic Sea,
And the summer skies are bluer even than our own can be;
In the shadow of a murder, weak from war and sore afraid;
By the ocean-tinted Danube stood the city of Belgrade.
Danube of the love-lit starlight, Danube of the dreamy waltz—
And Belgrade bowed down in ashes for her crimes and for her faults.
And the Prussian-driven Austrians who'd been driven oft before,
From Vienna's cultured city marched reluctantly to war.

Just to clear a path for Prussia, and her bloodhounds to the sea;
To the danger of the white world and the shame of Germany.
And a blacker fate than Belgium's stared the Servians in the face.
But Belgrade had many soldiers of the old Slavonic race,
And her gun-crews manned the Danube, small and weak, but undismayed—
And Belgrade remembered Russia, and she called on her for aid.

And there came a secret message and a sign from Petrograd,
And the Servian arm was strengthened and the Servian heart was glad.
For the message in plain English, from the City of Snow,
Simply said: "I'm sending Ivan by the shortest route I know."
So then Servia bid defiance, for she knew her friend was true;
And her guns along the Danube added blue smoke to the blue.

IV.—

The Peasantry

Who are these in rags and sheepskin, mangy fur-caps, matted hair?
Who are these with fearsome whiskers, black and wiry everywhere?
Who are these in blanket putties—canvas, rag, or green-hide shoes?
These with greasy bags and bundles grimy as the Russian flues?
Never song nor cheer amongst them, never cry of "What's the News?"
Packed on cattle-trains and ox-carts, from the north and south and east;
Trudging from the marsh and forest, where the man is like the beast?
On the lonely railway platforms, bending round the village priest;
Here and there the village scholar, everywhere the country clowns?
They're reservists of old Russia pouring in to Russian towns!

Women's faces, gaunt and haggard, start and startle here and there,
White and whiter by the contrast to the shawls that hide their hair.
Black-shawled heads—the shrouds of sorrow! Eyes of Fear without a name!
Through the length and breadth of Europe, God! their eyes are all the same!
Famous Artist of the Present, wasting Art and wasting Life,
With your daughters for your models, or your everlasting wife—
With your kids for nymphs and fairies, or your Studies in "the Nood"—
Exercise imagination, and forget your paltry brood!
Take an old Bulgarian widow who has lost her little store,
Who has lost her sons in battle, paint her face, and call it "War."

V.—

The Russian March

Russian mist, and cold, and darkness, on the weary Russian roads;
And the sound of Russian swear-words, and the whack of Russian goads;
There's the jerk of tightened traces and of taughtened bullock-chains—
'Tis the siege guns and the field guns, and the ammunition trains.
There's the grind of tires unceasing, where the metal caps the clay;
And the "clock," "clock," "clock" of axles going on all night and day.
And the groaning undercarriage and the king pin and the wheel,
And the rear wheels, which are fore wheels, with their murd'rous loads of steel.

Here and there the sound of cattle in the mist and in the sleet,
And the scrambling start of horses, and the ceaseless splosh of feet.
There's the short, sharp, sudden order such as drivers give to slaves,
And a ceaseless, sougning, sighing, like the sound of sea-worn caves
When a gale is slowly dying and the darkness hides the waves,
And the ghostly phosphorescence flashes past the rocky arch
Like the wraiths of vanished armies. . . . It is Ivan on the march!
'Tis an army that is marching over other armies' graves.

"Halt!"

Clamp of bits and gathering silence—here and there a horse's stamp;
Sounds of chains relaxed, and harness, like the teamsters come to camp.
Sounds of boxes moved in waggons, and of axes on a log—
And the wild and joyous barking of the regimental dog!
Sounds of pots and pans and buckets, and the clink of chain and hook—
And the blasphemous complaining of the Universal Cook.
Mist and mist and mellowed moonlight—night in more than ghostly robes;
And the lanterns and the camp fires like dim lights in frosted globes.
Silence deep of satisfaction. Sounds of laughter murmuring—
And the fragrance of tobacco! Are you Ivan? Ivan! Sing!

"I am Ivan! Yes, I'm Ivan, from the mist and from the mirk;
From the night of "Darkest Russia" where Oppression used to lurk—
And it's many weary winters since I started Christian work;
But you feared the power of Ivan, and you nursed the rotten Turk.
Nurse him now! Or nurse him later, when his green-black blood hath laved
Wounds upon your hands and "honour" that his gratitude engraved;
Poison teeth on hands that shielded, poison fangs on hands that saved.

"No one doubted Ivan's honour, no one doubted Ivan's vow,
And the simple word of Ivan, none would dream of doubting now;
Yet you cherished, for your purpose, lies you heard and lies you spread,

And you triumphed for a Spectre over Ivan's murdered dead!
You were fearful of my power in the rolling of my drums—
Now you tremble lest it fail me when To-morrow's Morrow comes!

I had sought to conquer no land save what was by right my own—
I took Finland, I took Poland, but I left their creeds alone.
I, the greater, kindlier Tyrant, bade them live and showed them how—
They are free, and they are happy, and they're marching with me now—
Marching to the War of Ages—marching to the War of Wars—
Hear the rebel songs of Warsaw! Hear the hymn of Helsingfors!
From the Danube to Siberia and the northern lights aflame.
Many freed and peaceful millions bless the day when Ivan came.
Travel through the mighty Russland—study, learn and understand
That my people are contented, for my people have their land.

"It was spring-time in Crimea, coming cold and dark and late,
When I signed the terms you offered, for I knew that I could wait;
When I bowed to stronger nations or to Universal Fate.
And the roofs of guiltless kinsmen blazed across my frontiers still,
Where the bloody hordes of Islam came to ravish, rob and kill;
And the lands were laid in ashes over many a field and hill;
And the groans of tortured peasants (dreaming yet and sullen-mad)—
And the shrieks of outraged daughters echoed still in Petrograd;
So we taugt and trained and struggled, and we cursed the Western Powers,
While we suffered in the awful silence of your God, and ours.

"For the safety of the White Race and the memory of Christ,
Once again I marched on Turkey, only to be sacrificed,
To the Sea-Greed of the Nations, by the pandering of the weak,
And the treachery in Athens of the lying, cheating Greek.
Once again I forced the Balkans over snow and rock and moss,
Once again I saw the passes stormed with unavailing loss;
Once again I saw the Crescent reeling back before the Cross,
And the ships of many nations on the billows dip and toss.

Once again my grey battalions, that had come with Christian aid,
Stood before Constantinople! Ah, you wish that we had stayed!
But the Powers raised their fingers, fearful even once again,
With the jealous fear that lingers even now (and shall remain);
Frigid as the polar regions were your hearts to others' pain—
So I dragged my weary legions back to Russia—once again.

“Thrice again they raised their fingers when I came with purpose true,
And I bowed and smirked and grovelled as I had been used to do.
Till my kin in bloody visions saw their homes in ruins laid
From the Danube to the ocean, from the ocean to Belgrade;
I was ready, for the last time, when they called on me for aid.

From the Dardanelles, denied me, shall my outward march be set;
And you'll see my fleets of commerce sail the Adriatic yet.”

Grey Day

.
Daybreak on the world of Europe! Daybreak from the Eastern arch;
Hear the startling sound of bugles! Load and limber up and march!
On! for Ivan and his children, Peace and Rest and Morning Star!
On for Truth and Right and Justice. On for Russia and the Czar!

Henry Lawson

Mount Bukaroo

Only one old post is standing --
Solid yet, but only one --
Where the milking, and the branding,
And the slaughtering were done.
Later years have brought dejection,
Care, and sorrow; but we knew
Happy days on that selection
Underneath old Bukaroo.

Then the light of day commencing
Found us at the gully's head,
Splitting timber for the fencing,
Stripping bark to roof the shed.
Hands and hearts the labour strengthened;
Weariness we never knew,
Even when the shadows lengthened
Round the base of Bukaroo.

There for days below the paddock
How the wilderness would yield
To the spade, and pick, and mattock,
While we toiled to win the field.
Bronzed hands we used to sully
Till they were of darkest hue,
'Burning off' down in the gully
At the back of Bukaroo.

When we came the baby brother
Left in haste his broken toys,
Shouted to the busy mother:
'Here is dadda and the boys!'
Strange it seems that she was able
For the work that she would do;
How she'd bustle round the table
In the hut 'neath Bukaroo!

When the cows were safely yarded,
And the calves were in the pen,

All the cares of day discarded,
Closed we round the hut-fire then.
Rang the roof with boyish laughter
While the flames o'er-topped the flue;
Happy days remembered after --
Far away from Bukaroo.

But the years were full of changes,
And a sorrow found us there;
For our home amid the ranges
Was not safe from searching Care.
On he came, a silent creeper;
And another mountain threw
O'er our lives a shadow deeper
Than the shade of Bukaroo.

All the farm is disappearing;
For the home has vanished now,
Mountain scrub has choked the clearing,
Hid the furrows of the plough.
Nearer still the scrub is creeping
Where the little garden grew;
And the old folks now are sleeping
At the foot of Bukaroo.

Henry Lawson

My Army, O, My Army!

My Army, O, my army! The time I dreamed of comes!
I want to see your colours; I want to hear your drums!
I heard them in my boyhood when all men's hearts seemed cold;
I heard them as a Young Man—and I am growing old!
My army, O, my army! The signs are manifold!
My army, O, my army! My army and my Queen!
I used to sing your battle-songs when I was seventeen!
They came to me from ages, they came from far and near;
They came to me from Paris, they came to me from Here!—
They came when I was marching with the Army of the Rear.

My Queen's dark eyes were flashing (oh, she was younger then!);
My Queen's Red Cap was redder than the reddest blood of men!
My Queen marched like an Amazon, with anger manifest—
Her dark hair darkly matted from a knifegash in her breast
(For blood will flow where milk will not—her sisters knew the rest).

My legions ne'er were listed, they had no need to be;
My army ne'er was trained in arms—'twas trained in misery!
It took long years to mould it, but war could never drown
The shuffling of my army's feet in the hunger-haunted town—
A little child was murdered, and so Tyranny went down.

My army kept no order, my army kept no time;
My army dug no trenches, yet died in dust and slime;
Its troops were fiercely ignorant, as to the manner born;
Its clothes were rags and tatters, or patches worn and torn—
Ah, me! It wore a uniform that I have often worn!

The faces of my army were ghastly as the dead;
My army's cause was Hunger, my army's cry was "Bread!"
It called on God and Mary and Christ of Nazareth;
It cried to kings and courtesans that fainted at its breath—
Its women beat their poor, flat breasts where babes had starved to death.

My army! My army—I hear the sound of drums
Above the roar of battles—and, lo! my army comes!
Nor creed of man may stay it—nor war, nor nation's law—

The pikes go through the firing-lines as pitchforks go through straw—
Like pitchforks through the litter, while empires stand in awe.

Henry Lawson

My Father-In-Law And I

MY father-in-law is a careworn man,
And a silent man is he;
But he summons a smile as well as he can
Whenever he meets with me.
The sign we make with a silent shake
That speaks of the days gone by—
Like men who meet at a funeral—
My father-in-law and I.

My father-in-law is a sober man
(And a virtuous man, I think);
But we spare a shilling whenever we can,
And we both drop in for a drink.
Our pints they fill, and we say, "Ah, well!"
With the sound of the world-old sigh—
Like the drink that comes after a funeral—
My father-in-law and I.

My father-in-law is a kindly man—
A domestic man is he.
He tries to look cheerful as well as he can
Whenever he meets with me.
But we stand and think till the second drink
In a silence that might imply
That we'd both get over a funeral,
My father-in-law and I.

Henry Lawson

My Land And I

They have eaten their fill at your tables spread,
Like friends since the land was won;
And they rise with a cry of "Australia's dead!"
With the wheeze of "Australia's done!"
Oh, the theme is stale, but they tell the tale
(How the weak old tale will keep!)
Like the crows that croak on a splintered rail,
That have gorged on a rotten sheep.

I would sing a song in your darkest hour
In your darkest hour and mine –
For I see the dawn of your wealth and power,
And I see your bright star shine.
The little men yelp and the little men lie,
And they spread the lies afar;
But we heed them never, my Land and I,
For we know how small they are.

They know you not in a paltry town –
In the streets where great hopes die –
Oh, heart that never a flood could drown,
And never a drought could dry!
Stand forth from the rim where the red sun dips,
Strong son of the land's own son –
With the grin of grit on your drought-chapped lips
And say, is your country done?

Stand forth from the land where the sunset dies,
By the desolate lonely shed,
With the smile of faith in your blighted eyes,
And say, is your country dead?
They see no future, they know no past –
The parasite cur and clown,
Who talk of ruin and death to last
When a man or a land is down.

God sends for answer the rain, the rain,
And away on the western lease,
The limitless plain grows green again,

And the fattening stock increase.
We'll lock your rivers, my land, my land,
Dig lakes on the furthest run –
While down in the corners where houses stand,
They drivel, "Australia's done!"

The parasites dine at your tables spread
(As my enemies did at mine),
And they croak and gurgle, "Australia's dead"
While they guzzle Australian wine.
But we heed them never, my land, my land,
For we know how small they are,
And we see the signs of a future grand,
As we gaze on a rising star.

Henry Lawson

My Literary Friend

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

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

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

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

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

Henry Lawson

My Wife's Second Husband

THE WORLD goes round, old fellow,
And still I'm in the swim,
While my wife's second husband
Is growing old and grim.
I meet him in the city—
It all seems very tame—
He glances at me sometimes
As if I were to blame.

Oh, my wife's second husband
Was handsome, young and true;
He had his boyish visions
(I had my visions too).
He made a model lover—
The greenest in the game—
They say, when I was married
That I was just the same.

Though I am ten years older
My hair is dark to-day,
While my wife's second husband
Is quickly growing grey.
I drank when first he knew me,
And he drank not at all;
I see that he, through drinking,
Is going to the wall.

A sweet ill-treated woman,
A drunken brute (Good Lord!)—
Ah, well, she got her freedom,
And he got his reward.
He'll fight it out a season,
For Fate will not be forced,
But my wife's second husband
Shall surely be divorced.

I sympathize, and wonder
What mutual friends would think
If my wife's second husband

And I should have a drink.
And I a mere bystander—
It almost seems absurd—
Might lay prophetically
My hand on my wife's third.

But my wife's second husband
His sorrows shall forget,
We'll clasp warm hands in friendship
And clink our glasses yet.
We'll smoke cigars together,
In pure philosophy,
While calmly contemplating
The fate of number three.

Henry Lawson

Ned's Delicate Way

Ned knew I was short of tobacco one day,
And that I was too proud to ask for it;
He hated such pride, but his delicate way
Forbade him to take me to task for it.

I loathed to be cadging tobacco from Ned,
But, when I was just on the brink of it;
'I've got a new brand of tobacco", he said –
"Try a smoke, and let's know what you think of it."

Henry Lawson

Nemesis

It is night-time when the saddest and the darkest memories haunt,
When outside the printing office the most glaring posters flaunt,
When the love-wrong is accomplished. And I think of things and mark
That the blackest lies are written, told, and printed after dark.
'Tis the time of "late editions". It is night when, as of old,
Foulest things are done for hatred, for ambition, love and gold.

Racing from the senseless city down the dull suburban streets,
Come again the ragged newsboys yelping with their paltry sheets—
Lying posters meaning nothing, double columns meaning less,
Twisted facts and reckless falsehoods—dodges of the Daily Press.
In the town the roar and rattle of the great machines once more,
Greedy for the extra penny, while the "Public" howls for war.

War because of one poor blunder made in panic far away,
While a thousand men were lying on the battlefield to-day:
Dead heaped on the helpless dying, blinded eyes and brains that swim,
Parched or choked with their own life-blood, battered head and broken limb.
Wounds too ghastly to be pictured. Things to seem like men no more,
Crying out to Christ for water, and oblivion—that is war.

And the poets of the nation—singing-birds or carrion-birds—
Bluff with cheap alliteration and the boom of empty words,
Catch the crowd with cheating phrases, as a jingo laureate flings
Recklessly his high defiance in the "grinning teeth of Things".
They pretend to lead who follow this day's crowd with lying tact;
Let them fling their high defiance in the stony face of Fact.

And so Russia, maimed and baited, seeing nought but storm to come,
Sailed upon a desperate venture, cursed by treachery at home;
Seeing danger in each shadow, thinking doubtless now and then
Of the swift fate of her warship with its seven hundred men;
And she struck out in the darkness at the ally of her foe,
Struck out blindly as a wounded dying bear might strike a blow.

Ah, we well might howl for vengeance, we who killed for killing's sake—
Murdered helpless men in daylight, in cold blood by no mistake,
We who burnt the homes of women when the nights were cold and damp;

We who murdered little children in the concentration camp!
(When the farmers downed the lion for a season in his pride,
Say, did Russia take advantage then, while England's hands were tied?)

Wipe away the blood that binds you!—struggle to your feet again—
Shake them from your shoulders, Ivan—Ivan nearly mad with pain.
You must fight it single-handed on the deck or in the trench.
Look not to the boorish German! Look not to the fickle French!
Rather look to blinded England when her sight is clear again.
(And remember in the future there is chivalry in Spain.)

Scoff at Russia on the ocean and her helplessness forget,
But on land the braggart Mongol has not done with Ivan yet;
He's a fierce and cruel tyrant (we are not as others are);
But his slaves would die by thousands for their country and the Czar,
While a single broken column drags a battery through the mire,
And a single battered cruiser has a gun that she can fire.

Henry Lawson

Never, Never Land

By hut, homestead and shearing shed,
By railroad, coach and track-
By lonely graves where rest the dead,
Up-Country and Out-Back:
To where beneath the clustered stars
The dreamy plains expand-

My home lies wide a thousand miles
In Never-Never Land.
It lies beyond the farming belt,
Wide wastes of scrub and plain,
A blazing desert in the drought,
A lake-land after rain;
To the skyline sweeps the waving grass,
Or whirls the scorching sand-
A phantom land, a mystic realm!
The Never-Never Land.

Where lone Mount Desolation lies
Mounts Dreadful and Despair-
'Tis lost beneath the rainless skies
In hopeless deserts there;
It spreads nor-west by No-Man's Land
Where clouds are seldom seen
To where the cattle stations lie
Three hundred miles between.

The drovers of the Great Stock Routes
The strange Gulf country know
Where, travelling from the southern droughts,
The big lean bullocks go;
And camped by night where plains lie wide,
Like some old ocean's bed,
The watchmen in the starlight ride
Round fifteen hundred head.

Lest in the city I forget
True mateship after all,
My water-bag and billy yet

Are hanging on the wall;
And I, to save my soul again,
Would tramp to sunsets grand
With sad-eyed mates across the plain
In Never-Never Land.

Henry Lawson

New Life, New Love

The breezes blow on the river below,
And the fleecy clouds float high,
And I mark how the dark green gum trees match
The bright blue dome of the sky.
The rain has been, and the grass is green
Where the slopes were bare and brown,
And I see the things that I used to see
In the days ere my head went down.

I have found a light in my long dark night,
Brighter than stars or moon;
I have lost the fear of the sunset drear,
And the sadness of afternoon.
Here let us stand while I hold your hand,
Where the light's on your golden head—
Oh! I feel the thrill that I used to feel
In the days ere my heart was dead.

The storm's gone by, but my lips are dry
And the old wrong rankles yet—
Sweetheart or wife, I must take new life
From your red lips warm and wet!
So let it be, you may cling to me,
There is nothing on earth to dread,
For I'll be the man that I used to be
In the days ere my heart was dead!

Henry Lawson

Next Door

Whenever I'm moving my furniture in
Or shifting my furniture out—
Which is nearly as often and risky as Sin
In these days of shifting about—
There isn't a stretcher, there isn't a stick,
Nor a mat that belongs to the floor;
There isn't a pot (Oh, my heart groweth sick!)
That escapes from the glare of Next Door!
The Basilisk Glare of Next Door.
Be it morn, noon or night—be it early or late;
Be it summer or winter or spring,
I cannot sneak down just to list at the gate
For the song that the bottle-ohs sing;
With some bottles to sell that shall bring me a beer,
And lead up to one or two more;
But I feel in my backbone the serpentine sneer,
And the Basilisk Glare of Next Door.
The political woman Next Door.

I really can't say, being no one of note,
Why she glares at my odds and my ends,
Excepting, maybe, I'm a frivolous Pote,
With one or two frivolous friends,
Who help me to shift and to warm up the house
For three or four glad hours or more,
In a suburb that hasn't the soul of a louse;
And they've got no respect for Next Door!

They don't give a damn for Next Door

.

Henry Lawson

Nineteen Nine

There's a light out there in the nearer east
In the dawn of Nineteen Nine;
There's the old ghost light in the salty yeast
Where the black rocks meet the brine.
Here's the same old strife and toil in vain—
Here's the same old hope and doubt—
Here's the same old useless care and pain—
And the sea is my way out—
My dear—
The sea is my way out.
'Tis a grey and a sad old sea for me—
With a growing grey head too.
Oh, the heads were brown and the eyes were bright
When the sea was white and blue.
It was round the world and home again,
We could turn and turn about,
And the sea means exile now in vain,
But the sea is my way out—
My dear—
The sea is my way out.

Henry Lawson

O Cupid, Cupid; Get Your Bow!

Arming down along the stream,
Along the sparkling water,
And past the pool where lilies gleam,
There comes the squatter's daughter.

Her eyes are kind; her lips are warm;
And like a flower her face is;
The habit shows her bonny form
As graceful as a Grace's.

O I'll be mad of love, I know;
My head she'll surely addle;
O Cupid, Cupid; get your bow;
And shoot her from the saddle!

For, like a bird on breezes waft,
She quickly, quickly passes;
O Cupid, Cupid, draw your shaft;
And bring her to the grasses!

O she is worthy game for you;
And there is none to match her.
So, Cupid, send your arrow true;
And I'll be there to catch her!

Henry Lawson

O'Hara, J.P.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(
Case postponed
.)

'Twas early next morning, or late the same night—
'Twas early next morning' we think would be right—
And sounds that betokened a breach of the law
Escaped through the cracks of the Axe-and-the-Saw.
And Constable Dogherty, out in the street,
Met Constable Clancy a bit off his beat;
He took him with finger and thumb by the ear,
And led him around to a lane in the rear.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The final case of O'Hara, J.P.

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

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

Henry Lawson

Old North Sydney

They're shifting old North Sydney—
Perhaps 'tis just as well—
They're carting off the houses
Where the old folks used to dwell.
Where only ghosts inhabit
They lay the old shops low;
But the Spirit of North Sydney,
It vanished long ago.

The Spirit of North Sydney,
The good old time and style,
It camped, maybe, at Crow's Nest,
But only for a while.
It left about the season,
Or at the time, perhaps,
When old Inspector Cotter
Transferred his jokes and traps.

A brand new crowd is thronging
The brand new streets aglow
Where the Spirit of North Sydney
Would gossip long ago.
They will not know to-morrow—
Tho' 'twere but yesterday—
Exactly how McMahon's Point
And its ferry used to lay.

The good old friendly spirit
Its sorrows would unfold,
When householders were neighbours
And shop-keeping was old;
But now we're busy strangers,
Our feelings we restrain—
The Spirit of North Sydney
Shall never come again!

Henry Lawson

Old Stone Chimney

The rising moon on the peaks was blending
Her silver light with the sunset glow,
When a swagman came as the day was ending
Along a path that he seemed to know.
But all the fences were gone or going—
The hand of ruin was everywhere;
The creek unchecked in its course was flowing,
For none of the old clay dam was there.
Here Time had been with his swiftest changes,
And husbandry had westward flown;
The cattle tracks in the rugged ranges
Were long ago with the scrub o'ergrown.
It must have needed long years to soften
The road, that as hard as rock had been;
The mountain path he had trod so often
Lay hidden now with a carpet green.

He thought at times from the mountain courses
He heard the sound of a bullock bell,
The distant gallop of stockmen's horses,
The stockwhip's crack that he knew so well:
But these were sounds of his memory only,
And they were gone from the flat and hill,
For when he listened the place was lonely,
The range was dumb and the bush was still.

The swagman paused by the gap and faltered,
For down the gully he feared to go,
The scene in memory never altered—
The scene before him had altered so.
But hope is strong, and his heart grew bolder,
And over his sorrows he raised his head,
He turned his swag to the other shoulder,
And plodded on with a firmer tread.

Ah, hope is always the keenest hearer,
And fancies much when assailed by fear;
The swagman thought, as the farm drew nearer,
He heard the sounds that he used to hear.

His weary heart for a moment bounded,
For a moment brief he forgot his dread;
For plainly still in his memory sounded
The welcome bark of a dog long dead.

A few steps more and his face grew ghostly,
Then white as death in the twilight grey;
Deserted wholly, and ruined mostly,
The Old Selection before him lay.
Like startled spectres that paused and listened,
The few white posts of the stockyard stood;
And seemed to move as the moonlight glistened
And paled again on the whitened wood.

And thus he came, from a life long banished
To other lands, and of peace bereft,
To find the farm and the homestead vanished,
And only the old stone chimney left.
The field his father had cleared and gardened
Was overgrown with saplings now;
The rain had set and the drought had hardened
The furrows made by a vanished plough.

And this, and this was the longed-for haven
Where he might rest from a life of woe;
He read a name on the mantel graven—
The name was his ere he stained it so.
'And so remorse on my care encroaches—
'I have not suffered enough,' he said;
'That name is pregnant with deep reproaches—
'The past won't bury dishonoured dead!'

Ah, now he knew it was long years after,
And felt how swiftly a long year speeds;
The hardwood post and the beam and rafter
Had rotted long in the tangled weeds.
He found that time had for years been sowing
The coarse wild scrub on the homestead path,
And saw young trees by the chimney growing,
And mountain ferns on the wide stone hearth.

He wildly thought of the evil courses

That brought disgrace on his father's name;
The escort robbed, and the stolen horses,
The felon's dock with its lasting shame.
'Ah, God! Ah, God! is there then no pardon?'
He cried in a voice that was strained and hoarse;
He fell on the weeds that were once a garden,
And sobbed aloud in his great remorse.

But grief must end, and his heart ceased aching
When pitying sleep to his eye-lids crept,
And home and friends who were lost in waking,
They all came back while the stockman slept.
And when he woke on the empty morrow,
The pain at his heart was a deadened pain;
And bravely bearing his load of sorrow,
He wandered back to the world again.

Henry Lawson

Old Tunes

When friends are listening round me, Jack, to hear my dying breath,
And I am lying in a sleep they say will end in death,
Don't notice what the doctor says—and let the nurse complain—
I'll tell you how to rouse me if I'll ever wake again.

Just you bring in your fiddle, Jack, and set your heart in tune,
And strike up "Annie Laurie", or "The Rising of the Moon";
And if you see no token of a rising in my throat,
You'll need to brace your mouth, old man—I'm booked by Charon's boat.

And if you are not satisfied that I am off the scene,
Strike up "The Marseillaise", or else "The Wearing of the Green";
And should my fingers tremble not, then I have crossed the line,
But keep your fingers steady, Jack, and strike up "Auld Lang Syne".

Henry Lawson

On Looking Through An Old Punishment Book [at Eurunderee School]

I took the book of punishment,
And ran its columns down;
I started with an open brow
And ended with a frown;
I noted long-forgotten names –
They took me unaware;
I noted old familiar names.
But my names wasn't there!

I thought of what I might have been,
And Oh! My heart was pained
To find, of all the scholars there,
That I was never caned!
I thought of wasted childhood hours,
And a tear rolled down my cheek –
I must have been a model boy,
Which means a little sneak!

"Oh, give me back my youth again!"
Doc Faustus used to say –
I only wish the Powers could give
My boyhood for a day,
A model boy! Beloved of girls!
Despised by boys and men!
But it comforts me to think that I've
Made up for it since then.

Henry Lawson

On The March

So the time seems come at last,
And the drums go rolling past,
And above them in the sunlight Labour's banners float and flow;
They are marching with the sun,
But I look in vain for one
Of the men who fought for freedom more than fifteen years ago.

They were men who did the work
Out at Blackall, Hay, and Bourke –
They were men who fought the battle that the world shall never know;
And they vanished one by one
When their bitter task was done –
Men who worked and wrote for freedom more than fifteen years ago.

Some are scattered, some are dead,
By the shanty and the shed,
In the lignum and the mulga, by the river running low;
And I often wish in vain
I could call them back again –
Mates of mine who fought for freedom more than fifteen years ago.

From the country of their birth
Some have sailed and proved their worth;
Some have died on distant deserts, some have perished in the snow.
Some are gloomy, bitter men,
And I meet them now and then –
Men who'd give their lives for Labour more than fifteen years ago.

Oh, the drums come back to me,
And they beat for victory,
But my heart is scarcely quickened, and I never feel the glow;
For I've learnt the world since then,
And the hopelessness of men,
And the fire it burnt too fiercely more than fifteen years ago.

Lucky you who still are young,
When the rebel war-hymn's sung,
And the sons of slaves are marching with their faces all aglow,
When the revolution comes

And the blood is on the drums –
Oh! I wish the storm had found me more than fifteen years ago!

Bear the olden banner still!
Let the nations fight who will!
'Tis the flag of generations – the flag that all the peoples know;
And they'll bear it, brave and red,
Over ancient rebel dead,
In the future to the finish as a thousand years ago!

Henry Lawson

On The Night Train

Have you seen the bush by moonlight, from the train, go running by?
Blackened log and stump and sapling, ghostly trees all dead and dry;
Here a patch of glassy water; there a glimpse of mystic sky?
Have you heard the still voice calling – yet so warm, and yet so cold:
"I'm the Mother-Bush that bore you! Come to me when you are old"?

Did you see the Bush below you sweeping darkly to the Range,
All unchanged and all unchanging, yet so very old and strange!
While you thought in softened anger of the things that did estrange?
(Did you hear the Bush a-calling, when your heart was young and bold:
"I'm the Mother-bush that nursed you; Come to me when you are old"?)

In the cutting or the tunnel, out of sight of stock or shed,
Did you hear the grey Bush calling from the pine-ridge overhead:
"You have seen the seas and cities – all is cold to you, or dead –
All seems done and all seems told, but the grey-light turns to gold!
I'm the Mother-Bush that loves you – come to me now you are old"?)

Henry Lawson

On The Summit Of Mt. Clarence

On the summit of Mount Clarence rotting slowly in the air
Stands a tall and naked flagstaff, relic of the Russian scare—
Russian scare that scares no longer, for the cry is "All is well"—
Yet the flagstaff still is standing like a lonely sentinel.
And it watches through the seasons—winter's cold and summer's heat,
Watches seaward, watches ever for the phantom Russian fleet.

In a cave among the ridges, where the scrub is tall and thick
With no human being near him dwells a wretched lunatic:
On Mount Clarence in the morning he will fix his burning eyes,
And he scans the sea and watches for the signal flag to rise;
In his ears the roar of cannon and the sound of battle drums
While he cleans his gun and watches for the foe that never comes.

And they say, at dreary nightfall, when the storms are howling round
Comes a phantom ship to anchor in the waters of the "Sound",
And the lunatic who sees it wakes the landscape with his whoops,
Loads his gun and marches seaward at the head of airy troops—
To the summit of Mount Clarence leads them on with martial tread,
Fires his gun and sends the Russians to the mustering of the dead.

Henry Lawson

On The Wallaby

Now the tent poles are rotting, the camp fires are dead,
And the possums may gambol in trees overhead;
I am humping my bluey far out on the land,
And the prints of my bluchers sink deep in the sand:
I am out on the wallaby humping my drum,
And I came by the tracks where the sundowners come.

It is nor'-west and west o'er the ranges and far
To the plains where the cattle and sheep stations are,
With the sky for my roof and the grass for my bunk,
And a calico bag for my damper and junk;
And scarcely a comrade my memory reveals,
Save the spiritless dingo in tow of my heels.

But I think of the honest old light of my home
When the stars hang in clusters like lamps from the dome,
And I think of the hearth where the dark shadows fall,
When my camp fire is built on the widest of all;
But I'm following Fate, for I know she knows best,
I follow, she leads, and it's nor'-west by west.

When my tent is all torn and my blankets are damp,
And the rising flood waters flow fast by the camp,
When the cold water rises in jets from the floor,
I lie in my bunk and I list to the roar,
And I think how to-morrow my footsteps will lag
When I tramp 'neath the weight of a rain-sodden swag.

Though the way of the swagman is mostly up-hill,
There are joys to be found on the wallaby still.
When the day has gone by with its tramp or its toil,
And your camp-fire you light, and your billy you boil,
There is comfort and peace in the bowl of your clay
Or the yarn of a mate who is tramping that way.

But beware of the town -- there is poison for years
In the pleasure you find in the depths of long beers;
For the bushman gets bushed in the streets of a town,
Where he loses his friends when his cheque is knocked down;

He is right till his pockets are empty, and then --
He can hump his old bluey up country again.

Henry Lawson

One Hundred And Three

With the frame of a man, and the face of a boy, and a manner strangely wild,
And the great, wide, wondering, innocent eyes of a silent-suffering child;
With his hideous dress and his heavy boots, he drags to Eternity—
And the Warder says, in a softened tone: 'Keep step, One Hundred and Three.'
'Tis a ghastly travesty of drill—or a ghastly farce of work—
But One Hundred and Three, he catches step with a start, a shuffle and jerk.
'Tis slow starvation in separate cells, and a widow's son is he,
And the widow, she drank before he was born—(Keep step, One Hundred and
Three!)

They shut a man in the four-by-eight, with a six-inch slit for air,
Twenty-three hours of the twenty-four, to brood on his virtues there.
And the dead stone walls and the iron door close in as an iron band
On eyes that followed the distant haze far out on the level land.

Bread and water and hominy, and a scrag of meat and a spud,
A Bible and thin flat book of rules, to cool a strong man's blood;
They take the spoon from the cell at night—and a stranger might think it odd;
But a man might sharpen it on the floor, and go to his own Great God.

One Hundred and Three, it is hard to believe that you saddled your horse at
dawn;
There were girls that rode through the bush at eve, and girls who lolled on the
lawn.
There were picnic parties in sunny bays, and ships on the shining sea;
There were foreign ports in the glorious days—(Hold up, One Hundred and
Three!)

A man came out at exercise time from one of the cells to-day:
'Twas the ghastly spectre of one I knew, and I thought he was far away;
We dared not speak, but he signed 'Farewell—fare—well,' and I knew by this
And the number stamped on his clothes (not sewn) that a heavy sentence was
his.

Where five men do the work of a boy, with warders not to see,
It is sad and bad and uselessly mad, it is ugly as it can be,
From the flower-beds laid to fit the gaol, in circle and line absurd,
To the gilded weathercock on the church, agape like a strangled bird.

Agape like a strangled bird in the sun, and I wonder what he could see?
The Fleet come in, and the Fleet go out? (Hold up, One Hundred and Three!)
The glorious sea, and the bays and Bush, and the distant mountains blue
(Keep step, keep step, One Hundred and Three, for my lines are halting too)

The great, round church with its volume of sound, where we dare not turn our
eyes—

They take us there from our separate hells to sing of Paradise.
In all the creeds there is hope and doubt, but of this there is no doubt:
That starving prisoners faint in church, and the warders carry them out.

They double-lock at four o'clock and the warders leave their keys,
And the Governor strolls with a friend at eve through his stone conservatories;
Their window slits are like idiot mouths with square stone chins adrop,
And the weather-stains for the dribble, and the dead flat foreheads atop.

No light save the lights in the yard beneath the clustering lights of the Lord—
And the lights turned in to the window slits of the Observation Ward.
(They eat their meat with their fingers there in a madness starved and dull—
Oh! the padded cells and the "O—b—s" are nearly always full.)

Rules, regulations—red-tape and rules; all and alike they bind:
Under 'separate treatment' place the deaf; in the dark cell shut the blind!
And somewhere down in his sandstone tomb, with never a word to save,
One Hundred and Three is keeping step, as he'll keep it to his grave.

The press is printing its smug, smug lies, and paying its shameful debt—
It speaks of the comforts that prisoners have, and 'holidays' prisoners get.
The visitors come with their smug, smug smiles through the gaol on a working
day,
And the public hears with its large, large ears what authorities have to say.

They lay their fingers on well-hosed walls, and they tread on the polished floor;
They peep in the generous shining cans with their ration Number Four.
And the visitors go with their smug, smug smiles; the reporters' work is done;
Stand up! my men, who have done your time on ration Number One!

Speak up, my men! I was never the man to keep my own bed warm,
I have jogged with you round in the Fools' Parade, and I've worn your uniform;
I've seen you live, and I've seen you die, and I've seen your reason fail—
I've smuggled tobacco and loosened my tongue—and I've been punished in gaol.

Ay! clang the spoon on the iron floor, and shove in the bread with your toe,
And shut with a bang the iron door, and clank the bolt—just so,
With an ignorant oath for a last good-night—or the voice of a filthy thought.
By the Gipsy Blood you have caught a man you'll be sorry that ever you caught.

He shall be buried alive without meat, for a day and a night unheard
If he speak to a fellow prisoner, though he die for want of a word.
He shall be punished, and he shall be starved, and he shall in darkness rot,
He shall be murdered body and soul—and God said, 'Thou shalt not!'

I've seen the remand-yard men go out, by the subway out of the yard—
And I've seen them come in with a foolish grin and a sentence of Three Years
Hard.
They send a half-starved man to the court, where the hearts of men they carve—
Then feed him up in the hospital to give him the strength to starve.

You get the gaol-dust in your throat, in your skin the dead gaol-white;
You get the gaol-whine in your voice and in every letter you write.
And in your eyes comes the bright gaol-light—not the glare of the world's
distraught,
Not the hunted look, nor the guilty look, but the awful look of the Caught.

There was one I met—'twas a mate of mine—in a gaol that is known to us;
He died—and they said it was 'heart disease'; but he died for want of a truss.
I've knelt at the head of the pallid dead, where the living dead were we,
And I've closed the yielding lids with my thumbs—(Keep step, One Hundred and
Three!)

A criminal face is rare in gaol, where all things else are ripe—
It is higher up in the social scale that you'll find the criminal type.
But the kindness of man to man is great when penned in a sandstone pen—
The public call us the 'criminal class,' but the warders call us 'the men.'

The brute is a brute, and a kind man kind, and the strong heart does not fail—
A crawler's a crawler everywhere, but a man is a man in gaol!
For forced 'desertion' or drunkenness, or a law's illegal debt,
While never a man who was a man was 'reformed' by punishment yet.

The champagne lady comes home from the course in charge of the criminal
swell—
They carry her in from the motor car to the lift in the Grand Hotel.
But armed with the savage Habituals Act they are waiting for you and me,

And the drums, they are beating loud and near. (Keep step, One Hundred and Three!)

The clever scoundrels are all outside, and the moneyless mugs in gaol—
Men do twelve months for a mad wife's lies or Life for a strumpet's tale.
If the people knew what the warders know, and felt as the prisoners feel—
If the people knew, they would storm their gaols as they stormed the old Bastille.

And the cackling, screaming half-human hens who were never mothers nor wives
Would send their sisters to such a hell for the term of their natural lives,
Where laws are made in a Female Fit in the Land of the Crazy Fad,
And drunkards in judgment on drunkards sit and the mad condemn the mad.

The High Church service swells and swells where the tinted Christs look down—
It is easy to see who is weary and faint and weareth the thorny crown.
There are swift-made signs that are not to God, and they march us Hellward
then.

It is hard to believe that we knelt as boys to 'for ever and ever, Amen. '

Warders and prisoners all alike in a dead rot dry and slow—
The author must not write for his own, and the tailor must not sew.
The billet-bound officers dare not speak and discharged men dare not tell
Though many and many an innocent man must brood in this barren hell.

We are most of us criminal, most of us mad, and we do what we can do.
(Remember the Observation Ward and Number Forty-Two.)
There are eyes that see through stone and iron, though the rest of the world be
blind—
We are prisoners all in God's Great Gaol, but the Governor, He is kind.

They crave for sunlight, they crave for meat, they crave for the might-have-
been,
But the cruellest thing in the walls of a gaol is the craving for nicotine.
Yet the spirit of Christ is everywhere where the heart of a man can dwell,
It comes like tobacco in prison—or like news to the separate cell.

They have smuggled him out to the Hospital with no one to tell the tale,
But it's little the doctors and nurses can do for the patient from Starvinghurst
Gaol.
He cannot swallow the food they bring, for a gaol-starved man is he,

And the blanket and screen are ready to draw—(Keep step, One Hundred and Three!)

'What were you doing, One Hundred and Three?' and the answer is 'Three years hard,

And a month to go'—and the whisper is low: 'There's the moonlight—out in the yard.'

The drums, they are beating far and low, and the footstep's light and free,

And the angels are whispering over his bed: 'Keep step, One Hundred and Three!'

Henry Lawson

Only A Sod

It's only a sod, but 'twill break me ould heart
Nigh hardened wid toilin' and carin',
And make the ould wounds in it tingle and smart.
It's only a sod, but it's parcel and part
Of strugglin', sufferin' Erin.

It's only a sod, but it rakes the ould pain —
The ould love in me heart that still lingers,
That Time has been soothing and docth'ring in vain;
And now he must soothe it and heal it again
Wid his kindly and gentle ould fingers.

It's only a sod, but I see a big ship
Through the gallopin' waters come tearin',
And a lass that looks back on the horizon dip,
Wid eyes full of tears and a thrimblin' lip,
On the last that she saw of ould Erin.

It's only a sod, but wid care it will keep
Till me brooms and me brushes are silint
Put it into me arms ere they bury me deep,
And tell them old Biddy the "slavey" does sleep
'Neath a sod from the bogs of ould Irlint.

Henry Lawson

Otherside

Somewhere in the mystic future, on the road to Paradise,
There's a very pleasant country that I've dreamed of once or twice,
It has inland towns, and cities by the ocean's rocky shelves,
But the people of the country differ somewhat from ourselves;
It is many leagues beyond us, and they call it Otherside.
And there is among its people more Humanity than Pride.

Now, a social system never was complete, without a flaw,
And among the Othersiders there is love and gold and war.
But if one is fairly beaten he can turn upon the track,
For in such a case there isn't any shame in going back;
And a broken-hearted mortal never thinks of suicide,
For he finds amongst his brothers more Humanity than Pride.

And the lords of that creation never scoff at simple things,
Never scorn the lad who's tethered to his mother's apron-strings.
He will speak of "home" and "mother" without shame when he's inclined,
Yet the blow he strikes in battle mostly leaves a mark behind.
They are brave against invasion; they can die in Otherside,
Though there is among the people more Humanity than Pride.

Poets sing in simple language that a child might understand,
Yet their songs are sung for ages by the elders of the land;
And the people know that Freedom never shall be wanting guards,
For the foremost in the vanguard waves the banner of the Bards.
O the poets march together, and at home in peace abide,
For there is amongst the people more Humanity than Pride.

And when I am very weary, 'neath a load of "worldly care",
There are times when I've a longing just to hump my bluey there;
But alone I could not reach it, for the track is barred to one—
I must take the nations with me—all mankind must go, or none—
And we'd trample one another on the way to Otherside,
For I find among my brothers less Humanity than Pride.

Henry Lawson

Our Mistress And Our Queen

We set no right above hers,
No earthly light nor star,
She hath had many lovers,
But not as lovers are:
They all were gallant fellows
And died all deaths for her,
And never one was jealous
But comrades true they were.

Oh! each one is a brother,
Though all the lands they claim—
For her or for each other
They've died all deaths the same
Young, handsome, old and ugly,
Free, married or divorced,
Where springtime bard or Thug lie
Her lover's feet have crossed.

'Mid buttercups and daisies
With fair girls by their side,
Young poets sang her praises
While day in starlight died.
In smoke and fire and dust, and
With red eyes maniac like,
Those same young poets thrust and—
Wrenched out the reeking pike!

She is as old as ages,
But she is ever young.
Upon her birthday pages
They've writ in every tongue;
Her charms have never vanished
Nor beauty been defiled,
Her lovers ne'er were banished—
Can never be exiled.

Ah! thousands died who kissed her,
But millions died who scorned
Our Sweetheart, Queen and Sister,

Whom slaves and Cæsars spurned!
And thousands lost her for her
Own sweet sake, and the world,
Her first most dread adorer,
From Heaven's high state was hurled.

No sign of power she beareth,
In silence doth she tread,
But evermore she weareth
A cap of red rose red.
Her hair is like the raven,
Her soul is like the sea,
Her blue eyes are a haven
That watch Eternity.

She claimed her right from Heaven,
She claims her right from earth,
She claimed it hell-ward driven,
Before her second birth.
No real man lives without her,
No real man-child thrives,
Sweet sin may cling about her,
But purity survives.

She claims the careless girl, and
She claims the master mind;
She whispers to the Earl, and
She whispers to the hind!
No ruler knoweth which man
His sword for her might draw;
Her whisper wakes the rich man—
The peasant on his straw.

She calls us from the prison,
She calls us from the plain,
To towns where men have risen
Again, again, again!
She calls us from our pleasures,
She calls us from our cares,
She calls us from our treasures,
She calls us from our prayers.

From seas and oceans over
Our long-lost sons she draws,
She calls the careless rover,
She calls us from our wars.
The hermit she discovers
To lead her bravest brave—
The spirit of dead lovers,
She calls them from the grave!

We leave the squalid alley,
Our women and our vice,
We leave the pleasant valley,
Life-lust or sacrifice.
The gold hunt in the mountains,
The power-lust on the sea,
The land-lust by earth's fountains,
Defeat or victory.

No means of peace discover
Her strength on "Nights Before",
She has her secret lover
That guards the Grand Duke's door.
No power can resist hers,
No massacre deter—
Small brothers and wee sisters
Of lovers, watch for her!

Old dotards undetected,
School boys that never tire,
And lone hags unsuspected
That drone beside the fire.
The youth in love's first passion,
The girl in day-dream mood,
And, in the height of fashion,
The "butterfly" and "dude".

The millionaire heart-broken,
The beggar with his whine,
And each one hath a token,
And each one hath a sign.
And when the time is ripe and
The hells of earth in power,

The dotard drops his pipe, and—
The maiden drops a flower!

Oh, bloody our revivals!
And swift our vengeance hurled,
We've laid our dear-loved rivals
In trenches round the world!
We've flung off fair arms clinging,
Health, wealth, and life's grand whole,
And marched out to her singing,
A passion of our soul.

Her lovers fought on ice fields
With stone clubs long ago,
Her lovers slave in rice fields
And in the "lectric's" glow.
Her lovers pine wherever
The lust for Nothing is,
They starve where light is never,
And starve in palaces.

They've gathered, crowded and scattered,
With heads and scythe-blades low,
Through fir and pine clump spattered,
Like ink blots on the snow.
With broken limbs and shattered
They've crushed like hunted brute,
And died in hellish torture
In holes beneath the roof.

They've coursed through streets of cities
The fleeing Parliaments,
And songs that were not ditties
They've sung by smouldering tents.
And trained in caps and sashes
They've heard the head drums roll,
They've danced on kings-blood splashes
The dreadful carmagnole.

By mountains, and by stations,
Out where wide levels are,
They've balked the march of nations

And ridden lone and far.
The whip stroke of the bullet,
The short grunt of distress—
The saddled pony grazing
Alone and riderless.

The plain in sunlight blazing—
No signal of distress,
Unseen by far scouts gazing,
And still, with wide eyes glazing:
Dead lover of our mistress,
Dead comrade of his rivals,
Dead champion of his country,
Dead soldier of his widow
And of his fatherless.

She pauses by her writers,
And whispers, through the years,
The poems that delight us
And bring the glorious tears.
The song goes on unbroken
Through worlds of senseless drones,
Until the words are spoken
By Emperors on their thrones.

Henry Lawson

Out Back

The old year went, and the new returned, in the withering weeks of drought,
The cheque was spent that the shearer earned,
and the sheds were all cut out;
The publican's words were short and few,
and the publican's looks were black --
And the time had come, as the shearer knew, to carry his swag Out Back.

For time means tucker, and tramp you must,
where the scrubs and plains are wide,
With seldom a track that a man can trust, or a mountain peak to guide;
All day long in the dust and heat -- when summer is on the track --
With stunted stomachs and blistered feet,
they carry their swags Out Back.

He tramped away from the shanty there, when the days were long and hot,
With never a soul to know or care if he died on the track or not.
The poor of the city have friends in woe, no matter how much they lack,
But only God and the swagmen know how a poor man fares Out Back.

He begged his way on the parched Paroo and the Warrego tracks once more,
And lived like a dog, as the swagmen do, till the Western stations shore;
But men were many, and sheds were full, for work in the town was slack --
The traveller never got hands in wool,
though he tramped for a year Out Back.

In stifling noons when his back was wrung
by its load, and the air seemed dead,
And the water warmed in the bag that hung to his aching arm like lead,
Or in times of flood, when plains were seas,
and the scrubs were cold and black,
He ploughed in mud to his trembling knees, and paid for his sins Out Back.

He blamed himself in the year 'Too Late' --
in the heaviest hours of life --
'Twas little he dreamed that a shearing-mate had care of his home and wife;
There are times when wrongs from your kindred come,
and treacherous tongues attack --
When a man is better away from home, and dead to the world, Out Back.

And dirty and careless and old he wore, as his lamp of hope grew dim;
He tramped for years till the swag he bore seemed part of himself to him.
As a bullock drags in the sandy ruts, he followed the dreary track,
With never a thought but to reach the huts when the sun went down Out Back.

It chanced one day, when the north wind blew
in his face like a furnace-breath,
He left the track for a tank he knew -- 'twas a short-cut to his death;
For the bed of the tank was hard and dry, and crossed with many a crack,
And, oh! it's a terrible thing to die of thirst in the scrub Out Back.

A drover came, but the fringe of law was eastward many a mile;
He never reported the thing he saw, for it was not worth his while.
The tanks are full and the grass is high in the mulga off the track,
Where the bleaching bones of a white man lie
by his mouldering swag Out Back.

For time means tucker, and tramp they must,
where the plains and scrubs are wide,
With seldom a track that a man can trust, or a mountain peak to guide;
All day long in the flies and heat the men of the outside track
With stunted stomachs and blistered feet
must carry their swags Out Back.

Henry Lawson

Out On The Roofs Of Hell

SING us a song in this cynical age,
Sing us a song, my friend,
While the Flesh and the Devil are all the rage
And Death seems the only end.
Give it the clatter of hoof-clipped bones
And a note like a dingo's yell,
And the long, low sigh when the big mob moans
Out on the roofs of hell.

For Wool, Tallow, and Hides and Co.,
For Wool, Tallow, and Hides—
Over the roofs of hell we go
For Wool, Tallow, and Hides.

We take the route or we take the track,
Hell-doomed by the greed of man,
And we leave our wives in the scrubs out back
To struggle as best they can.
For the credit is short and the flour is low—
And this is the tale we tell—
A check must be made and the stock must go
Over the roofs of hell.

Wake ere the burst of the great white sun
Into the blazing skies,
Our limbs are stiff and the lids are gummed
Over our blighted eyes.
But our souls have perished in dust and heat,
And this is the tale we tell—
Our lives are ever a grim retreat
With Death on the roofs of hell.

They drivel and say how the bushman drinks,
But what do the townsfolk know?
The life is a hell to the man who thinks—
He must drink or his reason go.
Drink and drink, as the bushman knows,
Till he strip to the skin and yell;
Down for a change! for a rest! he goes

Down through the roofs of hell.

For Wool, Tallow, and Hides and Co.,
For Wool, Tallow, and Hides,
Down through the roofs of hell they go
For Wool, Tallow, and Hides.

Henry Lawson

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and the sheds were all cut out;
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And the time had come, as the shearer knew, to carry his swag Out Back.

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With stunted stomachs and blistered feet
must carry their swags Out Back.

Henry Lawson

Outside

I want to be lighting my pipe on deck,
With my baggage safe below—
I want to be free of the crowded quay,
While the steamer's swinging slow.
I want to be free of treachery,
And of sordid joys and griefs—
To be out of sight of the faces white,
And the waving of handkerchiefs.
I want to be making my ship-board friends,
I want to be free of the past—
I want to be laughing with kindred souls,
While the Heads are opening fast.
I want to be sailing far to-day,
On the tracks where the rovers go,
To feel the heave of the deck, and draw
The breath that the rovers know.

Henry Lawson

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Henry Lawson

Over The Ranges And Into The West

Let others sing praise of their sea-girted isles,
But give me the bush with its limitless miles;
Then it's over the ranges and into the West,
To the scenes of wild boyhood; we love them the best.

We'll ride and we'll ride from the city afar,
To the plains where the cattle and sheep stations are;
Where stockmen ride hard, and the drover starts forth
On his long, lonely journey 'way up in the North.

When your money is low, and your luck has gone down,
There's no place so lone as the streets of a town;
There's nothing but worry, and dread and unrest,
So we'll over the ranges and into the West.

The drought in the West may spread ruin around,
But the dread drought of life in the city is found;
And I'd far sooner tread on the long dusty way,
Where each one you meet says, "Good day, mate, good day."

Henry Lawson

Past Carin'

Now up and down the siding brown
The great black crows are flyin',
And down below the spur, I know,
Another `milker's' dyin';
The crops have withered from the ground,
The tank's clay bed is glarin',
But from my heart no tear nor sound,
For I have gone past carin' --
 Past worryin' or carin',
 Past feelin' aught or carin';
 But from my heart no tear nor sound,
 For I have gone past carin'.

Through Death and Trouble, turn about,
Through hopeless desolation,
Through flood and fever, fire and drought,
And slavery and starvation;
Through childbirth, sickness, hurt, and blight,
And nervousness an' scarin',
Through bein' left alone at night,
I've got to be past carin'.
 Past botherin' or carin',
 Past feelin' and past carin';
 Through city cheats and neighbours' spite,
 I've come to be past carin'.

Our first child took, in days like these,
A cruel week in dyin',
All day upon her father's knees,
Or on my poor breast lyin';
The tears we shed -- the prayers we said
Were awful, wild -- despairin'!
I've pulled three through, and buried two
Since then -- and I'm past carin'.
 I've grown to be past carin',
 Past worryin' and wearin';
 I've pulled three through and buried two
 Since then, and I'm past carin'.

'Twas ten years first, then came the worst,
All for a dusty clearin',
I thought, I thought my heart would burst
When first my man went shearin';
He's drovin' in the great North-west,
I don't know how he's farin';
For I, the one that loved him best,
Have grown to be past carin'.

I've grown to be past carin'
Past lookin' for or carin';
The girl that waited long ago,
Has lived to be past carin'.

My eyes are dry, I cannot cry,
I've got no heart for breakin',
But where it was in days gone by,
A dull and empty achin'.
My last boy ran away from me,
I know my temper's wearin',
But now I only wish to be
Beyond all signs of carin'.

Past wearyin' or carin',
Past feelin' and despairin';
And now I only wish to be
Beyond all signs of carin'.

Henry Lawson

Peddling Round The World

When at first in foreign parts
Was her flag unfurled,
England was a Gipsy lass
Peddling round the world.
Sailing on the Spanish Main—
Everywhere you roam—
Peddling in the Persian Gulf
Things she'd made at home.
Peddling round the world,
Peddling round the world—
England was a Gipsy lass
Peddling round the world.
England never wanted war,
Not on land or sea—
Other nations rising up
Couldn't let her be.
England only wanted peace,
And the ocean's breath;
So there came, in course of time,
Queen Elizabeth.
Queen Elizabeth—
Queen Elizabeth—
Came a plain, bad-tempered queen,
Called Elizabeth.

Queen Elizabeth, she called
Drake, and Raleigh too—
Essex, Howard, and the rest
Of the pirate crew;
"See what you can do," she said.
"England's feeling sick—
If you don't, I'll hang you all!
Better do it quick."
"Better do it quick," she said—
"Better do it quick";
And they knew she'd keep her word,
So they did it quick.

Drake and Raleigh sailed away—

(Only Bess they feared)
Cleared the Spanish Main and singed
The King of Spain his beard—
Singed the King of Spain his beard,
And his hair they curled.
England was a Gipsy's love
Peddling round the world.
Peddling round the world,
Peddling round the world.
England was a Gipsy's love
Peddling round the world.

Once again, when Cromwell came,
England wanted room;
So he lowered Holland's tone,
Smashed the Dutchman's broom.
Sent a message to Algiers;
Made its meaning plain—
On the way they called once more
On the King of Spain.
On the King of Spain—
On the King of Spain:
Called, to jog his memory,
On the King of Spain.

So the years went round and round,
Over hills and flats—
England was a Gipsy wife—
England had her brats;
Peddling in the China Sea,
Far from English ground;
Doing biz with Mrs. Jap—
Peddling all around.
Peddling all around—
Peddling all around;
Making friends with Mrs. Jap—
Peddling all around.

When the war is past and gone,
With its blood and tears;
And the world may count upon

Peace for fifty years—
When the gory battle-flags
Round their sticks are furled—
Then you'll see a Gipsy crone
Peddling round the world.
Peddling round the world—
Peddling round the world.
Then you'll see a Gipsy crone
A-peddling round the world!
Shawl as old as Joseph's coat,
Hair as white as snow,
Mind as bright as Seventeen—
Eyes still like the sloe—
Peddling in the Southern Seas—
Everywhere you roam—
And she'll fill her baskets here
With things we'll make at home.
Things we'll make at home—
Things we'll make at home—
Call to fill her baskets here
With things we'll make at HOME.

Henry Lawson

Peter Anderson And Co.

He had offices in Sydney, not so many years ago,
And his shingle bore the legend `Peter Anderson and Co.',
But his real name was Careless, as the fellows understood --
And his relatives decided that he wasn't any good.
'Twas their gentle tongues that blasted any `character' he had --
He was fond of beer and leisure -- and the Co. was just as bad.
It was limited in number to a unit, was the Co. --
'Twas a bosom chum of Peter and his Christian name was Joe.

'Tis a class of men belonging to these soul-forsaken years:
Third-rate canvassers, collectors, journalists and auctioneers.
They are never very shabby, they are never very spruce --
Going cheerfully and carelessly and smoothly to the deuce.
Some are wanderers by profession, `turning up' and gone as soon,
Travelling second-class, or steerage (when it's cheap they go saloon);
Free from `ists' and `isms', troubled little by belief or doubt --
Lazy, purposeless, and useless -- knocking round and hanging out.
They will take what they can get, and they will give what they can give,
God alone knows how they manage -- God alone knows how they live!
They are nearly always hard-up, but are cheerful all the while --
Men whose energy and trousers wear out sooner than their smile!
They, no doubt, like us, are haunted by the boresome `if' or `might',
But their ghosts are ghosts of daylight -- they are men who live at night!

Peter met you with the comic smile of one who knows you well,
And is mighty glad to see you, and has got a joke to tell;
He could laugh when all was gloomy, he could grin when all was blue,
Sing a comic song and act it, and appreciate it, too.
Only cynical in cases where his own self was the jest,
And the humour of his good yarns made atonement for the rest.
Seldom serious -- doing business just as 'twere a friendly game --
Cards or billiards -- nothing graver. And the Co. was much the same.

They tried everything and nothing 'twixt the shovel and the press,
And were more or less successful in their ventures -- mostly less.
Once they ran a country paper till the plant was seized for debt,
And the local sinners chuckle over dingy copies yet.

They'd been through it all and knew it in the land of Bills and Jims --
Using Peter's own expression, they had been in `various swims'.
Now and then they'd take an office, as they called it, -- make a dash
Into business life as `agents' -- something not requiring cash.
(You can always furnish cheaply, when your cash or credit fails,
With a packing-case, a hammer, and a pound of two-inch nails --
And, maybe, a drop of varnish and sienna, too, for tints,
And a scrap or two of oilcloth, and a yard or two of chintz).
They would pull themselves together, pay a week's rent in advance,
But it never lasted longer than a month by any chance.

The office was their haven, for they lived there when hard-up --
A `daily' for a table cloth -- a jam tin for a cup;
And if the landlord's bailiff happened round in times like these
And seized the office-fittings -- well, there wasn't much to seize --
They would leave him in possession. But at other times they shot
The moon, and took an office where the landlord knew them not.
And when morning brought the bailiff there'd be nothing to be seen
Save a piece of bevelled cedar where the tenant's plate had been;
There would be no sign of Peter -- there would be no sign of Joe
Till another portal boasted `Peter Anderson and Co.'

And when times were locomotive, billiard-rooms and private bars --
Spicy parties at the cafe -- long cab-drives beneath the stars;
Private picnics down the Harbour -- shady campings-out, you know --
No one would have dreamed 'twas Peter --
no one would have thought 'twas Joe!
Free-and-easies in their `diggings', when the funds began to fail,
Bosom chums, cigars, tobacco, and a case of English ale --
Gloriously drunk and happy, till they heard the roosters crow --
And the landlady and neighbours made complaints about the Co.
But that life! it might be likened to a reckless drinking-song,
For it can't go on for ever, and it never lasted long.

.

Debt-collecting ruined Peter -- people talked him round too oft,
For his heart was soft as butter (and the Co.'s was just as soft);
He would cheer the haggard missus, and he'd tell her not to fret,
And he'd ask the worried debtor round with him to have a wet;
He would ask him round the corner, and it seemed to him and her,
After each of Peter's visits, things were brighter than they were.

But, of course, it wasn't business -- only Peter's careless way;
And perhaps it pays in heaven, but on earth it doesn't pay.
They got harder up than ever, and, to make it worse, the Co.
Went more often round the corner than was good for him to go.

`I might live,' he said to Peter, `but I haven't got the nerve --
I am going, Peter, going -- going, going -- no reserve.
Eat and drink and love they tell us, for to-morrow we may die,
Buy experience -- and we bought it -- we're experienced, you and I.'
Then, with a weary movement of his hand across his brow:
`The death of such philosophy's the death I'm dying now.
Pull yourself together, Peter; 'tis the dying wish of Joe
That the business world shall honour Peter Anderson and Co.

`When you feel your life is sinking in a dull and useless course,
And begin to find in drinking keener pleasure and remorse --
When you feel the love of leisure on your careless heart take holt,
Break away from friends and pleasure, though it give your heart a jolt.
Shun the poison breath of cities -- billiard-rooms and private bars,
Go where you can breathe God's air and see the grandeur of the stars!
Find again and follow up the old ambitions that you had --
See if you can raise a drink, old man, I'm feelin' mighty bad --
Hot and sweetened, nip o' butter -- squeeze o' lemon, Pete,' he sighed.
And, while Peter went to fetch it, Joseph went to sleep -- and died
With a smile -- anticipation, maybe, of the peace to come,
Or a joke to try on Peter -- or, perhaps, it was the rum.

.

Peter staggered, gripped the table, swerved as some old drunkard swerves --
At a gulp he drank the toddy, just to brace his shattered nerves.
It was awful, if you like. But then he hadn't time to think --
All is nothing! Nothing matters! Fill your glasses -- dead man's drink.

.

Yet, to show his heart was not of human decency bereft,
Peter paid the undertaker. He got drunk on what was left;
Then he shed some tears, half-maudlin, on the grave where lay the Co.,
And he drifted to a township where the city failures go.
Where, though haunted by the man he was, the wreck he yet might be,
Or the man he might have been, or by each spectre of the three,

And the dying words of Joseph, ringing through his own despair,
Peter 'pulled himself together' and he started business there.

But his life was very lonely, and his heart was very sad,
And no help to reformation was the company he had --
Men who might have been, who had been, but who were not in the swim --
'Twas a town of wrecks and failures -- they appreciated him.
They would ask him who the Co. was -- that queer company he kept --
And he'd always answer vaguely -- he would say his partner slept;
That he had a 'sleeping partner' -- jesting while his spirit broke --
And they grinned above their glasses, for they took it as a joke.
He would shout while he had money, he would joke while he had breath --
No one seemed to care or notice how he drank himself to death;
Till at last there came a morning when his smile was seen no more --
He was gone from out the office, and his shingle from the door,
And a boundary-rider jogging out across the neighb'ring run
Was attracted by a something that was blazing in the sun;
And he found that it was Peter, lying peacefully at rest,
With a bottle close beside him and the shingle on his breast.
Well, they analysed the liquor, and it would appear that he
Qualified his drink with something good for setting spirits free.
Though 'twas plainly self-destruction -- 'twas his own affair,' they said;
And the jury viewed him sadly, and they found -- that he was dead.

Henry Lawson

Pigeon Toes

A dusty clearing in the scrubs
Of barren, western lands—
Where, out of sight, or sign of hope
The wretched school-house stands;
A roof that glares at glaring days,
A bare, unshaded wall,
A fence that guards no blade of green—
A dust-storm over all.
The books and slates are packed away,
The maps are rolled and tied,
And for an hour I breathe, and lay
My ghastly mask aside;
I linger here to save my head
From voices shrill and thin,
That rasp for ever in the shed,
The 'home' I'm boarding in.

The heat and dirt and wretchedness
With which their lives began—
Bush mother nagging day and night,
And sullen, brooding man;
The minds that harp on single strings,
And never bright by chance,
The rasping voice of paltry things,
The hopeless ignorance.

I had ideals when I came here,
A noble purpose had,
But all that they can understand
Is 'axe to grind' or 'mad.'
I brood at times till comes a fear
That sets my brain awl—
I fight a strong man's battle here,
And I am but a girl.

I hated paltriness and deemed
A breach of faith a crime;
I listen now to scandal's voice
In sewing-lesson time.

There is a thought that haunts me so,
And gathers strength each day—
Shall I as narrow-minded grow,
As mean of soul as they?

The feuds that rise from paltry spite,
Or from no cause at all;
The brooding, dark, suspicious minds—
I suffer for it all.
They do not dream the 'Teacher' knows,
What brutal thoughts are said;
The children call me 'Pigeon Toes,'
'Green Eyes' and 'Carrot Head.'

On phantom seas of endless change
My thoughts to madness roam—
The only thing that keeps me here,
The thoughts of those at home—
The hearts that love and cling to me,
That I love best on earth,
My mother left in poverty,
My brother blind from birth.

On burning West Australian fields
In that great dreadful land,
Where all day long the heat waves flow
O'er the seas of glowing sand.
My elder brother toils and breaks
That great true heart of his
To rescue us from poverty—
To rescue me from this.

And one is with him where he goes,
My brother's mate and mine;
He never called me Pigeon Toes—
He said my eyes were 'fine';
And his face comes before me now,
And hope and courage rise,
The lines of life—the troubled brow,
Firm mouth and kind grey eyes.

I preach content and gentleness,

And mock example give;
They little think the Teacher hates
And loathes the life they live.
I told the infants fairy tales
But half an hour since—
They little dream how Pigeon Toes
Prays for a fairy Prince.

I have one prayer (and God forgive
A selfish prayer and wild);
I kneel down by the infants' stool
(For I am but a child),
And pray as I've prayed times untold
That Heaven will set a sign,
To guide my brother to the gold,
For mother's sake and mine.

A dust cloud on the lonely road,
And I am here alone;
I lock the door till it be past,
For I have nervous grown.

God spare me disappointment's blow.
He stops beside the gate;
A voice, thrill-feeling that I know.
My brother! No! His mate!

His eyes—a proud, triumphant smile,
His arms outstretched, and 'Come,
'For Jack and I have made our pile,
'And I'm here to take you home'!

Henry Lawson

Possum A Lay Of New Chumland

SO YER trav'lin' for yer pleasure while yer writin' for the press?
An' yer huntin' arter "copy"—well, I've heer'd o' that. I guess
You are gorn ter write a story that is gorn ter be yer best,
'Bout the "blunders an' advenchers ov a new chum in the west?"
An' you would be very thankful an' acknowledge any hint?
Well, I karn't say as I hankers fur ter see my name in print;
But I know a little story an' I'll tell it out ov hand
If yer'll put it down in writin' that the swells kin understand—
(It's a story ov a new chum, and—a story ov the land.)

He had lately kum from England—you cud tell it by 's cap—
Fur "kerlonial exper'ence" (an' he got it, too, poor chap).
'Twas in town he met the squatter, an' he asked, as if in fun,
"If the boss 'ud want a flunkey or a coachy on the run?"
Well, it riz the boss's dander, an' he jumps clean orf 'is 'oss—
"Now, me fresh, sweet-scented beauty, watyer giv'nus?" sez the boss;
"I hev met yer kidney often, an' yer mighty fresh an' free,
But yer needn't think yer gorn ter come a-lardin' over me!"

But the new chum sed that 'onest he was lookin' for a job,
An' in spite of his appearance he had blued 'is bottom bob.
An' as beggars karn't be choosers same as people wot are rich,
Said he'd go as stoo'rd or gard'ner, but he warn't partickler which.
Well, the joker seemed in earnest, so the boss began ter cool,
An' he only blanked the new chum for a thund'rin' jumpt-up fool.
Then he sed, "Well, there's the fencin', if yer'll tramp it up from Perth,
The boys 'll find yer su'thin p'r'aps, an' giv' yer wat yer worth."

Ov course the squatter never thort ter see 'im any more,
But he wa'n't the kind ov new chum that the squatter tuk 'im for;
No, he wa'n't the kind er cockeroach that on'y kums ter shirk,
That wants ter git the sugar, but is fri'tened ov the work;
For he sold 'is watch 'n' jool'ry, 'n' lardi-dardy suits,
Stuck a swag upon his shoulder, 'n' 'is feet in blucher boots;
An' I dunno how he did it, he was anythin' but strong,
But he 'umped his bluey ninety mile an' kum to Bunglelong.

He earnt 'is pound and tucker borin' holes an' runnin' wire,
An' he'd work from dawn to sunset, an' he never seemed to tire;
But he must have suffered orful from the tucker an' the heat,
An' the everlastin' trampin' made 'im tender in the feet,
An' he must hev thort ov England w'en the everlastin' flies
Ware a-worrit, worrit, worrit, an' a-knawin' at 'is eyes;
An' he used to swear like thunder w'en the yaller sergeant ants
Took a mornin' stroll, promiscus, on the inside ov 'is pants.

He uster make 'is damper six or seven inches thick—
It was doughey on the inside an' the shell was like a brick,
An' while the damper made 'im dream ov days ov long ago,
The little boodie rats 'ud kum an' nibble out the dough.
He biled 'is taters soggy, an' 'is junk was biled to rags
(The little boodie rats 'ud kum an' chew 's tucker bags),
But he took 'is troubles cheerful, an' he fixed 'em like a pome,
An' writ 'em in his darey to amuse the folks at home.

At first he flashed a coller an' was keerful with 'is hat,
An' he'd black 'is boots ov Sundays, but he soon grew out of that;
An' he learnt ter bake 'is damper, an' he leant to bile 'is junk
An' sleep without a-getting up all night ter shake 'is bunk.
He soon got out ov takin' "shorter cuts" across the flats,
An' he learnt to fling ole bottles to the sorrow of the rats,
An' learnt to sling kerlonial and like the bushman's way,
An' it did us good to see 'im smoke 'is "nigger" in a clay.

He would sing an' play 'is fiddle when we gathered round the blaze,
Till ole Frenchy got excited while he'd play the Mascylays;
An' Bill 'ud take 'is hat off while he'd spout the Light Brigade,
An' Scotchy got oneasy when the "Bony 'Ills" was played.
So we got ter like the new chum for we'd met with many wuss,
An' we made it easy for 'im an' he seemed to take to us:
The toilin' an' the trampin' was a-cookin' 'im we found,
So we made 'im cook an' stoo'rd just ter keep the chap around.

Well, the months went bakin' broilin' on until Christmas nex',
When we tramped it down to Perth to spend our 'ollyday (and cheques);
But Possum sed he'd save 'is tin an' stay and mind the camp,
So we left 'im in possession an' we started on our tramp;
(We useter call 'im Possum, but for short we called 'im Poss,

For 'is eyes was black an' twinklin' and a little chap he was),
We never would have left 'im if we'd know'd (but that's the ru,
Comin' back we found 'im dyin' in 'is gunyah in the scrub.

We fixed 'im up an' nursed 'im; but we seen without a doubt
That consumption was the matter, an' the chap was peggin' out;
But the lion heart inside 'im was as strong an' stout as six,
An' while he'd smile an' thank us he would joke about 'is fix;
An' he said 'twas very jolly to be dry-nursed in a tent,
An' he reckoned that the Christmas was the best he'd ever spent;
He would talk of 'ome and Ingran' when 'is head began ter swim,
But he never blamed the country that had been so 'ard on him.

He would say, "I like the country; if a feller's blind er halt,
Or if he's got konsumption, why it ain't the country's fault.
The tea that's boil'd in billies is far sweeter stuff, I know,
Than the cursed drink w'at blasted all my chances long ago.
I would hev cum out sooner if it was my destiny,
An' I daresay that the country would have made a man ov me.
But w'at's the good ov energy, an' wat's the good er 'push'
W'en a feller's sick an' dyin' in a gunyah in the bush."

But he tole me all about it as I sat beside 'is bunk—
How he'd spent 'is tin in Melbourne an' was allers gettin' drunk;
How he thort he'd take it easy while he had a little gold,
And, before he turned the new leaf, how he scribbled on the old;
An' among a lot ov nonsense w'en 'is mind began to drift,
He told me that the new leaf was a heavy leaf to lift.
But w'ats the good er writin' this, it's nothin' very new,
The land will see enough ov it an' suffer for it, too.
An' he said w'en he was dying, (when his lung was spit away)
An' we all was standin' round 'im in the gunyah where he lay,
An' he said, "I've watched the sunset—when the wind began to 'woosh',
Like a layer ov coals a-glowin'—on the dark bed ov the bush;
An' I felt my fingers slippin'—slippin'—slowly—from the ropes,
Wen the West was cold—like ashes—like the ashes of my hopes;
An'—I— Sit beside me—Peter—let me 'old—a—bushman's hand,
For I'm—gorn to—'ump—my bluey—through the gates ov—Newchumland."

Henry Lawson

Poverty

I hate this grinding poverty—
To toil, and pinch, and borrow,
And be for ever haunted by
The spectre of to-morrow.
It breaks the strong heart of a man,
It crushes out his spirit—
Do what he will, do what he can,
However high his merit!

I hate the praise that Want has got
From preacher and from poet,
The cant of those who know it not
To blind the men who know it.
The greatest curse since man had birth,
An everlasting terror:
The cause of half the crime on earth,
The cause of half the error.

Henry Lawson

Queen Hilda Of Virland

PART I

Queen Hilda rode along the lines,
And she was young and fair;
And forward on her shoulders fell
The heavy braids of hair:
No gold was ever dug from earth
Like that burnished there –
No sky so blue as were her eyes
Had man seen anywhere.

'Twas so her gay court poets sang,
And we believed it true.
But men must fight for golden hair
And die for eyes of blue!
Cheer after cheer, the long half mile
(It has been ever thus),
And evermore her winsome smile
She turned and turned on us.

The Spring-burst over wood and sea,
The day was warm and bright –
Young Clarence stood on my left hand,
Old Withen on the right.
With fifteen thousand men, or more,
With plumes and banners gay,
To sail that day to foreign war,
And our ships swarmed on the bay.

Old Withen muttered in his beard I listened with a sigh –
"Good Faith! for such a chit as that
Strong men must kill and die.
She'll back to her embroideree,
And fools that bow and smirk,
And we must sail across the sea
And go to other work.

"And wherefore? Wherefore," Withen said,
"Is this red quarrel sought?
Because of clacking painted hags

And foreign fops at Court!
Because 'tis said a drunken king,
In lands we've never seen,
Said something foolish in his cups
Of our young silly queen!

"Good faith! in her old great-aunt's time
'Twere different, I vow:
If old Dame Ruth were here, she'd get
Some sharp advising now!"
(At this a grim smile went about
For men could say in sooth
That none who'd seen her face could doubt
The fair fame of Dame Ruth.)

If Clarence heard, he said no word;
His soul was fresh and clean;
The glory in his boyish eyes
Was shining for his Queen!
And as she passed, he gazed as one
An angel might regard.
(Old Withen looked as if he'd like
To take and smack her hard.)

We only smiled at anything
That good old Withen said,
For he, half blind, through smoke and flame
Had borne her grandsire dead;
And he, in Virland's danger time,
Where both her brothers died,
Had ridden to red victory
By her brave father's side.

Queen Hilda rode along the lines
'Mid thundering cheers the while,
And each man sought – and seemed to get –
Her proud and happy smile.
Queen Hilda little dreamed – Ah, me! –
On what dark miry plain,
And what blood-blinded eyes would see
Her girlish smile again!

Queen Hilda rode on through the crowd,
We heard the distant roar;
We heard the clack of gear and plank,
The sailors on the shore.
Queen Hilda sought her "bower" to rest,
(For her day's work was done),
We kissed our wives – or others' wives –
And sailed ere set of sun.

(Some sail because they're married men,
And some because they're free –
To come or not come back agen,
And such of old were we.
Some sail for fame and some for loot
And some for love – or lust –
And some to fish and some to shoot
And some because they must.

(Some sail who know not why they roam
When they are come aboard,
And some for wives and loves at home,
And some for those abroad.
Some sail because the path is plain,
And some because they choose,
And some with nothing left to gain
And nothing left to lose.

(And we have sailed from Virland, we,
For a woman's right or wrong,
And we are One, and One, and Three,
And Fifteen Thousand strong.
For Right or Wrong and Virland's fame –
You dared us and we come
To write in blood a woman's name
And take a letter home.)

PART II

King Death came riding down the lines
And broken lines were they,
With scarce a soldier who could tell
Where friend or foeman lay:
The storm cloud looming over all,

Save where the west was red,
And on the field, of friend and foe,
Ten thousand men lay dead.

Boy Clarence lay in slush and blood
With his face deathly white;
Old Withen lay by his left side
And I knelt at his right.
And Clarence ever whispered,
Though with dying eyes serene:
"I loved her for her girlhood,
Will someone tell the Queen?"

And this old Withen's message,
When his time shortly came:
"I loved her for her father's sake
But I fought for Virland's fame:
Go, take you this, a message
From me," Old Withen said,
"Who knelt beside her father,
And his when they were dead:

"I who in sport or council,
I who as boy and man,
Would aye speak plainly to them
Were it Court, or battle's van –
(Nay! fear not, she will listen
And my words be understood,
And she will heed my message,
For I know her father's blood.)

"If shame there was – (I judge not
As I'd not be judged above:
The Royal blood of Virland
Was ever hot to love,
Or fight.) – the slander's wiped out,
As witness here the slain:
But, if shame there was, then tell her
Let it not be again."

At home once more in Virland
The glorious Spring-burst shines:

Queen Hilda rides right proudly
Down our victorious lines.
The gaps were filled with striplings,
And Hilda wears a rose:
And what the wrong or right of it
Queen Hilda only knows.

But, be it state or nation
Or castle, town, or shed,
Or be she wife or monarch
Or widowed or unwed –
Now this is for your comfort,
And it has ever been:
That, wrong or right, a man must fight
For his country and his queen.

Henry Lawson

Rain In The Mountains

The Valley's full of misty cloud,
Its tinted beauty drowning,
The Eucalypti roar aloud,
The mountain fronts are frowning.
The mist is hanging like a pall
From many granite ledges,
And many a little waterfall
Starts o'er the valley's edges.

The sky is of a leaden grey,
Save where the north is surly,
The driven daylight speeds away,
And night comes o'er us early.

But, love, the rain will pass full soon,
Far sooner than my sorrow,
And in a golden afternoon
The sun may set to-morrow.

Henry Lawson

Reedy River

Ten miles down Reedy River
A pool of water lies,
And all the year it mirrors
The changes in the skies,
And in that pool's broad bosom
Is room for all the stars;
Its bed of sand has drifted
O'er countless rocky bars.

Around the lower edges
There waves a bed of reeds,
Where water rats are hidden
And where the wild duck breeds;
And grassy slopes rise gently
To ridges long and low,
Where groves of wattle flourish
And native bluebells grow.

Beneath the granite ridges
The eye may just discern
Where Rocky Creek emerges
From deep green banks of fern;
And standing tall between them,
The grassy she-oaks cool
The hard, blue-tinted waters
Before they reach the pool.

Ten miles down Reedy River
One Sunday afternoon,
I rode with Mary Campbell
To that broad, bright lagoon;
We left our horses grazing
Till shadows climbed the peak,
And strolled beneath the she-oaks
On the banks of Rocky Creek.

Then home along the river
That night we rode a race,
And the moonlight lent a glory

To Mary Campbell's face;
And I pleaded for our future
All through that moonlight ride,
Until our weary horses
Drew closer side by side.

Ten miles from Ryan's Crossing
And five miles below the peak,
I built a little homestead
On the banks of Rocky Creek;
I cleared the land and fenced it
And ploughed the rich, red loam,
And my first crop was golden
When I brought my Mary home.

Now still down Reedy River
The grassy she-oaks sigh,
And the water-holes still mirror
The pictures in the sky;
And over all for ever
Go sun and moon and stars,
While the golden sand is drifting
Across the rocky bars

But of the hut I builded
There are no traces now.
And many rains have levelled
The furrows of the plough;
And my bright days are olden,
For the twisted branches wave
And the wattle blossoms golden
On the hill by Mary's grave.

Henry Lawson

Rejected

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

You think and think, and think, and think, till you go mad almost;
Across your sight the spectres of the bygone seem to flit;
The very girl herself seems dead, and comes back as a ghost,
When you're hit, like this—hard hit.

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

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

Henry Lawson

Republican Pioneers

We're marching along, we're gath'ring strong'
We place on our right reliance,
We fling in the air, for all who care,
Our first loud notes of defiance!
We fling in the air,
For all who care,
Our first loud notes of defiance!

Laugh long and loud, you toady crowd,
At the men you call benighted,
In spite of your sneers, we are pioneers
Of "Australian States United"!
In spite of your sneers, We are pioneers
Of "Australian States United"!

Not long we'll stand as an outlaw band,
And be in our country lonely,
For soon to the sky shall ring our cry,
Our cry of "Australia only"!
For soon to the sky
Shall mount our cry,
Our cry of "Australia only"!

And we'll sleep sound in Australian ground,
'Neath the blue-cross flag star lighted,
When it freely waves o'er the grass-grown graves
Of the pioneers united!
When it floats and veers
O'er the pioneers
Of "Australian States United"!

Henry Lawson

Rewi To Grey: The Old Maori Chief's Last Message

We have lived till these times, brother,
We who lived in this;
We have not grown old together,
Soon our lives must close –
Rewi's first! For I am dying
Ere I got where all is true
From my heart a wish is flying –
This is my great word to you:

Mine to you and those who love us –
Be they white or brown –
Let there be one stone above us
When they've laid us down;
Let us rest together, brother,
When our gods recall us two.
Grant my wish – I have no other:
This is my great word to you.

Let there be one stone above us,
Standing for a sign:
On one side your name be written
On the other mine.
In my heart your name is lying;
We shall meet where all is true –
From my heart this wish is flying
This is my great word to you.

Henry Lawson

Riding Round The Lines

Dust and smoke against the sunrise out where grim disaster lurks
And a broken sky-line looming like unfinished railway works,
And a trot, trot, trot and canter down inside the belt of mines:
It is General Greybeard Shrapnel who is riding round his lines.

And the scarecrows from the trenches, haggard eyes and hollow cheeks,
War-stained uniforms and ragged that have not been off for weeks;
They salute him and they cheer him and they watch his face for signs;
Ah! they try to read old Greybeard while he's riding round the lines.

There's a crack, crack, crack and rattle; there's a thud and there's a crash;
In the battery over yonder there is something gone to smash,
Then a hush and sudden movement, and its meaning he divines,
And he patches up a blunder while he's riding round his lines.

Pushing this position forward, bringing that position back,
While his officers, with orders, ride like hell down hell's own track;
Making hay—and to what purpose?—while his sun of winter shines,
But his work is just beginning when he's ridden round his lines.

There are fifty thousand rifles and a hundred batteries
All a-playing battle music, with his fingers on the keys,
And if for an hour, exhausted, on his camp bed he reclines,
In his mind he still is riding—he is riding round his lines.

He's the brains of fifty thousand, blundering at their country's call;
He's the one hope of his nation, and the loneliest man of all;
He is flesh and blood and human, though he never shews the signs:
He is General Greybeard Shrapnel who is fixing up his lines.

It is thankless work and weary, and, for all his neighbour knows,
He may sometimes feel as if he doesn't half care how it goes;
But for all that can be gathered from his eyes of steely blue
He might be a great contractor who has some big job to do.

There's the son who died in action—it may be a week ago;
There's the wife and other troubles that most men have got to know—
(And we'll say the grey-haired mother underneath the porch of vines):
Does he ever think of these things while he's riding round his lines?

He is bossed by bitter boobies who can never understand;
He is hampered by the asses and the robbers of the land,
And I feel inclined to wonder what his own opinions are
Of the Government, the country, of the war and of the Czar.

He's the same when he's advancing, he's the same in grim retreat;
For he wears one mask in triumph and the same mask in defeat;
Of the brave he is the bravest, he is strongest of the strong:
General Greybeard Shrapnel never shows that anything is wrong.

But we each and all are lonely, and we have our work to do;
We must fight for wife and children or our country and our screw
In the everlasting struggle to the end that fate destines;
In the war that men call living we are riding round our lines.

I ride round my last defences, where the bitter jibes are flung,
I am patching up the blunders that I made when I was young,
And I may be digging pitfalls and I may be laying mines;
For I sometimes feel like Shrapnel while I'm riding round my lines.

Henry Lawson

Rise Ye! Rise Ye!

Rise Ye! rise ye! noble toilers! claim your rights with fire and steel!
Rise ye! for the cursed tyrants crush ye with the hiron 'eel!
They would treat ye worse than sl-a-a-ves! they would treat ye worse than
brutes!
Rise and crush the selfish tyrants! ku-r-rush them with your hob-nailed boots!
Rise ye rise ye glorious toilers
Rise ye rise ye noble toilers!
Erwake! er-rise!
Rise ye! rise ye! noble toilers! tyrants come across the waves!
Will ye yield the Rights of Labour? will ye? will ye still be sl-a-a-ves?
Rise ye! rise ye! mighty toilers! and revoke the rotten laws!
Lo! your wives go out a-washing while ye battle for the caws!
Rise ye! rise ye glorious toilers!
Rise ye! rise ye noble toilers!
Erwake! er-rise!

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

Lo! the poor are starved, my brothers! lo! our wives and children weep!
Lo! our women toil to keep us while the toilers are asleep!
Rise ye! rise ye! noble toilers! rise and break the tyrant's chain!
March ye! march ye! mighty toilers! even to the battle plain!
Rise ye! rise ye! noble toilers!
Rise ye! rise ye! noble toilers!
Erwake! er-r-rise!

Henry Lawson

Robbie's Statue

Grown tired of mourning for my sins—
And brooding over merits—
The other night with bothered brow
I went amongst the spirits;
And I met one that I knew well:
'Oh, Scotty's Ghost, is that you?
'And did you see the fearsome crowd
'At Robbie Burns's statue?

'They hurried up in hansom cabs,
'Tall-hatted and frock-coated;
'They trained it in from all the towns,
'The weird and hairy-throated;
'They spoke in some outlandish tongue,
'They cut some comic capers,
'And ilka man was wild to get
'His name in all the papers.

'They showed no gleam of intellect,
'Those frauds who rushed before us;
'They knew one verse of "Auld Lang Syne—"
'The first one and the chorus:
'They clacked the clack o' Scotlan's Bard,
'They glibly talked of "Rabby;"
'But what if he had come to them
'Without a groat and shabby?

'They drank and wept for Robbie's sake,
'They stood and brayed like asses
'(The living bard's a drunken rake,
'The dead one loved the lasses);
'If Robbie Burns were here, they'd sit
'As still as any mouse is;
'If Robbie Burns should come their way,
'They'd turn him out their houses.

'Oh, weep for bonny Scotland's bard!
'And praise the Scottish nation,
'Who made him spy and let him die

'Heart-broken in privation:
'Exciseman, so that he might live
'Through northern winters' rigours—
'Just as in southern lands they give
'The hard-up rhymer figures.

'We need some songs of stinging fun
'To wake the States and light 'em;
'I wish a man like Robert Burns
'Were here to-day to write 'em!
'But still the mockery shall survive
'Till the Day o' Judgment crashes—
'The men we scorn when we're alive
'With praise insult our ashes.'

And Scotty's ghost said: 'Never mind
'The fleas that you inherit;
'The living bard can flick them off—
'They cannot hurt his spirit.
'The crawlers round the bardie's name
'Shall crawl through all the ages;
'His work's the living thing, and they
'Are fly-dirt on the pages.'

Henry Lawson

Ruth

All is well—in a prison—to-night, and the warders are crying 'All's Well!'
I must speak, for the sake of my heart—if it's but to the walls of my cell.
For what does it matter to me if to-morrow I go where I will?
I'm as free as I ever shall be—there is naught in my life to fulfil.
I am free! I am haunted no more by the question that tortured my brain:
'Are you sane of a people gone mad? or mad in a world that is sane?'
I have had time to rest—and to pray—and my reason no longer is vexed
By the spirit that hangs you one day, and would hail you as martyr the next.

Are the fields of my fancy less fair through a window that's narrowed and barred?
Are the morning stars dimmed by the glare of the gas-light that flares in the
yard?
No! And what does it matter to me if to-morrow I sail from the land?
I am free, as I never was free! I exult in my loneliness grand!

Be a saint and a saviour of men—be a Christ, and they'll slander and rail!
Only Crime's understood in the world, and a man is respected—in gaol.
But I find in my raving a balm—in the worst that has come to the worst—
Let me think of it all—I grow calm—let me think it all out from the first.

Beyond the horizon of Self do the walls of my prison retreat,
And I stand in a gap of the hills with the scene of my life at my feet;
The range to the west, and the Peak, and the marsh where the dark ridges end,
And the spurs running down to the Creek, and the she-oaks that sigh in the
bend.
The hints of the river below; and, away on the azure and green,
The old goldfield of Specimen Flat, and the township—a blotch on the scene;
The store, the hotels, and the bank—and the gaol and the people who come
With the weatherboard box and the tank—the Australian idea of home:

The scribe—spirit-broken; the 'wreck,' in his might-have-been or shame;
The townsman 'respected' or worthy; the workman respectful and tame;
The boss of the pub with his fine sense of honour, grown moral and stout,
Like the spielers who came with the 'line,' on the cheques that were made farther
out.

The clever young churchman, despised by the swaggering, popular man;
The doctor with hands clasped behind, and bowed head, as if under a ban;
The one man with the brains—with the power to lead, unsuspected and dumb,

Whom Fate sets apart for the Hour—the man for the hour that might come.

The old local liar whose story was ancient when Egypt was young,
And the gossip who hangs on the fence and poisons God's world with her tongue;
The haggard bush mother who'd nag, though a husband or child be divine,
And who takes a fierce joy in a rag of the clothes on the newcomer's line.

And a lad with a cloud on his heart who was lost in a world vague and dim—
No one dreamed as he drifted apart that 'twas genius the matter with him;
Who was doomed, in that ignorant hole, to its spiritless level to sink,
Till the iron had entered his soul, and his brain found a refuge in drink.

Perhaps I was bitter because of the tongues of disgrace in the town—
Of a boy-nature misunderstood and its nobler ambitions sneered
Of the sense of injustice that stings till it ends in the creed of the push—
I was born in that shadow that clings to the old gully homes in the bush.
And I was ambitious. Perhaps as a boy I could see things too plain—
How I wished I could write of the truths—of the visions—that haunted my brain!
Of the bush-buried toiler denied e'en the last loving comforts of all—
Of my father who slaved till he died in the scrub by his wedges and maul.

Twenty years, and from daylight till dark—twenty years it was split, fence, and
grub,
And the end was a tumble-down hut and a bare, dusty patch in the scrub.
'Twas the first time he'd rested, they said, but the knit in his forehead was deep,
And to me the scarred hands of the dead seemed to work as I'd seen them in
sleep.

And the mother who toiled by his side, through hardship and trouble and
drought,
And who fought for the home when he died till her heart—not her spirit—wore
out:
I am shamed for Australia and haunted by the face of the haggard bush wife—
She who fights her grim battle undaunted because she knows nothing of life.

By the barren track travelled by few men—poor victims of commerce, unknown—
E'en the troubles that woman tells woman she suffers, unpitied, alone;
Heart-dumbed and mind-dulled and benighted, Eve's beauty in girlhood
destroyed!
Till the wrongs never felt shall be righted—and the peace never missed be
enjoyed.

There was no one to understand me. I was lonely and shy as a lad,
Or I lived in a world that was wider than ours; so of course I was 'mad.'
Who is not understood is a 'crank'—so I suffered the tortures of men
Doomed to think in the bush, till I drank and went wrong—I grew popular then.

There was Doctor Lebenski, my friend—and the friend, too, of all who were
down—
Clever, gloomy, and generous drunkard—the pride and disgrace of the town.
He had been through the glory and shame of a wild life by city and sea,
And the tales of the land whence he came had a strong fascination for me.

And often in yarning or fancy, when she-oaks grew misty and dim,
From the forest and straight for the camp of the Cossack I've ridden with him:
Ridden out in the dusk with a score, ridden back ere the dawning with ten—
Have struck at three kingdoms and Fate for the fair land of Poland again!

He'd a sorrow that drink couldn't drown—that his great heart was powerless to
fight—
And I gathered the threads 'twixt the long, pregnant puffs of his last pipe at
night;
For he'd say to me, sadly: 'Jack Drew'—then he'd pause, as to watch the smoke
curl—
'If a good girl should love you, be true—though you die for it—true to the girl!

'A man may be false to his country—a man may be false to his friend:
'Be a vagabond, drunkard, a spieler—yet his soul may come right in the end;
'But there is no prayer, no atonement, no drink that can banish the shade
'From your side, if you've one spark of manhood, of a dead girl that you have
betrayed.'

'One chance for a fortune,' we're told, in the lives of the poorest of men—
There's a chance for a heaven on earth that comes over and over again!
'Twas for Ruth, the bank manager's niece, that the wretched old goldfield grew
fair,
And she came like an angel of peace in an hour of revengeful despair.
A girl as God made her, and wise in a faith that was never estranged—
From childhood neglected and wronged, she had grown with her nature
unchanged;
And she came as an angel of Hope as I crouched on Eternity's brink,
And the loaded revolver and rope were parts of the horrors of drink.

I was not to be trusted, they said, within sight of a cheque or a horse,

And the worst that was said of my name all the gossips were glad to endorse.
But she loved me—she loved me! And why? Ask the she-oaks that sighed in the
bends—

We had suffered alike, she and I, from the blindness of kinsfolk and friends.

A girlhood of hardship and care, for she gave the great heart of a child
To a brother whose idol was Self, and a brother good-natured but 'wild;'
And a father who left her behind when he'd suffered too much from the moan
Of a mother grown selfish and blind in her trouble—'twas always her own.

She was brave, and she never complained, for the hardships of youth that had
driven

My soul to the brink of perdition, but strengthened the girl's faith in Heaven.
In the home that her relatives gave she was tortured each hour of her life.
By her cruel dependence—the slave of her aunt, the bank-manager's wife.

Does the world know how easy to lead and how hard to be driven are men?
She was leading me back with her love, to the faith of my childhood again!
To my boyhood's neglected ideal—to the hopes that were strangled at birth,
To the good and the truth of the real—to the good that was left on the earth.

And the sigh of the oaks seemed a hymn, and the waters had music for me
As I sat on the grass at her feet, and rested my head on her knee;
And we seemed in a dreamland apart from the world's discontent and despair,
For the cynic went out of my heart at the touch of her hand on my hair.

She would talk like a matron at times, and she prattled at times like a child:
'I will trust you—I know you are good—you have only been careless and wild—
'You are clever—you'll rise in the world—you must think of your future and me—
'You will give up the drink for my sake, and you don't know how happy we'll be!
'I can work, I will help you,' she said, and she'd plan out our future and home,
But I found no response in my heart save the hungry old craving to roam.
Would I follow the paths of the dead? I was young yet. Would I settle down
To the life that our parents had led by the dull, paltry-spirited town?

For the ghost of the cynic was there, and he waited and triumphed at last—
One night—I'd been drinking, because of a spectre that rose from the past—
My trust had so oft been betrayed: that at last I had turned to distrust—
My sense of injustice so keen that my anger was always unjust.

Would I sacrifice all for a wife, who was free now to put on my hat
And to go far away from the life—from the home life of Specimen Flat?

Would I live as our fathers had lived to the finish? And what was it worth?
A woman's reproach in the end—of all things most unjust on the earth.

The old rebel stirred in my blood, and he whispered, 'What matter?' 'Why not?'
And she trembled and paled, for the kiss that I gave her was reckless and hot.
And the angel that watched o'er her slept, and the oaks sighed aloud in the creek
As we sat in a shadow that crept from a storm-cloud that rose on the Peak.

There's a voice warns the purest and best of their danger in love or in strife,
But that voice is a knell to her honour who loves with the love of her life!
And 'Ruth—Ruth!' I whispered at last in a voice that was not like my own—
She trembled and clung to me fast with a sigh that was almost a moan.

While you listen and doubt, and incline to the devil that plucks at your sleeve—
When the whispers of angels have failed—then Heaven speaks once I believe.
The lightning leapt out—in a flash only seen by those ridges and creeks,
And the darkness shut down with a crash that I thought would have riven the
peaks.

By the path through the saplings we ran, as the great drops came pattering
down,
To the first of the low-lying ridges that lay between us and the town;
Where she suddenly drew me aside with that beautiful instinct of love
As the clatter of hoofs reached our ears—and a horseman loomed darkly above.

'Twas the Doctor: he reined up and sat for the first moment pallid and mute,
Then he lifted his hand to his hat with his old-fashioned martial salute,
And he said with a glance at the ridge, looming black with its pine-tops awhirl,
'Take my coat, you are caught in the storm!' and he whispered, 'Be true to the
girl!'

He rode on—to a sick bed, maybe some twenty miles back in the bush,
And we hurried on through the gloom, and I still seemed to hear in the 'woosh'
Of the wind in the saplings and oaks, in the gums with their top boughs awhirl—
In the voice of the gathering tempest—the warning, 'Be true to the girl!'
And I wrapped the coat round her, and held her so close that I felt her heart
thump
When the lightning leapt out, as we crouched in the lee of the shell of a stump—
And there seemed a strange fear in her eyes and the colour had gone from her
cheek—
And she scarcely had uttered a word since the hot brutal kiss by the creek.

The storm rushed away to the west—to the ridges drought-stricken and dry—
To the eastward loomed far-away peaks 'neath the still starry arch of the sky;
By the light of the full moon that swung from a curtain of cloud like a lamp,
I saw that my tent had gone down in the storm, as we passed by the camp.

'Tis a small thing, or chance, such as this, that decides between hero and cur
In one's heart. I was wet to the skin, and my comfort was precious to her.
And her aunt was away in the city—the dining-room fire was alight,
And the uncle was absent—he drank with some friends at the Royal that night.

He came late, and passed to his room without glancing at her or at me—
Too straight and precise, be it said, for a man who was sober to be.
Then the drop of one boot on the floor (there was no wife to witness his guilt),
And a moment thereafter a snore that proclaimed that he slept on the quilt.

Was it vanity, love, or revolt? Was it joy that came into my life?
As I sat there with her in my arms, and caressed her and called her 'My wife!'
Ah, the coward! But my heart shall bleed, though I live on for fifty long years,
For she could not cry out, only plead with eyes that were brimming with tears.

Not the passion so much brings remorse, but the thought of the treacherous part
I'd have played in a future already planned out—ay! endorsed in my heart!
When a good woman falls for the sake of a love that has blinded her eyes,
There is pardon, perhaps, for his lust; but what heaven could pardon the lies?

And 'What does it matter?' I said. 'You are mine, I am yours—and for life.
'He is drunk and asleep—he won't hear, and to morrow you shall be my wife!'
There's an hour in the memory of most that we hate ever after and loathe—
'Twas the daylight that came like a ghost to her window that startled us both.

Twixt the door of her room and the door of the office I stood for a space,
When a treacherous board in the floor sent a crack like a shot through the
place!—
Then the creak of a step and the click of a lock in the manager's room—
I grew cold to the stomach and sick, as I trembled and shrank in the gloom.
He faced me, revolver in hand—'Now I know you, you treacherous whelp!
'Stand still, where you are, or I'll fire!' and he suddenly shouted for help.
'Help! Burglary!' Yell after yell—such a voice would have wakened the tomb;
And I heard her scream once, and she fell like a log on the floor of her room!

And I thought of her then like a flash—of the foul fiend of gossip that drags
A soul to perdition—I thought of the treacherous tongues of the hags;

She would sacrifice all for my sake—she would tell the whole township the truth.
I'd escape, send the Doctor a message and die—ere they took me—for Ruth!

Then I rushed him—a struggle—a flash—I was down with a shot in my arm—
Up again, and a desperate fight—hurried footsteps and cries of alarm!
A mad struggle, a blow on the head—and the gossips will fill in the blank
With the tale of the capture of Drew on the night he broke into the bank.

In the cell at the lock-up all day and all night, without pause through my brain
Whirled the scenes of my life to the last one—and over and over again
I paced the small cell, till exhaustion brought sleep—and I woke to the past
Like a man metamorphosed—clear-headed, and strong in a purpose at last.

She would sacrifice all for my sake—she would tell the whole township the
truth—

In the mood I was in I'd have given my life for a moment with Ruth;
But still, as I thought, from without came the voice of the constable's wife;
'They say it's brain fever, poor girl, and the doctor despairs of her life.'

'He has frightened the poor girl to death—such a pity—so pretty and young,'
So the voice of a gossip chimed in: 'And the wretch! he deserves to be hung.
'They were always a bad lot, the Drews, and I knowed he was more rogue than
crank,
'And he only pretended to court her so's to know his way into the bank!'

Came the doctor at last with his voice hard and cold and a face like a stone—
Hands behind, but it mattered not then—'twas a fight I must fight out alone:
'You have cause to be thankful,' he said, as though speaking a line from the
past—
'She was conscious an hour; she is dead, and she called for you, Drew, till the
last!

'Ay! And I knew the truth, but I lied. She fought for the truth, but I lied;
'And I said you were well and were coming, and, listening and waiting, she died.
'God forgive you! I warned you in time. You will suffer while reason endures:
'For the rest, you will know only I have the key of her story—and yours.'

The curious crowd in the court seemed to me but as ghosts from the past,
As the words of the charge were read out, like a hymn from the first to the last;
I repeated the words I'd rehearsed—in a voice that seemed strangely away—
In their place, 'I am guilty,' I said; and again, 'I have nothing to say.'
I realised then, and stood straight—would I shrink from the eyes of the clown—

From the eyes of the sawney who'd boast of success with a girl of the town?
But there is human feeling in men which is easy, or hard, to define:
Every eye, as I glanced round the court, was cast down, or averted from mine.

Save the doctor's—it seemed to me then as if he and I stood there alone—
For a moment he looked in my eyes with a wonderful smile in his own,
Slowly lifted his hand in salute, turned and walked from the court-room, and
then

From the rear of the crowd came the whisper: 'The Doctor's been boozing again!'

I could laugh at it then from the depth of the bitterness still in my heart,
At the ignorant stare of surprise, at the constables' 'Arder in Car-rt!'
But I know. Oh, I understand now how the poor tortured heart cries aloud
For a flame from High Heaven to wither the grin on the face of a crowd.

Then the Judge spoke harshly; I stood with my fluttering senses aw whirl:
My crime, he said sternly, had cost the young life of an innocent girl;
I'd brought sorrow and death to a home, I was worse than a murderer now;
And the sentence he passed on me there was the worst that the law would allow.

Let me rest—I grow weary and faint. Let me breathe—but what value is breath?
Ah! the pain in my heart—as of old; and I know what it is—it is death.
It is death—it is rest—it is sleep. 'Tis the world and I drifting apart.
I have been through a sorrow too deep to have passed without breaking my
heart.

There's a breeze! And a light without bars! Let me drink the free air till I drown.
'Tis the she-oaks—the Peak—and the stars. Lo, a dead angel's spirit floats down!
This will pass—aye, and all things will pass. Oh, my love, have you come back to
me?

I am tired—let me lie on the grass at your feet, with my head on your knee.

'I was wrong'—the words lull me to sleep, like the words of a lullaby song—
I was wrong—but the iron went deep in my heart ere I knew I was wrong.
I rebelled, but I suffered in youth, and I suffer too deeply to live:
You'll forgive me, and pray for me, Ruth—for you loved me—and God will forgive.

Henry Lawson

Sacred To The Memory Of "unknown"

Oh, the wild black swans fly westward still,
While the sun goes down in glory—
And away o'er lonely plain and hill
Still runs the same old story:
The sheoaks sigh it all day long—
It is safe in the Big Scrub's keeping—
'Tis the butcher-birds' and the bell-birds' song
In the gum where 'Unknown' lies sleeping—
(It is heard in the chat of the soldier-birds
O'er the grave where 'Unknown' lies sleeping).
Ah! the Bushmen knew not his name or land,
Or the shame that had sent him here—
But the Bushmen knew by the dead man's hand
That his past life lay not near.
The law of the land might have watched for him,
Or a sweetheart, wife, or mother;
But they bared their heads, and their eyes were dim,
For he might have been a brother!
(Ah! the death he died brought him near to them,
For he might have been a brother.)

Oh, the wild black swans to the westward fade,
And the sunset burns to ashes,
And three times bright on an eastern range
The light of a big star flashes,
Like a signal sent to a distant strand
Where a dead man's love sits weeping.
And the night comes grand to the Great Lone Land
O'er the grave where 'Unknown' lies sleeping,
And the big white stars in their clusters blaze
O'er the Bush where 'Unknown' lies sleeping.

Henry Lawson

Said Grenfell To My Spirit

Said Grenfell to my spirit, "You've been writing very free
Of the charms of other places, and you don't remember me.
You have claimed another native place and think it's Nature's law,
Since you never paid a visit to a town you never saw:
So you sing of Mudgee Mountains, willowed stream and grassy flat:
But I put a charm upon you and you won't get over that."
O said Grenfell to my spirit, " Though you write of breezy peaks,
Golden Gullies, wattle sidings, and the pools in she-oak creeks,
Of the place your kin were born in and the childhood that you knew,
And your father's distant Norway (though it has some claim on you),
Though you sing of dear old Mudgee and the home on Pipeclay Flat,
You were born on Grenfell goldfield – and you can't get over that ."

Henry Lawson

Said The Kaiser To The Spy

"Now tell me what can England do?"
Said the Kaiser to the Spy.
"She can do nought, your Majesty—
You rule the sea and sky.
Her day of destiny is done;
Her path of peace is plain;
For she dare never throw a troop
Across the Strait again."
The Kaiser sent his mighty host,
With Bombast in advance,
To set his seal on Paris first,
And make an end of France.
Their guns were heard in Paris streets,
And trembling Europe heard;
(They're staggering back in Belgium now)
And England said no word.

"Now tell me what can England do?"
Said the Kaiser to the Spy.
"She can do nought in Southern seas
Where her possessions lie!
Her colonies are arming now—
They only wait your aid!"
"I'll send my ships," the Kaiser said,
"And I will kill her trade!"

The Kaiser sent his cruisers forth
To do their worst or best;
And one made trouble in the North—
The Cocos tell the rest.
He sent a squadron to a coast
Where treachery prevailed—
Gra'mercy! They were stricken hard
On seas that Raleigh sailed!

"Now tell me what can England do?"
Said the Kaiser to the Spy.
"Her ports are all unfortified
And there your chances lie!"

He sent his ships to Scarborough,
And called them back again.
The Blucher lies in Channel ooze
With seven hundred men.

"Oh, tell me what can England do?"
Said the Kaiser to the Spy.
"She can't hold Egypt for a day—
(I have it from On High.)"
And so the Kaiser paid the Turk
To put the matter through—
And England's Queen of Egypt now,
And boss of Turkey too.

"Now tell me what shall England do?"
Said the Kaiser to the Spy.
You see that neither of them knew
Much more than you or I.
But the blooming thing that's troubling me
As the pregnant weeks go by,

Is wotinell shall England do
When the Kaiser hangs that Spy!

Henry Lawson

Saint Peter

Now, I think there is a likeness 'twixt St Peter's life and mine
For he did a lot of trampin' long ago in Palestine
He was 'union' when the workers first began to organize
And I'm glad that old St Peter keeps the gate of Paradise

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

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

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

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

Henry Lawson

Say Goodbye When Your Chum Is Married

Now this is a rhyme that might well be carried
Gummed in your hat till the end of things:
Say Good-bye when your chum is married;
Say Good-bye while the church-bell rings;
Say Good-bye—if you ask why must you,
'Tis for the sake of old friendship true,
For as sure as death will his wife distrust you
And lead him on to suspect you, too.
Say Good-bye, though he be a brother,
Seek him not when you're married, too—
Things that you never would tell each other
The wives will carry as young wives do.
Say Good-bye ere their tongues shall strangle
The friendship pledged ere the lights grew dim,
For, as sure as death, will those young wives wrangle,
And drag you into it, you and him.

Henry Lawson

Scots Of The Riverina

The boy cleared out to the city from his home at harvest time --
They were Scots of the Riverina, and to run from home was a crime.
The old man burned his letters, the first and last he burned,
And he scratched his name from the Bible when the old wife's back was turned.

A year went past and another. There were calls from the firing-line;
They heard the boy had enlisted, but the old man made no sign.
His name must never be mentioned on the farm by Gundagai --
They were Scots of the Riverina with ever the kirk hard by.

The boy came home on his "final", and the township's bonfire burned.
His mother's arms were about him; but the old man's back was turned.
The daughters begged for pardon till the old man raised his hand --
A Scot of the Riverina who was hard to understand.

The boy was killed in Flanders, where the best and bravest die.
There were tears at the Grahame homestead and grief in Gundagai;
But the old man ploughed at daybreak and the old man ploughed till the mirk --
There were furrows of pain in the orchard while his housefolk went to the kirk.

The hurricane lamp in the rafters dimly and dimly burned;
And the old man died at the table when the old wife's back was turned.
Face down on his bare arms folded he sank with his wild grey hair
Outspread o'er the open Bible and a name re-written there.

Henry Lawson

Seaweed, Tussock And Fern

Emblems of storm and danger,
Spindrift and mountain stern,
Plants that welcome the stranger—
Seaweed, tussock, and fern.

Known to the world-wide ranger,
Who sailed on the "Never Return,"
Emblems of storm and danger—
Flax and tussock and fern.

Plants that welcome the stranger,
Sea-swept and driven astern,
Beloved by the wide-world ranger—
Seaweed, tussock, and fern.

Henry Lawson

Second Class Wait Here

At suburban railway stations--you may see them as you pass--
there are signboards on the platform saying 'Wait here second class,'
And to me the whirr and thunder and the cluck of running-gear
Seem to be forever saying 'Second class wait here--
Wait here second class
Second class wait here.'

Seem to be forever saying, 'Second class wait here.'
Yes, the second class were waiting in the days of serf and prince,
And the second class are waiting--they've been waiting ever since,
There are gardens in the background, and the line is bare and drear,
Yet they wait beneath a signboard, sneering 'Second class wait here.'

I have waited oft in winter, in the mornings dark and damp,
When the asphalt platform glistened underneath the lonely lamp,
Glistened on the brick-faced cutting 'Sellum's Soap' and 'Blower's Beer,'
Glistened on enamelled signboards with their 'Second class wait here.'

And the others seemed like burglars, slouched and muffled to the throats,
Standing round apart and silent in their shoddy overcoats;
And the wind among the poplars, and the wires that thread the air,
Seemed to be forever snarling, snarling 'Second class wait there.'

Out beyond a further suburb, 'neath a chimney-stack alone
Lay the works of Grinder Brothers, with a platform of their own;
And I waited there and suffered, waited there for many a day,
Slaved beneath a phantom signboard, telling all my hopes to stay.

Ah! a man must feel revengeful for a boyhood such as mine.
God! I hate the very houses near the workshop by the line;
And the smell of railway stations, and the roar of running gear,
And the scornful-seeming signboards, saying 'Second class wait here.'

There's a train, with Death for driver, that is ever going past;
There will be no class compartments when it's 'all aboard' at last
For the long white jasper platform with an Eden in the rear;
And there won't be any signboards, saying 'Second class wait here'

Henry Lawson

Send Round The Hat

Now this is the creed from the Book of the Bush –
Should be simple and plain to a dunce:
"If a man's in a hole you must pass round the hat –
Were he jail-bird or gentleman once."

Henry Lawson

Sez You

When the heavy sand is yielding backward from your blistered feet,
And across the distant timber you can SEE the flowing heat;
When your head is hot and aching, and the shadeless plain is wide,
And it's fifteen miles to water in the scrub the other side --
Don't give up, don't be down-hearted, to a man's strong heart be true!
Take the air in through your nostrils, set your lips and see it through --
For it can't go on for ever, and -- `I'll have my day!' says you.

When you're camping in the mulga, and the rain is falling slow,
While you nurse your rheumatism 'neath a patch of calico;
Short of tucker or tobacco, short of sugar or of tea,
And the scrubs are dark and dismal, and the plains are like a sea;
Don't give up and be down-hearted -- to the soul of man be true!
Grin! if you've a mate to grin for, grin and jest and don't look blue;
For it can't go on for ever, and -- `I'll rise some day,' says you.

When you've tramped the Sydney pavements till you've counted all the flags,
And your flapping boot-soles trip you, and your clothes are mostly rags,
When you're called a city loafer, shunned, abused, moved on, despised --
Fifty hungry beggars after every job that's advertised --
Don't be beaten! Hold your head up! To your wretched self be true;
Set your pride to fight your hunger! Be a MAN in all you do!
For it cannot last for ever -- `I will rise again!' says you.

When you're dossing out in winter, in the darkness and the rain,
Crouching, cramped, and cold and hungry 'neath a seat in The Domain,
And a cloaked policeman stirs you with that mighty foot of his --
`Phwat d'ye mane? Phwat's this?
Who are ye? Come, move on -- git out av this!
Don't get mad; 'twere only foolish; there is nought that you can do,
Save to mark his beat and time him -- find another hole or two;
But it can't go on for ever -- `I'll have money yet!' says you.

Bother not about the morrow, for sufficient to the day
Is the evil (rather more so). Put your trust in God and pray!
Study well the ant, thou sluggard. Blessed are the meek and low.
Ponder calmly on the lilies -- how they idle, how they grow.
A man's a man! Obey your masters! Do not blame the proud and fat,
For the poor are always with them, and they cannot alter that.

Lay your treasures up in Heaven -- cling to life and see it through!
For it cannot last for ever -- 'I shall die some day,' says you.

Henry Lawson

Shadows Before

"Like clouds o'er the South are the nations who reign
On fair islands that we would command;
But clouds that are darker and denser than these
Have sailed from an Isle in the Northern Seas
And rest on our Southern Land.

Low in dust is our Goddess of Liberty hurled
At our feet, and the time is at hand,
When we, the proud sons of the southern world,
Beneath a proud banner of freedom unfurled
And true to each other shall stand.

If e'er in the ranks of the Right we advance;
Though our enemies come like a flood,
We'll meet them like lions, aroused from our trance,
And show that a streak of the Olden Romance
Still runs in our commonplace blood.

Henry Lawson

Shearer's Song

The season is over;
The shearing is done;
The wages are paid; and
The 'sprees' have begun.
But never a shanty
Gets sight of my cheques;
For far down the Murray
My Annie expects
A heart that is faithful,
A head that is clear,
And sufficient provisions
To last for a year.

Henry Lawson

Shearers Dream

O I dreamt I shore in a shearing shed and it was a dream of joy
For every one of the rouseabouts was a girl dressed up as a boy
Dressed up like a page in a pantomime the prettiest ever seen
They had flaxen hair they had coal black hair and every shade between

There was short plump girls there was tall slim girls and the handsomest ever
seen
They was four foot five they was six foot high and every shade between

The shed was cooled by electric fans that was over every shoot
The pens was of polished mahogany and everything else to suit
The huts had springs to the mattresses and the tucker was simply grand
And every night by the billabong we danced to a German band

Our pay was the wool on the jumbucks' backs so we shore till all was blue
The sheep was washed afore they was shore and the rams were scented too
And we all of us cried when the shed cut out in spite of the long hot days
For every hour them girls waltzed in with whisky and beer on trays

There was three of them girls to every chap and as jealous as they could be
There was three of them girls to every chap and six of them picked on me
We was drafting them out for the homeward track and sharing them round like
steam
When I woke with my head in the blazing sun to find it a shearer's dream

Henry Lawson

Sheoaks That Sigh When The Wind Is Still

Why are the sheoaks forever sighing?
(Sheoaks that sigh when the wind is still)—
Why are the dead hopes forever dying?
(Dead hopes that died and are with us still.)
As you make it and what you will.

Why are the ridges forever waiting?
Ridges that waited ere one man came,
Still by the towns with their life vibrating
Lonely ridges that wait the same.
Ridges and gullies without a name.

Why is the strong heart forever peering
Into the future that speaks no ill?
Why is the kind heart forever cheering,
Even at times when the fears are still?
As you make it, and what you will.

Why is the distance forever drawing?
(The wide horizon is round us still!)
Why is resentment forever gnawing
Against a world that may mean no ill?
Why are so many forever sawing
On strings that rasp and can never thrill—Soothe or thrill?
As you make it, and what you will.

Henry Lawson

Since The Cities Are The Cities

FOOLS can parrot-cry the prophet when the proof is close at hand,
And the blind can see the danger when the foe is in the land!
Truth was never cynicism, death or ruin's not a joke,
"Told-you-so" is not a warning—Patriotism not a croak.

Blame will aid no man nor country when the dark days come at last—
As with men so with a nation, and the warning time is past.
Our great sins were of omission, and the dogs of war are loosed—
And we all must stand together when those sins come home to roost.

Since the cities are the cities and shall stand for evermore,
Let us justify our being, be it peace or be it war.
For because we are the townsfolk, and have never ridden far
Shall we call the bush to aid us that has made us what we are?

Westward went our brothers, fighting distance, drought, and loneliness
While we lived in light and comfort knowing nothing of distress,
We who never shared the hardships when the sunset led them on,
Now's our time, O street-bred people, with our faces to the dawn!

They have conquered with the cross-cut and the wedges and the maul,
With the spade and axe and mattock and the saddle-packs and all,
They have mighty work before them for the sake of you and me—
Let us stand up to our duty! We're the Rearguard by the Sea.

Days of gibes at "street-bred people" by the street-bred bards are done—
Shall the man who lays the yard-stick never learn to lay the gun?
Shall the crouched type-writer toiling for his home in days like these
Touch the button the less firmly when we play on other keys?

We have seen in many countries what the street-bred men can do—
In the desert, scrub and jungle they were men who battled through!
Human weeds of grand endurance winning where the strong men quailed,
Pigeon-chested leaders leading on where beef-born courage failed.

Street-bred people down the ages—beggars, mobs and democrats—
Fought through many desperate sieges (fought on horseflesh, dogs and rats)
When their own cowed country failed them, then the city soul was proved—
"Street-bred people" died in thousands for the cities that they loved.

In the days when strength was needed—days of pike and axe and sword—
Daylight found the peaceful burghers ready, keeping watch and ward.
Clerks and tailors fought like heroes at the gates and in the trench—
(Even Falstaff brought his herrings with some slaughter through the French).

Every man should have a cottage and a garden to defend,
But the “should-be” is for ever—cities stand until the end,
Every farmer has a country that he loves when war-drums roll—
Every clerk may have a city that he loves with heart and soul.

Fat or lean, we all are sinners—lean or fat we all would be;
High or low or lean or fatted, 'tis for Nationality.
It will be till all is ended, as it was since all began—
'Tis the head and not the feathers! 'tis the heart and not the “man”!

Henry Lawson

Since Then

I met Jack Ellis in town to-day --
 Jack Ellis -- my old mate, Jack --
Ten years ago, from the Castlereagh,
We carried our swags together away
 To the Never-Again, Out Back.

But times have altered since those old days,
 And the times have changed the men.
Ah, well! there's little to blame or praise --
Jack Ellis and I have tramped long ways
 On different tracks since then.

His hat was battered, his coat was green,
 The toes of his boots were through,
But the pride was his! It was I felt mean --
I wished that my collar was not so clean,
 Nor the clothes I wore so new.

He saw me first, and he knew 'twas I --
 The holiday swell he met.
Why have we no faith in each other? Ah, why? --
He made as though he would pass me by,
 For he thought that I might forget.

He ought to have known me better than that,
 By the tracks we tramped far out --
The sweltering scrub and the blazing flat,
When the heat came down through each old felt hat
 In the hell-born western drought.

The cheques we made and the shanty sprees,
 The camps in the great blind scrub,
The long wet tramps when the plains were seas,
And the oracles worked in days like these
 For rum and tobacco and grub.

Could I forget how we struck `the same
 Old tale' in the nearer West,

When the first great test of our friendship came --
But -- well, there's little to praise or blame
If our mateship stood the test.

`Heads!' he laughed (but his face was stern) --
`Tails!' and a friendly oath;
We loved her fair, we had much to learn --
And each was stabbed to the heart in turn
By the girl who -- loved us both.

Or the last day lost on the lignum plain,
When I staggered, half-blind, half-dead,
With a burning throat and a tortured brain;
And the tank when we came to the track again
Was seventeen miles ahead.

Then life seemed finished -- then death began
As down in the dust I sank,
But he stuck to his mate as a bushman can,
Till I heard him saying, `Bear up, old man!'
In the shade by the mulga tank.

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He took my hand in a distant way
(I thought how we parted last),
And we seemed like men who have nought to say
And who meet -- `Good-day', and who part -- `Good-day',
Who never have shared the past.

I asked him in for a drink with me --
Jack Ellis -- my old mate, Jack --
But his manner no longer was careless and free,
He followed, but not with the grin that he
Wore always in days Out Back.

I tried to live in the past once more --
Or the present and past combine,
But the days between I could not ignore --
I couldn't help notice the clothes he wore,
And he couldn't but notice mine.

He placed his glass on the polished bar,
And he wouldn't fill up again;
For he is prouder than most men are --
Jack Ellis and I have tramped too far
On different tracks since then.

He said that he had a mate to meet,
And 'I'll see you again,' said he,
Then he hurried away through the crowded street
And the rattle of buses and scrape of feet
Seemed suddenly loud to me.

And I almost wished that the time were come
When less will be left to Fate --
When boys will start on the track from home
With equal chances, and no old chum
Have more or less than his mate.

Henry Lawson

Skaal

While they struggle on exhausted,
While they plough through bog and flood,
While they drag their sick and wounded
Where the tracks are drenched with blood;
While the Fates seemed joined to crush her
And her bravest hearts lie low,
I might sing one song for Russia,
Even though she be our foe.
Still be generous to foemen,
And have charity for all—
Right or wrong, fill up the wine cup;
'Skaal!' unto all brave men—'Skaal!'

While they suffer, cold and hungry,
All the heart-break of defeat,
And the twice heroic rearguard
Grimly holds the grim retreat;
While they fight the last alive on
Fields where countless corpses are,
We might drop one tear for Ivan,
Dead for Russia and the Czar!

Sullen grief of boorish brother,
Sister's scalding tears that flow,
Choking grief of grey-haired mother,
Father's stony face bent low:
Hopeless stare of wife or daughter,
And the sweetheart dumb and white,
And the far-off fields of slaughter
Where their Ivan lies to-night.

Even England feared disaster,
With all Europe in despair,
In the days when Europe's master
Baited Bruin in his lair.
Greater nations made submission,
And a tyrant's yoke they earned;
But The Man with curbed ambition
Staggered back while Moscow burned,—

Burned to save the world from ruin
That dark winter long ago;
Ah! the gaunt and hunted Bruin
Hugged the tyrant in the snow!
We can cry the crimes of Russia,
Who know naught of Russia's work—
We who died to conquer freemen,
We who fought to save the Turk.

Ah! we well may cant and cackle,
In the streets and in the clubs,
While the Russia that we know not
Licks her wounds and feeds her cubs.
But the Fates for ever beckon—
Every nation has its debt,
And her foes may have to reckon,
Reckon with 'der Russland' yet.

Through long ages slept the Dragon,
We have roused the ugly beast—
Russia still may stand the vanguard
Of the West against the East.
And though Ivan sees no farther
Than to-night through lurid gloom
Every hour he holds Port Arthur
May postpone the White Man's doom.

Right or wrong—whate'er in future
May this blundering world befall,
Human kindness will survive it—
Brothers! 'Skaal!' to brave men, 'Skaal!'

Henry Lawson

Skeleton Flat

HERE'S never a bough to be tossed in the breeze,
For it's long since the forest was green;
And round all the trunks of the naked white trees
The marks of the death-ring are seen.
The solemn-faced bear, who had looked on the blacks
From his home with the 'possum and cat,
Blinked anxiously down when the death-dealing axe
Was ring-barking Skeleton Flat.

And, strange to be seen in the evergreen south,
The gums for ten summers have stood,
And dried in the terrible furnace of drouth,
Till harder than flint is the wood.
Now tall grows the grass at the roots of the trees,
But a beautiful forest it cost;
And the heart of the splitter is sad when he sees
And thinks of the timber that's lost.

Here flies, through a sky that is glazed, the black crow,
And the eagle goes circling around,
Or evilly sits on a branch that is low,
With his gleaming black eye on the ground.
And loudly the jackasses chuckle in mirth,
When a comrade flies upward, until
Like a fragment of thread, in its height from the earth,
Is the writhing brown snake in his bill.

O fit for the place are the curlews that wail
On the banks of a distant lagoon,
Or round by the swamps that are shallow and pale
In the light of the nights of the moon;
When glist'ning and white are the frost-covered trees
That dead for ten summers have stood;
And the stranger, benighted, might fancy he sees
The skeleton wraith of a wood.

Henry Lawson

Somewhere Up In Queensland

He's somewhere up in Queensland,
The old folks used to say;
He's somewhere up in Queensland,
The people say to-day.
But Somewhere (up in Queensland)
That uncle used to know—
That filled our hearts with wonder,
Seems vanished long ago.
He's gone to Queensland, droving,
The old folks used to say;
He's gone to Queensland, droving,
The people say to-day.
But "gone to Queensland, droving,"
Might mean, in language plain,
He follows stock in buggies,
And gets supplies by train.

He's knocking round in Queensland,
The old folks used to say;
He's gone to Queensland, roving,
His sweetheart says to-day.
But "gone to Queensland, roving"
By mighty plain and scrub,
Might mean he drives a motor-car
For Missus Moneygrub.

He's looking for new country,
The old folks used to say;
Our boy has gone exploring,
Fond parents say to-day.
"Exploring" out in Queensland
Might only mean to some
He's salesman in "the drapery"
Of a bush emporium.

To somewhere up in Queensland
Went Tom and Ted and Jack;
From somewhere up in Queensland
The dusty cheques come back:

From somewhere up in Queensland
Brown drovers used to come,
And someone up in Queensland
Kept many a southern home.

Somewhere up in Queensland,
How many black sheep roam,
Who never write a letter,
And never think of home.
For someone up in Queensland
How many a mother spoke;
For someone up in Queensland
How many a girl's heart broke.

Henry Lawson

Song Of The Dardanelles

The Wireless tells and the cable tells
How our boys behaved by the Dardanelles.
Some thought in their hearts "Will our boys make good?"
We knew them of old and we knew they would!
Knew they would—
Knew they would;
We were mates of old and we knew they would.
They laughed and they larked and they loved likewise,
For blood is warm under Southern skies;
They knew not Pharoah ('tis understood),
And they got into scrapes, as we knew they would.
Knew they would—
Knew they would;
And they got into scrapes, as we knew they would.

They chafed in the dust of an old dead land
At the long months' drill in the scorching sand;
But they knew in their hearts it was for their good,
And they saw it through as we knew they would.
Knew they would—
Knew they would;
And they saw it through as we knew they would.

The Coo-ee called through the Mena Camp,
And an army roared like the Ocean's tramp
On a gale-swept beach in her wildest mood,
Till the Pyramids shook as we knew they would.
Knew they would—
Knew they would.
(And the Sphinx woke up as we knew she would.)

They were shipped like sheep when the dawn was grey;
(But their officers knew that no lambs were they).
They squatted and perched where'er they could,
And they "blanky-ed" for joy as we knew they would.
Knew they would—
Knew they would;
They "blanky-ed" for joy as we knew they would.

The sea was hell and the shore was hell,
With mine, entanglement, shrapnel and shell,
But they stormed the heights as Australians should,
And they fought and they died as we knew they would.
Knew they would—
Knew they would;
They fought and they died as we knew they would.

From the southern hills and the city lanes,
From the sandwaste lone and the Blacksoil Plains;
The youngest and strongest of England's brood!—
They'll win for the South as we knew they would.
Knew they would—
Knew they would;
They'll win for the South as we knew they would.

Henry Lawson

Song Of The Old Bullock-Driver

Far back in the days when the blacks used to ramble
In long single file 'neath the evergreen tree,
The wool-teams in season came down from Coonamble,
And journeyed for weeks on their way to the sea,
'Twas then that our hearts and our sinews were stronger,
For those were the days when the bushman was bred.
We journeyed on roads that were rougher and longer
Than roads where the feet of our grandchildren tread.
With mates who have gone to the great Never-Never,
And mates whom I've not seen for many a day,
I camped on the banks of the Cudgegong River
And yarned at the fire by the old bullock-dray.
I would summon them back from the far Riverina,
From days that shall be from all others distinct,
And sing to the sound of an old concertina
Their rugged old songs where strange fancies were linked.

We never were lonely, for, camping together,
We yarned and we smoked the long evenings away,
And little I cared for the signs of the weather
When snug in my hammock slung under the dray.
We rose with the dawn, were it ever so chilly,
When yokes and tarpaulins were covered with frost,
And toasted the bacon and boiled the black billy,
Where high on the camp-fire the branches were tossed.

On flats where the air was suggestive of 'possums,
And homesteads and fences were hinting of change,
We saw the faint glimmer of appletree blossoms
And far in the distance the blue of the range;
And here in the rain, there was small use in flogging
The poor, tortured bullocks that tugged at the load,
When down to the axles the waggons were bogging
And traffic was making a marsh of the road.

'Twas hard on the beasts on the terrible pinches,
Where two teams of bullocks were yoked to a load,
And tugging and slipping, and moving by inches,
Half-way to the summit they clung to the road.

And then, when the last of the pinches was bested,
(You'll surely not say that a glass was a sin?)
The bullocks lay down 'neath the gum trees and rested —
The bullockies steered for the bar of the inn.

Then slowly we crawled by the trees that kept tally
Of miles that were passed on the long journey down.
We saw the wild beauty of Capertee Valley,
As slowly we rounded the base of the Crown.
But, ah! the poor bullocks were cruelly goaded
While climbing the hills from the flats and the vales;
'Twas here that the teams were so often unloaded
That all knew the meaning of 'counting your bales.'

And, oh! but the best-paying load that I carried
Was one to the run where my sweetheart was nurse.
We courted awhile, and agreed to get married,
And couple our futures for better or worse.
And as my old feet grew too weary to drag on
The miles of rough metal they met by the way,
My eldest grew up and I gave him the waggon —
He's plodding along by the bullocks to-day.

Henry Lawson

Spread The Truth!

BRAVE the anger of the wealthy! Scorn their bitter lying spite!
Tell the Truth in simple language, when you know that you are right!
And they'll read it by the slush-lamps in the station huts at night,

I have seen the People's triumph in the visions of my dreams;
It as pictured by the campfires down the lonely western streams,
And the teamsters talk about it as they tramp beside their teams.

Write the Truth in simple language, and you shall not write in vain!
Sing a ringing song of freedom, and you'll hear the same refrain
Where the drovers ride together far across the western plain.

Write of wrongs that you are hating with the grand old burning hate!
For the lonely digger reads it when the western day is late,
And he marks it in the paper he is sending to his mate.

Spread the Truth in simple language when you feel it in your breast!
It will reach the far selections in the wild Australian west,
Where the bushmen yarn together on a sunny day of rest.

O the workers' new religion spreads beneath the southern skies,
And the bearded fathers read it, for its words are kind and wise,
And the little children listen to the Truth with wondering eyes.

Henry Lawson

Stand By The Engines

On the moonlighted decks there are children at play,
While smoothly the steamer is holding her way;
And the old folks are chatting on deck-seats and chairs,
And the lads and the lassies go strolling in pairs.

Some gaze half-entranced on the beautiful sea,
And wonder perhaps if a vision it be:
And surely their journeys no sorrow nor care,
For wealth, love, and beauty are passengers there.

But down underneath, 'mid the coal dust that smears
The face and the hands, work the ship's engineers.
Whate'er be the duty of others, 'tis theirs
To stand by their engines whatever occurs.

The sailor may gaze on the sea and the sky;
The sailor may tell when the danger is nigh;
But when Death his black head o'er the waters uprears,
Unseen he is met by the ship's engineers.

They are thrown from their feet by the force of a shock;
They know that their vessel has struck on a rock.
Now stand by your engines when danger appears,
For all may depend on the ship's engineers!

No thought of their danger! No mad rush on deck!
They stand at their posts in the hull of a wreck,
Firm hands on the valves; and the white steam appears;
And down with their ship go the brave engineers!

Henry Lawson

Statue Of Robert Burns

To a town in Southern land
Light of purse I come and lone;
And I pause awhile, and stand
By a pedestal of stone;
And I bend my head and bow
While my heart to Scotland turns,
For I know I'm standing now
'Neath the form of Robbie Burns.

Round the corners of the lips
Lines of laughter seem to run;
From the merry eye there slips
Just a twinkle as of fun.
Living in the sculptor's art,
Set in stone, mine eye discerns
All the beauty, and a part
Of the soul, of Robert Burns.

One of Caledonia's sons,
Coming lonely to the land.
Well might think he'd met a friend
Who would take him by the hand,
And the tears spring to his eyes,
While his heart for friendship yearns;
And from out that heart he cries,
"Heaven bless ye, Bobbie Burns."

"Unto me, as unto you,
Has a hard world done ill turns;
And the sorrows that you knew
I am learning Bobbie Burns.
But I'll keep my heart above
Until, after many moons,
I return to friends I love,
And to banks line bonnie Doon's."

Henry Lawson

Success

Did you see that man riding past,
With shoulders bowed with care?
There's failure in his eyes to last,
And in his heart despair.
He seldom looks to left or right,
He nods, but speaks to none,
And he's a man who fought the fight—
God knows how hard!—and won.
No great "review" could rouse him now,
No printed lies could sting;
No kindness smooth his knitted brow,
Nor wrong one new line bring.
Through dull, dumb days and brooding nights,
From years of storm and stress,
He's riding down from lonely heights—
The Mountains of Success.

He sees across the darkening land
The graveyards on the coasts;
He sees the broken columns stand
Like cold and bitter ghosts;
His world is dead while yet he lives,
Though known in continents;
His camp is where his country gives
Its pauper monuments.

Henry Lawson

Sweeney

It was somewhere in September, and the sun was going down,
When I came, in search of 'copy', to a Darling-River town;
'Come-and-have-a-drink' we'll call it -- 'tis a fitting name, I think --
And 'twas raining, for a wonder, up at Come-and-have-a-drink.

'Neath the public-house verandah I was resting on a bunk
When a stranger rose before me, and he said that he was drunk;
He apologised for speaking; there was no offence, he swore;
But he somehow seemed to fancy that he'd seen my face before.

'No offence,' he said. I told him that he needn't mention it,
For I might have met him somewhere; I had travelled round a bit,
And I knew a lot of fellows in the bush and in the streets --
But a fellow can't remember all the fellows that he meets.

Very old and thin and dirty were the garments that he wore,
Just a shirt and pair of trousers, and a boot, and nothing more;
He was wringing-wet, and really in a sad and sinful plight,
And his hat was in his left hand, and a bottle in his right.

His brow was broad and roomy, but its lines were somewhat harsh,
And a sensual mouth was hidden by a drooping, fair moustache;
(His hairy chest was open to what poets call the 'wined',
And I would have bet a thousand that his pants were gone behind).

He agreed: 'Yer can't remember all the chaps yer chance to meet,'
And he said his name was Sweeney -- people lived in Sussex-street.
He was campin' in a stable, but he swore that he was right,
'Only for the blanky horses walkin' over him all night.'

He'd apparently been fighting, for his face was black-and-blue,
And he looked as though the horses had been treading on him, too;
But an honest, genial twinkle in the eye that wasn't hurt
Seemed to hint of something better, spite of drink and rags and dirt.

It appeared that he mistook me for a long-lost mate of his --
One of whom I was the image, both in figure and in phiz --
(He'd have had a letter from him if the chap were living still,

For they'd carried swags together from the Gulf to Broken Hill.)

Sweeney yarned awhile and hinted that his folks were doing well,
And he told me that his father kept the Southern Cross Hotel;
And I wondered if his absence was regarded as a loss
When he left the elder Sweeney -- landlord of the Southern Cross.

He was born in Parramatta, and he said, with humour grim,
That he'd like to see the city ere the liquor finished him,
But he couldn't raise the money. He was damned if he could think
What the Government was doing. Here he offered me a drink.

I declined -- 'Twas self-denial -- and I lectured him on booze,
Using all the hackneyed arguments that preachers mostly use;
Things I'd heard in temperance lectures (I was young and rather green),
And I ended by referring to the man he might have been.

Then a wise expression struggled with the bruises on his face,
Though his argument had scarcely any bearing on the case:
'What's the good o' keepin' sober? Fellers rise and fellers fall;
What I might have been and wasn't doesn't trouble me at all.'

But he couldn't stay to argue, for his beer was nearly gone.
He was glad, he said, to meet me, and he'd see me later on;
He guessed he'd have to go and get his bottle filled again,
And he gave a lurch and vanished in the darkness and the rain.

.

And of afternoons in cities, when the rain is on the land,
Visions come to me of Sweeney with his bottle in his hand,
With the stormy night behind him, and the pub verandah-post --
And I wonder why he haunts me more than any other ghost.

Still I see the shearers drinking at the township in the scrub,
And the army praying nightly at the door of every pub,
And the girls who flirt and giggle with the bushmen from the west --
But the memory of Sweeney overshadows all the rest.

Well, perhaps, it isn't funny; there were links between us two --
He had memories of cities, he had been a jackeroo;
And, perhaps, his face forewarned me of a face that I might see

From a bitter cup reflected in the wretched days to be.

.

I suppose he's tramping somewhere where the bushmen carry swags,
Cadging round the wretched stations with his empty tucker-bags;
And I fancy that of evenings, when the track is growing dim,
What he ` might have been and wasn't' comes along and troubles him.

Henry Lawson

Sweethearts Wait On Every Shore

SHE SITS beside the tinted tide,
That's reddened by the tortured sand;
And through the East, to ocean wide,
A vessel sails from sight of land.

But she will wait and watch in vain,
For it is said in Cupid's lore,
"That he who loved will love again,
And sweethearts wait on every shore."

Henry Lawson

Sydney-Side

Where's the steward?—Bar-room steward? Berth? Oh, any berth will do—
I have left a three-pound billet just to come along with you.
Brighter shines the Star of Rovers on a world that's growing wide,
But I think I'd give a kingdom for a glimpse of Sydney-Side.
Run of rocky shelves at sunrise, with their base on ocean's bed;
Homes of Coogee, homes of Bondi, and the lighthouse on South Head.
For in loneliness and hardship—and with just a touch of pride—
Has my heart been taught to whisper, 'You belong to Sydney-Side.'

Oh, there never dawned a morning, in the long and lonely days,
But I thought I saw the ferries streaming out across the bays—
And as fresh and fair in fancy did the picture rise again
As the sunrise flushed the city from Woollahra to Balmain:

And the sunny water frothing round the liners black and red,
And the coastal schooners working by the loom of Bradley's Head;
And the whistles and the sirens that re-echo far and wide—
All the life and light and beauty that belong to Sydney-Side.

And the dreary cloud-line never veiled the end of one day more,
But the city set in jewels rose before me from 'The Shore.'
Round the sea-world shine the beacons of a thousand ports o' call,
But the harbour-lights of Sydney are the grandest of them all!

Toiling out beyond Coolgardie—heart and back and spirit broke,
Where the Rover's Star gleams redly in the desert by the 'soak'—
But says one mate to the other, 'Brace your lip and do not fret,
We will laugh on trains and 'buses—Sydney's in the same place yet.'

Working in the South in winter, to the waist in dripping fern,
Where the local spirit hungers for each 'saxpence' that we earn—
We can stand it for a season, for our world is growing wide,
And they all are friends and strangers who belong to Sydney-Side.

'T'other-siders! T'other-siders!' Yet we wake the dusty dead;
It is we that send the backward province fifty years ahead;
We it is that 'trim' Australia—making narrow country wide—
Yet we're always T'other-siders till we sail for Sydney-side.

Henry Lawson

Take It Fightin'

When you've got no chance at all,
Take it fightin'.
When you're driven to the wall,
Take it fightin'.

There are things that we delight in
For the wrongin' or the rightin',
But the fool you cannot frighten
(That you cannot bluff nor frighten)
He is King of all.
(Take it fightin'.)

When you're down an' out an' utter,
Take it fightin';
When they've put you in the gutter,
Take it fightin'.

There are things that we delight in
For the wrongin' or the rightin',
But the fool you cannot frighten
(That you cannot bluff nor frighten)
He is King of all.
(Take it fightin'.)

Henry Lawson

Taking His Chance

They stood by the door of the Inn on the Rise;
May Carney looked up in the bushranger's eyes:
'Oh! why did you come? -- it was mad of you, Jack;
You know that the troopers are out on your track.'
A laugh and a shake of his obstinate head --
'I wanted a dance, and I'll chance it,' he said.

Some twenty-odd bushmen had come to the 'ball',
But Jack from his youth had been known to them all,
And bushmen are soft where a woman is fair,
So the love of May Carney protected him there;
And all the short evening -- it seems like romance --
She danced with a bushranger taking his chance.

'Twas midnight -- the dancers stood suddenly still,
For hoofs had been heard on the side of the hill!
Ben Duggan, the drover, along the hillside
Came riding as only a bushman can ride.
He sprang from his horse, to the shanty he sped --
'The troopers are down in the gully!' he said.

Quite close to the homestead the troopers were seen.
'Clear out and ride hard for the ranges, Jack Dean!
Be quick!' said May Carney -- her hand on her heart --
'We'll bluff them awhile, and 'twill give you a start.'
He lingered a moment -- to kiss her, of course --
Then ran to the trees where he'd hobbled his horse.

She ran to the gate, and the troopers were there --
The jingle of hobbles came faint on the air --
Then loudly she screamed: it was only to drown
The treacherous clatter of slip-rails let down.
But troopers are sharp, and she saw at a glance
That someone was taking a desperate chance.

They chased, and they shouted, 'Surrender, Jack Dean!'
They called him three times in the name of the Queen.
Then came from the darkness the clicking of locks;

The crack of the rifles was heard in the rocks!
A shriek and a shout, and a rush of pale men --
And there lay the bushranger, chancing it then.

The sergeant dismounted and knelt on the sod --
'Your bushranging's over -- make peace, Jack, with God!'
The bushranger laughed -- not a word he replied,
But turned to the girl who knelt down by his side.
He gazed in her eyes as she lifted his head:
'Just kiss me -- my girl -- and -- I'll -- chance it,' he said.

Henry Lawson

Talbragar

Jack Denver died on Talbragar when Christmas Eve began,
And there was sorrow round the place, for Denver was a man;
Jack Denver's wife bowed down her head—her daughter's grief was wild,
And big Ben Duggan by the bed stood sobbing like a child.
But big Ben Duggan saddled up, and galloped fast and far,
To raise the biggest funeral ever seen on Talbragar.

By station home
And shearing shed
Ben Duggan cried, "Jack Denver's dead!
Roll up at Talbragar!"

He borrowed horses here and there, and rode all Christmas Eve,
And scarcely paused a moment's time the mournful news to leave;
He rode by lonely huts and farms, until the day was done
And then he turned his horse's head and made for Ross's Run.
No Bushman in a single day had ridden half so far
Since Johnson brought the doctor to his wife at Talbragar.

By diggers' camps
Ben Duggan sped—
At each he cried, "Jack Denver's dead!
Roll up at Talbragar!"

That night he passed the humpies of the splitters on the ridge,
And roused the bullock-drivers camped at Belinfante's Bridge;
And as he climbed the ridge again the moon shone on the rise;
The soft white moonbeams glistened in the tears that filled his eyes;
He dashed the rebel drops away—for blinding things they are—
But 'twas his best and truest friend who died on Talbragar.

At Blackman's Run
Before the dawn,
Ben Duggan cried, "Jack Denver's gone!
Roll up at Talbragar!"

At all the shanties round the place they'd beard his horse's tramp,
He took the track to Wilson's Luck, and told the diggers' camp;
But in the gorge by Deadman's Gap the mountain shades were black,

And there a newly-fallen tree was lying on the track—
He saw too late, and then he heard the swift hoof 's sudden jar,
And big Ben Duggan ne'er again rode home to Talbragar.

"The wretch is drunk,
And Denver's dead—
A burning shame!" the people said
Next day at Talbragar.

For thirty miles round Talbragar the boys rolled up in strength,
And Denver had a funeral a good long mile in length;
Round Denver's grave that Christmas day rough Bushmen's eyes were dim—
The Western Bushmen knew the way to bury dead like him;
But some returning homeward found, by light of moon and star,
Ben Duggan dying in the rocks, ten miles from Talbragar.

They knelt around.
He raised his head
And faintly gasped, "Jack Denver's dead,
Roll up at Talbragar!"

But one short hour before he died he woke and understood;
They told him, when he asked them, that the funeral was good;
And then there came into his eyes a sad and softened light.
He said. "Poor Denver's wife and kids—you'll see that they're all right?"
And still the careless Bushmen tell by tent and shanty bar
How Duggan raised a funeral years back on Talbragar.

And far and wide
When Duggan died.
The bushmen of the western side
Rode in to Talbragar.

Henry Lawson

Tambaroora Jim

He never drew a sword to fight a dozen foes alone,
Nor gave a life to save a life no better than his own.
He lived because he had been born—the hero of my song—
And fought the battle with his fist whenever he fought a wrong.
Yet there are many men who would do anything for him—
A simple chap as went by name of 'Tambaroora Jim.'
He used to keep a shanty in the 'Come-and-find-it Scrub,'
And there were few but knew the name of Tambaroora's pub.
He wasn't great in lambing down, as many landlords are,
And never was a man less fit to stand behind a bar—
Off-hand, as most bush natives are, and freckled, tall, and slim,
A careless native of the land was 'Tambaroora Jim.'

When people said that loafers took the profit from his pub,
He'd ask them how they thought a chap could do without his grub;
He'd say, 'I've gone for days myself without a bite or sup—
'Oh! I've been through the mill and know what 'tis to be hard-up.'
He might have made his fortune, but he wasn't in the swim,
For no one had a softer heart than 'Tambaroora Jim.'

One dismal day I tramped across the Come-and-find-it Flats,
With 'Ballarat Adolphus' and a mate of 'Ballarat's';
'Twas nearly night and raining fast, and all our things were damp,
We'd no tobacco, and our legs were aching with the cramp;
We couldn't raise a cent, and so our lamp of hope was dim;
And thus we struck the shanty kept by 'Tambaroora Jim.'

We dropped our swags beneath a tree, and squatted in despair,
But Jim came out to watch the rain, and saw us sitting there;
He came and muttered, 'I suppose you haven't half -a-crown,
'But come and get some tucker, and a drink to wash it down.'
And so we took our blueys up and went along with him,
And then we knew why bushmen swore by 'Tambaroora Jim.'

We sat beside his kitchen fire and nursed our tired knees,
And blessed him when we heard the rain go rushing through the trees.
He made us stay, although he knew we couldn't raise a bob,
And tuckered us until we made some money on a job.
And many times since then we've filled our glasses to the brim,

And drunk in many pubs the health of 'Tambaroora Jim.'

A man need never want a meal while Jim had 'junk' to carve,
For 'Tambaroora' always said a fellow couldn't starve.
And this went on until he got a bailiff in his pub,
Through helping chaps as couldn't raise the money for their grub.
And so, one rainy evening, as the distant range grew dim,
He humped his bluey from the Flats—did 'Tambaroora Jim.'

I miss the fun in Jim's old bar—the laughter and the noise,
The jolly hours I used to spend on pay-nights with the boys.
But that's all past, and vain regrets are useless, I'll allow;
They say the Come-and-find-it Flats are all deserted now.
Poor 'Tambaroora's' dead, perhaps, but that's all right with him,
Saint Peter cottons on to chaps like 'Tambaroora Jim.'

I trust that he and I may meet where starry fields are grand,
And liquor up together in the pubs in spirit-land.
But if you chance to drop on Jim while in the West, my lad,
You won't forget to tell him that I want to see him bad.
I want to shake his hand again—I want to shout for him—
I want to have a glass or two with 'Tambaroora Jim.'

Henry Lawson

That Great Waiting Silence

Where shall we go for prophecy? Where shall we go for proof?
The holiday street is crowded, pavement, window and roof;
Band and banner pass by us, and the old tunes rise and fall—
But that great waiting silence is on the people all!

Where is the cheering and laughter of the eight-hour days gone by?
When the holiday heart was careless, and the holiday spirit high—
The friendly jostling and banter, the wit and the jovial call?
But that great waiting silence is over the people all.

Oh! but my heart beats faster—and a gush that was nearly tears:
Clatter of hammers on iron! and Australian Engineers!
Goods from Australian workshops—proud to the world at last
(And I see, in a flash from the future, Australian guns go past).

The morning sun-glare, softened by a veil, like frosted glass—
There is no breath of a head-breeze as the Labour banners pass,
There seems no sign of a danger or a change for the workers now—
But for some great, new-born spirit the banners seem to bow.

Where shall we go for our platforms? Where shall we go, indeed?
Shall we follow the cackle of women that follow the jesting Reid,
Through indifferent-seeming cities—and the browned men straight and tall?
But that great waiting silence is on the people all.

Twist and tangle and mystify, bully, and weep and bluff;
Marry the truth to a glaring lie, and say it is good enough;
Boast of your vice and villainy—in your virtue rant and bawl—
But that great waiting silence is over the people all!

Brothers, who work with shovel or pen, labour by day and night:
Brothers, who think of the hearts of men, ponder and speak and write;
Work for Australia's destiny, content till you hear the call,
For the spirit that builds a nation is over the people all.

Henry Lawson

That Pretty Girl In The Army

“Now I often sit at Watty’s, when the night is very near
With a head that’s full of jingles – and the fumes of bottled beer;
For I always have a fancy that, if I am over there
When the Army prays for Watty, I’m included in the prayer.

“It would take a lot of praying, lots of thumping on the drum,
To prepare our sinful, straying, erring souls for Kingdom Come,
But I love my fellow-sinners! And I hope upon the whole,
That the Army gets a hearing when it prays for Watty’s soul.

Henry Lawson

That There Dog O' Mine

Macquarie the shearer had met with an accident. To tell the truth, he had been in a drunken row at a wayside shanty, from which he had escaped with three fractured ribs, a cracked head, and various minor abrasions. His dog, Tally, had been a sober but savage participator in the drunken row, and had escaped with a broken leg.

Macquarie afterwards shouldered his swag and staggered and struggled along the track ten miles to the Union-Town Hospital. Lord knows how he did it. He didn't exactly know himself. Tally limped behind all the way on three legs. The doctors examined the man's injuries and were surprised at his endurance.

Even doctors are surprised sometimes - though they don't always show it. Of course they would take him in, but they objected to Tally. Dogs were not allowed on the premises. 'You will have to turn that dog out,' they said to the shearer, as he sat on the edge of a bed.

Macquarie said nothing. 'We cannot allow dogs about the place, my man,' said the doctor in a louder tone, thinking the man was deaf. 'Tie him up in the yard then.' 'No. He must go out. Dogs are not permitted on the grounds.'

Macquarie rose slowly to his feet, shut his agony behind his set teeth painfully buttoned his shirt over his hairy chest, took up his waistcoat, and staggered to the corner where the swag lay. 'What are you going to do?' they asked.

'You ain't going to let my dog stop?' 'No. It's against the rules. There are no dogs allowed on the premises.' He stooped and lifted his swag, but the pain was too great, and he leaned back against the wall.

'Come, come now! man alive!' exclaimed the doctor, impatiently. 'You must be mad. You know you are not in a fit state to go out. Let the wardsman help you to undress.' 'No!' said Macquarie. 'No. If you won't take my dog in you don't take me. He's got a broken leg and wants fixing up just - just as much as - as I do.

If I'm good enough to come in, he's good enough - and - and better.' He paused awhile, breathing painfully, and then went on. 'That - that there old dog of mine has follered me faithful and true, these twelve long hard and hungry years. He's about - about the only thing that ever cared whether I lived or fell and rotted on the cursed track.'

He rested again; then he continued: 'That - that there dog was pupped on the track,' he said with a sad sort of smile. 'I carried him for months in a billy can and afterwards on my swag when he was knocked up... And the old slut - his mother - she'd foller along quite contented - sniff the billy now and again - just to see if he was all right... She follered me for God knows how many years. She follered me till she was blind - and for a year after. She folleredme till she could crawl along through the dust no longer, and - and then I killed her, because I couldn't leave her behind alive! '

He rested again. 'And this here old dog,' he continued, touching Tally's upturned nose with his knotted fingers, 'this here old dog has follered me for - for ten years; through floods and droughts, through fair times and - and hard - mostly hard; and kept me from going mad when I had no mate nor money on the lonely track and watched over me for weeks when I was drunk - drugged and poisoned at the cursed shanties; and saved my life more'n once, and got kicks and curses very often for thanks; and forgave me for it all; and - and fought for me.

He was the only living thing that stood up for me against that crawling push of curs when they set onter me at the shanty back yonder - and he left his mark on some of 'em too; and - and so did I.' He took another spell.

Then he drew in his breath, shut his teeth hard, shouldered his swag, stepped into the doorway, and faced round again. The dog limped out of the comer and looked up anxiously. 'That there dog,' said Macquarie to the Hospital staff in general, 'is a better dog than I'm a man - or you too, it seems - and a better Christian.

He's been a better mate to me than I ever was to any man - or any man to me. He's watched over me; kep' me from getting robbed many a time; fought for me; saved my life and took drunken kicks and curses for thanks - and forgave me. He's been a true, straight, honest, and faithful mate to me - and I ain't going to desert him now. I ain't going to kick him out in the road with a broken leg. I - Oh, my God! my back!'

He groaned and lurched forward, but they caught him, slipped off the swag, and laid him on a bed. Half an hour later the shearer was comfortably fixed up. 'Where's my dog?' he asked, when he came to himself.

'Oh, the dog's all right,' said the nurse, rather impatiently. 'Don't bother. The doctor's setting his leg out in the yard.'

Henry Lawson

The Afterglow

Oh, for the fire that used to glow
In those my days of old!
I never thought a man could grow
So callous and so cold.
Ah, for the heart that used to ache
For those in sorrow's ways;
I often wish my heart could break
As it did in those dead days.

Along my track of storm and stress,
And it is plain to trace,
I look back from the loneliness
And the depth of my disgrace.
'Twas fate and only fate I know,
But all mistakes are plain,
'Tis sadder than the afterglow,
More dreary than the rain.

But still there lies a patch of sun
That ne'er will come again,
Those golden days when I was one
Of Nature's gentlemen.
And if there is a memory
Could break me down at last,
It sure would be the thought of this,
The sunshine in the past.

But 'spite of sunshine on the track—
And well the sun might shine—
My heart grows hard when I look back
From these dark days of mine.
A nobler child was never born
In all the Southern land—
The slave of selfish ignorance
That could not understand.

Oh, I had lived for many years
In a world of my ideal,
With no false laughter, no false tears,

And it seemed very real.
But I was wakened from my dreams,
And learnt with hardening eyes
A world of selfish treachery,
Of paltry shame and lies.

I left the truest friends on earth
Who did not need my aid,
And worked for those who were not worth
The sacrifice I made.
And while I blindly strove to raise
The coward and the clown,
They sneaked behind by shady ways
And tore my palace down.

But let those faithless friends of mine
Who'd think of me with scorn,
Remember that for many years
A heavy load I've borne.
And my true friends when all is done,
And my sad soul is gone,
Will think of battles I have won
When I lead rivals on.

And though from spite and worldly things
I well should be exempt,
For little men and paltry men
I scarce can feel contempt.
They followed me with flattery
In the days when I was brave—
But for those who have been true to me
I'll strike back from the grave!

Henry Lawson

The Alleys

I was welcome in a palace when the ball was at my feet,
I was petted in a garden and my triumph was complete.
But for me above the alleys there forever shone a star,
Where the third-rate public houses and the dens of Venus are.
Where the third-rate public houses
And the fourth-rate lodging houses,
And the rag-shops and the pawn-shops and the dens of Venus are.
I was born among the alleys, bred in darkness and in doubt,
And I wrote the truth in blindness and I struggled up and out;
And the world was fair before me and the way was wide and plain,
But the spirit of the alleys ever dragged me back again.
'Tis a madness I inherit
And a blind and reckless spirit.
Oh! the spirit of the alleys ever drags me down again!

There were fair girls in the garden where the spring came in a day,
But the barmaids in the alleys know a wider world than they.
There were wise men in the palace who were born to rule the earth,
But the wrecks amongst the alleys know the world for what it's worth.
To the pewter from the chalice,
To the slum from the palace,
Aye! the wrecks sunk in the alleys know the world for what it's worth!

Poets who have done with puzzling—men who talk but dare not think—
Men who might have moulded nations had it not been for the drink!
Wicked stories full of humour—shafts of wit that seldom miss,
Shot from blighted lips of women that the bravest dare not kiss?
Let the worst girl lead the revels
Of the reckless alley devils!—
Pure and virtuous women often, often drive men down to this.

In the days of mental torture when my life was all a hell,
It was down amongst the alleys that I learnt the tales I tell,
From the black-sheep out from England, from the boozier in from Bourke,
From the tired haggard women bending over needle-work:
Tales of wrongs, that fire the spirit,
Tales of more than human merit,
Told in quiet tones and measured, bending over needle-work.

Oh! the pathos and the humour of the shifts of poverty,
Oh! the sympathy of drunkards, wit and truth and charity,
Oh! the worn-out working women and the lives that they endure,
And the hard and callous kindness of the poor unto the poor!
(Where they blame not—those who labour—
And the prostitute's a neighbour)
Ah! the humour and the courage and the kindness of the poor!

There is fire down in the alleys that has smouldered very long;
There is hatred in the alleys born of centuries of wrong;
And no prayer wins to heaven like a prayer from the slums,
And the thrones of empire totter when the alleys beat their drums.
(Ah! the world is very rotten!
But my sins shall be forgotten
And my work shall be remembered when the alleys beat their drums.)

It is down amongst the alleys, in the alleys dull and damp,
They find kindness in a scoundrel, they find good points in a scamp.
It is down amongst the alleys, now my star has ceased to shine,
I find sympathy with sinners and can hide what shame is mine,
For we trust and shield each other
And a sinner is a brother—
There are souls amongst the alleys who were lost the same as mine.

And if you should some day miss me, and should care to wonder why,
Ask for me amongst the alleys by the name they knew me by:
Mind your head and pick your footsteps for you'll grope in alley gloom,
And the stairs are steep and narrow where they'll lead you to a room.
What if floors are foul and dusty
And the air is close and musty?
In the days when I was noble then I wrote in such a room.

You will see a chair and table dimly shown by candle light,
And the pen I dropped for ever from the last line I shall write;
And some poor attempts at comfort, and a bottle—and maybe
You will find a bad girl crying over what is left of me:
Call no friends—I shall not need them;
Call no priests—I shall not heed them—
Let the bad girl do the praying over what is left of me.

Henry Lawson

The Army Of The Rear

I listened through the music and the sounds of revelry,
And all the hollow noises of that year of Jubilee;
I heard beyond the music and beyond the local cheer,
The steady tramp of thousands that were marching in the rear.
Tramp! tramp! tramp!
They seem to shake the air,
Those never-ceasing footsteps of the outcasts in the rear.
I heard defiance ringing from the men of rags and dirt,
I heard wan woman singing that sad "Song of the Shirt",
And o'er the sounds of menace and moaning low and drear,
I heard the steady tramping of their feet along the rear.
Tramp! tramp! tramp!
Vibrating in the air —
They're swelling fast, those footsteps of the Army of the Rear!

I hate the wrongs I read about, I hate the wrongs I see!
The tramping of that army sounds as music unto me!
A music that is terrible, that frights the anxious ear,
Is beaten from the weary feet that tramp along the rear.
Tramp! tramp! tramp!
In dogged, grim despair —
They have a goal, those footsteps of the Army of the Rear!

I looked upon the nobles, with their lineage so old;
I looked upon their mansions, on their acres and their gold,
I saw their women radiant in jewelled robes appear,
And then I joined the army of the outcasts in the rear.
Tramp! tramp! tramp!
We'll show what Want can dare,
My brothers and my sisters of the Army of the Rear!

I looked upon the mass of poor, in filthy alleys pent;
And on rich men's Edens, that are built on grinding rent;
I looked o'er London's miles of slums — I saw the horrors there,
And swore to die a soldier of the Army of the Rear.
Tramp! tramp! tramp!
I've sworn to do and dare,
I've sworn to die a soldier of the Army of the Rear!

“They’re brutes,” so say the wealthy, “and by steel must be dismayed” —
Be brutes among us, nobles, they are brutes that ye have made;
We want what God hath given us, we want our portion here,
And that is why we’re marching — and we’ll march beyond the rear!
Tramp! tramp! tramp!
Awake and have a care,
Ye proud and haughty spurners of the wretches in the rear.

We’ll nurse our wrongs to strengthen us, our hate that it may grow,
For, outcast from society, society’s our foe.
Beware! who grind out human flesh, for human life is dear!
There’s menace in the marching of the Army of the Rear.
Tramp! tramp! tramp!
There’s danger in despair,
There’s danger in the marching of the Army of the Rear!

The wealthy care not for our wants, nor for the pangs we feel;
Our hands have clutched in vain for bread, and now they clutch for steel!
Come, men of rags and hunger, come! There’s work for heroes here!
There’s room still in the vanguard of the Army of the Rear!
Tramp! tramp! tramp!
O men of want and care!
There’s glory in the vanguard of the Army of the Rear!

Henry Lawson

The Australian Marseillaise

Sing the strong, proud song of Labour,
Toss the ringing music high;
Liberty's a nearer neighbour
Than she was in days gone by.
Workmen's weary wives and daughters
Sing the songs of liberty;
Men hail men across the waters,
Men reply across the sea.

We are marching on and onward
To the silver-streak of dawn,
To the dynasty of mankind
We are marching on.

Long the rich have been protected
By the walls that can't endure;
By the walls that they erected
To divide them from the poor.
Crumbling now, they should not trust them,
For their end is drawing near;
Walls of Cant and walls of Custom,
Walls of Ignorance and Fear.

Tyrants, grip your weapons firmer,
Grip them firmly by the helms;
For the poor begin to murmur
Loudly now among themselves.
Hear us dare to say that Heaven
Gave us equal rights with you,
Dare to say the world was given
Unto all and not the few.

Tell us that the law has risen,
Make us bend beneath its sway,
Throw our leaders into prison,
Wrong us in the light of day.
Drive us to our dens, forgetting
All our woe as greed forgets,
While our weapons we are whetting

On your levelled bayonets.

Treat us like the beasts you'd make us,
Pen us close in wretched sties.
'Til our patience shall forsake us,
And like wolves we will arise.
Louder still for this shall rattle
Rifle shots, and sword blades ring
On the blood-wet fields of battle
In the days of reckoning.

We shall rise to prove us human,
Worthy of a human life,
When our starved and maddened women
Lead our armies on to strife.
When our war hymns wake the valleys,
And the rushing missiles shriek
From your barricaded alleys,
'Til your cannon cease to speak.

Then when Mammon Castle crashes
To the earth and trampled lies,
Then from out the blood and ashes
True Republics shall arise.
Then the world shall rest a season
(First since first the world began)
In the reign of right and reason
And the dynasty of man.

Henry Lawson

The Author's Farewell To The Bushmen

Some carry their swags in the Great North-West,
Where the bravest battle and die,
And a few have gone to their last long rest,
And a few have said: Good-bye!
The coast grows dim, and it may be long
Ere the Gums again I see;
So I put my soul in a farewell song
To the chaps who barracked for me.
Their days are hard at the best of times,
And their dreams are dreams of care—
God bless them all for their big soft hearts,
And the brave, brave grins they wear!
God keep me straight as a man can go,
And true as a man may be!
For the sake of the hearts that were always so,
Of the men who had faith in me!

And a ship-side word I would say, you chaps
Of the blood of the Don't-give-in!
The world will call it a boast, perhaps—
But I'll win, if a man can win!
And not for gold nor the world's applause—
Though ways to the end they be—
I'll win, if a man might win, because
Of the men who believed in me.

Henry Lawson

The Babies Of Walloon

He was lengthsman on the railway, and his station scarce deserved
That "pre-eminence in sorrow" of the Majesty he served,
But as dear to him and precious were the gifts reclaimed so soon—
Were the workman's little daughters who were buried near Walloon.

Speak their names in tones that linger, just as though you held them dear;
There are eyes to which the mention of those names will bring a tear.
Little Kate and Bridget, straying in an autumn afternoon,
Were attracted by the lilies in the water of Walloon.

All is dark to us. The angels sing perhaps in Paradise
Of the younger sister's danger, and the elder's sacrifice;
But the facts were hidden from us, when the soft light from the moon
Glistened on the water-lilies o'er the Babies at Walloon.

Ah! the children love the lilies, while we elders are inclined
To the flowers that have poison for the body and the mind.
Better for the "strongly human" to have done with life as soon,
Better perish for a lily like the Babies of Walloon.

For they gather flowers early on the river far away,
Where the everlasting lilies keep their purity for aye,
And while summer brings our lilies to the run and the lagoon
May our children keep the legend of the Babies of Walloon.

Henry Lawson

The Ballad Of Mabel Clare

Ye children of the Land of Gold,
I sing a song to you,
And if the jokes are somewhat old,
The main idea is new.
So be it sung, by hut and tent,
Where tall the native grows;
And understand, the song is meant
For singing through the nose.
There dwelt a hard old cockatoo
On western hills far out,
Where everything is green and blue,
Except, of course, in drought;
A crimson Anarchist was he—
Held other men in scorn—
Yet preached that ev'ry man was free,
And also 'ekal born.'

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

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

A stranger at the neighb'ring run
Sojourned, the squatter's guest,
He was unknown to anyone,
But like a swell was dress'd;

He had an eyeglass to his eye,
A collar to his ears,
His feet were made to tread the sky,
His mouth was formed for sneers.

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

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

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

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

'Oh love!' he cried, 'but you forget

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

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

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

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

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

A rouseabout—confess'd!

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

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

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

Henry Lawson

The Ballad Of The Black-Sheep

A black-sheep, from England, who worked on the run –
Riding where the stockmen ride –
He sat by the hut when the day's work was done –
Lone huts where the black sheep bide.

"I'm tired of my life!" to his lone self said he,
"My girl and my country are both done with me!"

"I'm tired of my life!" to the wide scrubs said he –
"My girl and my country are long done with me!"

He took from a packet a portrait and curl –
Such things as the exiles keep –
And sadly he gazed at the face of the girl –
Lost girl of a lost black-sheep.
"I'll go where there's fighting and die there!" said he;
"My girl and my country are well rid of me.

"I'll go where there's fighting and die there," said he;
"For heart-break and country that's well rid of me!"

He rode with a thousand, he rode with the best –
Riding as bushmen ride –
Who'd ridden alone on the wastes of the West –
Wide wastes where the drought-fiends bide,
They rode as they'd ride to an up-country ball,
And the laugh of the black-sheep was lightest of all!

The road was a shambles, the hill was a hell –
Red rosed where the reckless ride –
And he with the foremost lay torn by a shell –
(Die hard where your father died!)
"the death of a rebel!" he laughed as he groaned –
"for the land that adoptee – the land that disowned!"

the death of a black-sheep! – they laugh as they groan –
for the lands that adopt and the lands that disown!

Henry Lawson

The Ballad Of The Drover

Across the stony ridges,
Across the rolling plain,
Young Harry Dale, the drover,
Comes riding home again.
And well his stock-horse bears him,
And light of heart is he,
And stoutly his old pack-horse
Is trotting by his knee.

Up Queensland way with cattle
He travelled regions vast;
And many months have vanished
Since home-folk saw him last.
He hums a song of someone
He hopes to marry soon;
And hobble-chains and camp-ware
Keep jingling to the tune.

Beyond the hazy dado
Against the lower skies
And yon blue line of ranges
The homestead station lies.
And thitherward the drover
Jogs through the lazy noon,
While hobble-chains and camp-ware
Are jingling to a tune.

An hour has filled the heavens
With storm-clouds inky black;
At times the lightning trickles
Around the drover's track;
But Harry pushes onward,
His horses' strength he tries,
In hope to reach the river
Before the flood shall rise.

The thunder from above him
Goes rolling o'er the plain;

And down on thirsty pastures
In torrents falls the rain.
And every creek and gully
Sends forth its little flood,
Till the river runs a banker,
All stained with yellow mud.

Now Harry speaks to Rover,
The best dog on the plains,
And to his hardy horses,
And strokes their shaggy manes;
'We've breasted bigger rivers
When floods were at their height
Nor shall this gutter stop us
From getting home to-night!'

The thunder growls a warning,
The ghastly lightnings gleam,
As the drover turns his horses
To swim the fatal stream.
But, oh! the flood runs stronger
Than e'er it ran before;
The saddle-horse is failing,
And only half-way o'er!

When flashes next the lightning,
The flood's grey breast is blank,
And a cattle dog and pack-horse
Are struggling up the bank.
But in the lonely homestead
The girl will wait in vain --
He'll never pass the stations
In charge of stock again.

The faithful dog a moment
Sits panting on the bank,
And then swims through the current
To where his master sank.
And round and round in circles
He fights with failing strength,
Till, borne down by the waters,
The old dog sinks at length.

Across the flooded lowlands
And slopes of sodden loam
The pack-horse struggles onward,
To take dumb tidings home.
And mud-stained, wet, and weary,
Through ranges dark goes he;
While hobble-chains and tinware
Are sounding eerily.

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The floods are in the ocean,
The stream is clear again,
And now a verdant carpet
Is stretched across the plain.
But someone's eyes are saddened,
And someone's heart still bleeds
In sorrow for the drover
Who sleeps among the reeds.

Henry Lawson

The Ballad Of The Elder Son

A son of elder sons I am,
Whose boyhood days were cramped and scant,
Through ages of domestic sham
And family lies and family cant.
Come, elder brothers mine, and bring
Dull loads of care that you have won,
And gather round me while I sing
The ballad of the elder son.

'Twas Christ who spake in parables—
To picture man was his intent;
A simple tale He simply tells,
And He Himself makes no comment.
A morbid sympathy is felt
For prodigals—the selfish ones—
The crooked world has ever dealt
Unjustly by the elder sons.

The elder son on barren soil,
Where life is crude and lands are new,
Must share the father's hardest toil,
And share the father's troubles too.
With no child-thoughts to meet his own
His childhood is a lonely one:
The youth his father might have known
Is seldom for the eldest son.

It seems so strange, but fate is grim,
And Heaven's ways are hard to track,
Though ten young scamps come after him
The rod falls heaviest on his back.
And, well I'll say it might be caused
By a half-sense of injustice done—
That vague resentment parents feel
So oft towards the eldest son.

He, too, must bear the father's name,
He loves his younger brother, too,
And feels the younger brother's shame

As keenly as his parents do.
The mother's prayers, the father's curse,
The sister's tears have all been done—
We seldom see in prose or verse
The prayers of the elder son.

But let me to the parable
With eyes on facts but fancy free;
And don't belie me if I tell
The story as it seems to me—
For, mind, I do not mean to sneer
(I was religious when a child),
I wouldn't be surprised to hear
That Christ himself had sometimes smiled.

A certain squatter had two sons
Up Canaan way some years ago.
The graft was hard on those old runs,
And it was hot and life was slow.
The younger brother coolly claimed
The portion that he hadn't earned,
And sought the 'life' for which untamed
And high young spirits always yearned.

A year or so he knocked about,
And spent his cheques on girls and wine,
And, getting stony in the drought,
He took a job at herding swine,
And though he is a hog that swigs
And fools with girls till all is blue—
'Twas rather rough to shepherd pigs
And have to eat their tucker too.

"When he came to himself," he said
(I take my Bible from the shelf:
There's nothing like a feed of husks
To bring a young man to himself.
And when you're done with wine and girls—
Right here a moral seems to shine—
And are hard up, you'll find no pearls
Are cast by friends before your swine)—

When he came to himself, he said—
He reckoned pretty shrewdly, too—
'The rousers in my father's shed
'Have got more grub than they can chew;
'I've been a fool, but such is fate—
'I guess I'll talk the gov'nor round:
"I've acted cronk," I'll tell him straight;
'(He's had his time too, I'll be bound).

'I'll tell him straight I've had my fling,
'I'll tell him "I've been on the beer,
"But put me on at anything,
"I'll graft with any bounder here."
He rolled his swag and struck for home—
He was by this time pretty slim
And, when the old man saw him come—
Well, you know how he welcomed him.

They've brought the best robe in the house,
The ring, and killed the fatted calf,
And now they hold a grand carouse,
And eat and drink and dance and laugh:
And from the field the elder son—
Whose character is not admired—
Comes plodding home when work is done,
And very hot and very tired.

He asked the meaning of the sound
Of such unwonted revelry,
They said his brother had been 'found'
(He'd found himself it seemed to me);
'Twas natural in the elder son
To take the thing a little hard
And brood on what was past and done
While standing outside in the yard.

Now he was hungry and knocked out
And would, if they had let him be,
Have rested and cooled down, no doubt,
And hugged his brother after tea,
And welcomed him and hugged his dad
And filled the wine cup to the brim—

But, just when he was feeling bad
The old man came and tackled him.

He well might say with bitter tears
While music swelled and flowed the wine—
'Lo, I have served thee many years
'Nor caused thee one grey hair of thine.
'Whate'er thou bad'st me do I did
'And for my brother made amends;
'Thou never gavest me a kid
'That I might make merry with my friends.'

(He was no honest clod and glum
Who could not trespass, sing nor dance—
He could be merry with a chum,
It seemed, if he had half a chance;
Perhaps, if further light we seek,
He knew—and herein lay the sting—
His brother would clear out next week
And promptly pop the robe and ring).

The father said, 'The wandering one,
'The lost is found, this son of mine,
'But thou art always with me, son—
'Thou knowest all I have is thine.'
(It seemed the best robe and the ring,
The love and fatted calf were not;
But this was just a little thing
The old man in his joy forgot.)

The father's blindness in the house,
The mother's fond and foolish way
Have caused no end of ancient rows
Right back to Cain and Abel's day.
The world will blame the eldest born—
But—well, when all is said and done,
No coat has ever yet been worn
That had no colour more than one.

Oh! if I had the power to teach—
The strength for which my spirit craves—
The cant of parents I would preach

Who slave and make their children slaves.
For greed of gain, and that alone
Their youth they steal, their hearts they break
And then, the wretched misers moan—
'We did it for our children's sake.'

'And all I have'—the paltry bribe
That he might slave contented yet
While envied by his selfish tribe
The birthright he might never get:
The worked-out farm and endless graft,
The mortgaged home, the barren run—
The heavy, hopeless overdraft—
The portion of the elder son.

He keeps his parents when they're old,
He keeps a sister in distress,
His wife must work and care for them
And bear with all their pettishness.
The mother's moan is ever heard,
And, whining for the worthless one,
She seldom has a kindly word
To say about her eldest son.

'Tis he, in spite of sneer and jibe,
Who stands the friend when others fail:
He bears the burdens of his tribe
And keeps his brother out of jail.
He lends the quid and pays the fine,
And for the family pride he smarts—
For reasons I cannot divine
They hate him in their heart of hearts.

A satire on this world of sin—
Where parents seldom understand—
That night the angels gathered in
The firstborn of that ancient land.
Perhaps they thought, in those old camps,
While suffering for the blow that fell,
They might have better spared the scamps
And Josephs that they loved so well.

Sometimes the Eldest takes the track
When things at home have got too bad—
He comes not crawling, canting back
To seek the blind side of his dad.
He always finds a knife and fork
And meat between on which to dine,
And, though he sometimes deals in pork,
You'll never catch him herding swine.

The happy home, the overdraft,
His birthright and his prospects gay,
And likewise his share of the graft,
He leaves the rest to grab. And they—
Who'd always do the thing by halves,
If anything for him was done—
Would kill a score of fatted calves
To welcome home the eldest son.

Henry Lawson

The Ballad Of The Rousabout

A Rouseabout of rouseabouts, from any land—or none—
I bear a nick-name of the bush, and I'm—a woman's son;
I came from where I camp'd last night, and, at the day-dawn glow,
I rub the darkness from my eyes, roll up my swag, and go.
Some take the track for bitter pride, some for no pride at all—
(But—to us all the world is wide when driven to the wall)
Some take the track for gain in life, some take the track for loss—
And some of us take up the swag as Christ took up the Cross.

Some take the track for faith in men—some take the track for doubt—
Some flee a squalid home to work their own salvation out.
Some dared not see a mother's tears nor meet a father's face—
Born of good Christian families some leap, head-long, from Grace.

Oh we are men who fought and rose, or fell from many grades;
Some born to lie, and some to pray, we're men of many trades;
We're men whose fathers were and are of high and low degree—
The sea was open to us and we sailed across the sea.

And—were our quarrels wrong or just?—has no place in my song—
We seared our souls in puzzling as to what was right or wrong;
We judge not and we are not judged—'tis our philosophy—
There's something wrong with every ship that sails upon the sea.

From shearing shed to shearing shed we tramp to make a cheque—
Jack Cornstalk and the ne'er-do-weel—the tar-boy and the wreck.
We learn the worth of man to man—and this we learn too well—
The shanty and the shearing shed are warmer spots in hell!

I've humped my swag to Bawley Plain, and further out and on;
I've boiled my billy by the Gulf, and boiled it by the Swan—
I've thirsted in dry lignum swamps, and thirsted on the sand,
And eked the fire with camel dung in Never-Never Land.

I know the track from Spencer's Gulf and north of Cooper's Creek—
Where falls the half-caste to the strong, 'black velvet' to the weak—
(From gold-top Flossie in the Strand to half-caste and the gin—
If they had brains, poor animals! we'd teach them how to sin.)

I've tramped, and camped, and 'shore' and drunk with many mates Out Back—
And every one to me is Jack because the first was Jack—
A 'lifer' sneaked from jail at home—the 'straightest' mate I met—
A 'ratty' Russian Nihilist—a British Baronet!

I know the tucker tracks that feed—or leave one in the lurch—
The 'Burgoo' (Presbyterian) track—the 'Murphy' (Roman Church)—
But more the man, and not the track, so much as it appears,
For 'battling' is a trade to learn, and I've served seven years.

We're haunted by the past at times—and this is very bad,
And so we drink till horrors come, lest, sober, we go mad—
So much is lost Out Back, so much of hell is realised—
A man might skin himself alive and no one be surprised.

A rouseabout of rouseabouts, above—beneath regard,
I know how soft is this old world, and I have learnt, how hard—
A rouseabout of rouseabouts—I know what men can feel,
I've seen the tears from hard eyes slip as drops from polished steel.

I learned what college had to teach, and in the school of men
By camp-fires I have learned, or, say, unlearned it all again;
But this I've learned, that truth is strong, and if a man go straight
He'll live to see his enemy struck down by time and fate!

We hold him true who's true to one however false he be
(There's something wrong with every ship that lies beside the quay);
We lend and borrow, laugh and joke, and when the past is drowned,
We sit upon our swags and smoke and watch the world go round.

Henry Lawson

The Bard Of Furthest Out

He longed to be a Back-Blocks Bard,
And fame he wished to win—
He wrote at night and studied hard
(He read The Bulletin);
He sent in "stuff" unceasingly,
But couldn't get it through;
And so, at last, he came to me
To see what I could do.

The poet's light was in his eye,
He aimed to be a man;
He bought a bluey and a fly,
A brand new billy-can.
I showed him how to roll his swag
And "sling it" with the best;
I gave him my old water-bag,
And pointed to the west.

"Now you can take the train as far
As Blazes if you like—
The wealthy go by motor-car
(Some travellers go by bike);
They race it through without a rest,
And find it very tame—
But if you tramp it to the west
You'll get there just the same.

"(No matter if the hour is late,
The morning goes Out-Back),
You do not need a dog nor mate,
You'll find them on the track.
You must avoid such deadly rhymes
As 'self' and 'elf' and 'shelf'.
But were it as in other times,
I'd go with you myself.

"Those days are done for me, but ah!
On hills where you shall be,
The wattle and the waratah

Are good to smell and see.
But there's a scent, my heart believes,
That 'travellers' set higher
Than wattle—'tis the dried gum leaves
That light the evening fire.

"The evening fire and morning fire
Are one fire in the Bush.
(You'll find the points that you require
As towards the west you push.)
And as you pass by ancient ways,
Old camps, and mountain springs,
The spirits of the Roaring Days
Will whisper many things.

"The lonely ridge-and-gully belt—
The spirit of the whole
It must be seen; it must be felt—
Must sink into your soul!
The summer silence-creek-oaks' sigh—
The windy, rainy "woosh"—
'Tis known to other men, and I—
The Spirit of the Bush!

"So on, and on, through dust and heat,
When past the spurs you be—
And you shall meet whom you shall meet,
And see what you shall see,
You need not claim the stranger's due,
They yield it everywhere,
And mateship is a thing that you
Must take for granted there.

"And in the land of Lord-knows-where—
Right up and furthest out—
You find a new Australia there
That we know nought about.
Live as they live, fight as they fight,
Succeed as they succeed,
And then come back again and write
For all the world to read."

I've got a note from Hungerford,
'Tis written frank and fair;
The bushman's grim philosophy—
The bushman's grin are there.
And tramping on through rain and drought—
Unlooked for and unmissed—
I may have sent to furthest out
The Great Bush Novelist.

Henry Lawson

The Bards Who Lived At Manly

The camp of high-class spielers,
Who sneered in summer dress,
And doo-dah dilettante,
And scornful "venuses"—
House agents, and storekeepers,
All eager they to "bleed"—
The bards who tackled Manly,
Were plucky bards indeed!

With shops that feared to trust them,
And pubs that looked askance;
And prigs who read their verses,
But gave them not a glance;—
When all were vain and selfish,
And editors were hard—
The bard that stuck to Manly
Was sure a mighty bard.

What mattered floors were barren,
And windows curtainless,
And our life seemed to others
But blackguard recklessness?
We wore our clothes for comfort,
We earned our bread away,
And beer and good tobacco
Came somehow every day.

Came kindred souls to Manly—
Outsiders that we knew,
And with them scribes and artists,
And low comedians too;
And sometimes bright girl writers—
Called "Tommy", "Jack", or "Pat"—
(Though each one had a sweetheart
The rest knew nought of that).

'Twas not the paltry village
We honoured unaware,
Or welcome warm, or friendship,

Or "tone" that took us there;
We longed to sing for mankind,
Where heaven's breath was free
We only sought the grandeur
Of sea-cliff, sands and sea.

And we were glad at Manly,
All unaware of "swells",
Of doctors and of nurses,
And private hospitals;
With little fear of bailiffs,
And great contempt for greed—
The bards who lived at Manly,
They were a healthy breed.

Oh! moonlit nights at Manly,
When all the world was fair!
In shirts and turned-up trousers
We larked like big boys there.
Oh! glorious autumn mornings—
The gold and green and blue—
We "stripped" as well as any,
And swam as strongly too.

The artist had a missus,
Who rather loved the wretch,
And so for days together
He'd stay at home and sketch.
And then—I fear 'twas only
When things were getting tight—
The bards would shun each other,
And hump themselves—and write.

When bailiffs came to Manly
They'd find no "sticks" to take,
We'd welcome them as brothers—
Their grimy hands we'd shake;
We'd send for beer in billies—
And straightway send for more—
And bailiff nights in Manly
Were merry nights of yore.

There are some things that landlords
And law can't do at all:
They could not take the pictures
We painted on the wall;
They could not take the table—
The table was a door;
They could not take the bedsteads—
The beds were on the floor.

The door of some old stable—
We'd borrowed for a drink—
A page of rhymes and sketches,
And stained with beer and ink;
A dead hand drew the portraits—
And, say, should I be shamed,
To seek it out in Manly
And get the old door framed?

They left the masterpieces
The artist dreamed of long;
They could not take the gardens
From Victor Daley's song;
They left his summer islands
And fairy ships at sea,
They could not take my mountains
And western plains from me.

One bailiff was our brother,
No better and no worse—
And, oh! the yarns he told us
To put in prose and verse,
And sorry we to lose him,
And sorry he to go—
(Oh! skeletons of Pott's Point,
How many things we know)!

The very prince of laughter,
With brains and sympathy;
And with us on the last night
He spent his bailiff's fee.
He banished Durkin's gruffness,
He set my soul afloat,

And drew till day on Daley's
Bright store of anecdote.

He said he'd stick to business—
Though he could well be free—
If but to save poor devils
From harder "bums" than he,
Now artist, bard and bailiff
Have left this vale of sin—
I trust, if they reach Heaven,
They'll take that bailiff in.

The bards that lived in Manly
Have vanished one and one;
But do not think in Manly
Bohemian days are done.
They bled me white in Manly
When rich and tempest-tossed—
I'll leave some bills in Manly
To pay for what I lost.

They'd grab and grind in Manly,
Then slander, sneer, and flout.
The shocked of moral Manly!
They starved my brothers out.
The miserable village,
Set in a scene so fair,
Were honester and cleaner
If some of us were there!

But one went with December—
These last lines seem to-night
Like some song I remember,
And not a song I write.
With vision strangely clearer
My old chums seem to be,
In death and absence, nearer
Than e'er they were to me.

Alone, and still not lonely—
When tears will not be shed—
I wish that I could only

Believe that they were dead.
With hardly curbed emotion,
I can't but think, somehow,
In Manly by the ocean
They're waiting for me now.

Henry Lawson

The Battling Days

So, sit you down in a straight-backed chair, with your pipe and your wife content,
And cross your knees with your wisest air, and preach of the 'days mis-spent';
Grown fat and moral apace, old man! you prate of the change 'since then'—
In spite of all, I'd as lief be back in those hard old days again.

They were hard old days; they were battling days; they were cruel at times—but
then,

In spite of all, I would rather be back in those hard old days again.

The land was barren to sow wild oats in the days when we sowed our own—
('Twas little we thought or our friends believed that ours would ever be sown)

But the wild oats wave on their stormy path, and they speak of the hearts of
men—

I would sow a crop if I had my time in those hard old days again.

We travel first, or we go saloon—on the planned-out trips we go,
With those who are neither rich nor poor, and we find that the life is slow;

It's 'a pleasant trip' where they cried, 'Good luck!' There was fun in the steerage
then—

In spite of all, I would fain be back in those vagabond days again.

On Saturday night we've a pound to spare—a pound for a trip down town—
We took more joy in those hard old days for a hardly spared half-crown;

We took more pride in the pants we patched than the suits we have had since
then—

In spite of all, I would rather be back in those comical days again.

'Twas We and the World—and the rest go hang—as the Outside tracks we trod;
Each thought of himself as a man and mate, and not as a martyred god;

The world goes wrong when your heart is strong—and this is the way with men—
The world goes right when your liver is white, and you preach of the change
'since then.'

They were hard old days; they were battling days; they were cruel times—but
then,

In spite of all, we shall live to-night in those hard old days again.

Henry Lawson

The Beauty And The Dude

A fresh sweet-scented beauty
Came tripping down the street;
She was as fair a vision
As you might chance to meet.
A masher raised his cady
(I don't want to be rude)
He raised it to the lady—
That fresh sweet-scented dude.

They met and talked and simpered
And giggled in the street;
They were as bright a vision
As you might wish to meet.
I don't know what they're good for,
But don't want to be rude
To the fair sweet-scented beauty
Or the well-upholstered dude.

Henry Lawson

The Bill Of The Ages

He shall live to the end of this mad old world, he has lived since the world began,
He never has done any good for himself, but was good to every man.
He never has done any good for himself, and I'm sure that he never will,
He drinks and he swears and he fights at times, and his name is mostly Bill.
He carried a freezing mate to his cave, and nursed him, for all I know,
When Europe was mostly a sheet of ice, thousands of years ago.
He has stuck to many a mate since then, he is with us everywhere still
(He loves and gambles when he is young, and the girls stick up for Bill.)

He has rowed to a wreck, when the lifeboat failed, with Jim in a crazy boat;
He has given his lifebelt many a time, and sunk that another might float.
He has 'stood 'em off' while others escaped, when the niggers rushed from the
hill,
And rescue parties who came too late have found what was left of Bill.

He has thirsted on deserts that others might drink, he has given lest others
should lack,
He has staggered half-blinded through fire or drought with a sick man on his
back.
He is first to the rescue in tunnel or shaft, from Newcastle to Broken Hill,
When the water breaks in or the fire breaks out, Oh! a leader of men is Bill.

No humane societies' medals he wears for the fearful deaths he braved;
He seems ashamed of the good he did, and ashamed of the lives he saved.
If you chance to know of a noble deed he has done, you had best keep still;
If you chance to know of a kindly act, you mustn't let on to Bill.

He is fierce at a wrong, he is firm in right, he is kind to the weak and mild;
He will slave all day and sit up all night by the side of a neighbour's child.
For a woman in trouble he'd lay down his life, nor think as another man will;
He's a man all through, but no other man's wife has ever been worse for Bill.

He is good for the noblest sacrifice, he can do what few other men can;
He can break his heart that the girl he loves may marry a better man.
There's many a mother and wife to-night whose heart and whose eyes will fill
When she thinks of the days of the long ago when she well might have stuck to
Bill.

Maybe he's in trouble or hard up now, and travelling far for work,

Or fighting a dead past down to-night in a lone camp west of Bourke.
When he's happy and flush, take your sorrow to him and borrow as much as you
will;
But when he's in trouble or stony-broke, you never will hear from Bill.

And when, because of its million sins, this earth is cracked like a shell,
He will stand by a mate at the Judgment Seat!—and comfort him down in—Well,
I haven't much sentiment left, but let the cynic sneer as he will;
Perhaps God will fix up the world again for the sake of the likes of Bill.

Henry Lawson

The Black Bordered Letter

An' SO 'e's dead in London,
An' answered to the call,
An' trotted through the Long Street,
With 'earse an' plumes an' all?
We was village boys an' brothers—
We was warm as we could be,
In the milk-walk an' the fried fish,
Up in London, 'im an' me.
We was warm,
We was warm,
As we 'ad always been;
We never 'ad a dry word
Till she come between.

I lived round Windsor Terrace,
An' 'im across the wye,
An' when I sailed a emigrant
We never said good-bye!
He wos better than a brother—
Wot you Bushmen call a mate.
(Did he reach the rylwye stytion,
As they told me, just too late!)

We was warm,
We was warm,
As pals was ever seen;
We never 'ad a dry word
Till she come between.

I meant to go back 'ome again,
I meant to write to-night;
I meant to write by every mail,
But I thought 'e oughter write.
An' now 'e's left North London—
For a better place, perhaps—
She's flauntin' in 'er widder weeds,
With eyes on other chaps.

We was warm,

We was warm,
As we 'ad always been;
We never 'ad a dry word
Till she come between.

Oh! tongues is bad in wimmin,
When wimmin's tongues is bad!
For they'll part men an' brothers
World oceans wide, my lad!
There was seven years between us,
An' fifteen thousand mile,
An' now there's death an' sorrer
For ever an' awhile.

We was warm,
We was warm,
As two was ever seen;
We never 'ad a dry word
Till she come between.

Henry Lawson

The Black Tracker (Or: Why He Lost The Track)

There was a tracker in the force
Of wondrous sight (the story ran):—
He never failed to track a horse,
He never failed to find his man.

They brought him from a distant town
Once more to gain reward and praise,
Nor dreamed the man he hunted down
Had saved his life in bygone days.

Away across the farthest run,
And far across the stony plain,
The outlaw's horse's tracks, each one,
Unto the black man's eyes were plain.

Those tracks across the ranges wide
Right well he knew that he could trace,
And oft he turned aside to hide
The tears upon his dusky face.

Now was his time, for he could claim
Reward and praise if he prevailed!
Now was the time to win him fame,
When all the other blacks had failed.

He struggled well to play his part,
For in the art he took a pride.
But, ah! there beat a white man's heart
Beneath his old, black wrinkled hide.

Against that heart he struggled well,
But gratitude was in the black—
He failed—and only he could tell
The reason why he lost the track.

Henry Lawson

The Blue Mountains

Above the ashes straight and tall,
Through ferns with moisture dripping,
I climb beneath the sandstone wall,
My feet on mosses slipping.

Like ramparts round the valley's edge
The tinted cliffs are standing,
With many a broken wall and ledge,
And many a rocky landing.

And round about their rugged feet
Deep ferny dells are hidden
In shadowed depths, whence dust and heat
Are banished and forbidden.

The stream that, crooning to itself,
Comes down a tireless rover,
Flows calmly to the rocky shelf,
And there leaps bravely over.

Now pouring down, now lost in spray
When mountain breezes sally,
The water strikes the rock midway,
And leaps into the valley.

Now in the west the colours change,
The blue with crimson blending;
Behind the far Dividing Range,
The sun is fast descending.

And mellowed day comes o'er the place,
And softens ragged edges;
The rising moon's great placid face
Looks gravely o'er the ledges.

Henry Lawson

The Bonny Port Of Sydney

The lovely Port of Sydney
Lies laughing to the sky,
The bonny Port of Sydney,
Where the ships of nations lie.
You shall never see such beauty,
Though you sail the wide world o'er,
As the sunny Port of Sydney,
As we see it from the Shore.
The shades of night are falling
On many ports of call,
But the harbour lights of Sydney
Are the grandest of them all;
Such a city set in jewels
Has ne'er been seen before
As the harbour lights of Sydney
As we see them from the Shore.

I must sail for gloomy London,
Where there are no harbour lights,
Where no sun is seen in winter,
And there are no starry nights;
And the bonny port of Sydney—
I may never see it more,
But I'll always dream about it
As we view it from North Shore.

Henry Lawson

The Boss Over The Board

When he's over a rough and unpopular shed,
With the sins of the bank and the men on his head;
When he musn't look black or indulge in a grin,
And thirty or forty men hate him like Sin—
I am moved to admit—when the total is scored—
That it's just a bit off for the Boss-of -the-board.
I have battled a lot,
But my dream's never soared
To the lonely position of Boss-of-the-board.
'Twas a black-listed shed down the Darling: the Boss
Was a small man to see—though a big man to cross—
We had nought to complain of—except what we thought,
And the Boss didn't boss any more than he ought;
But the Union was booming, and Brotherhood soared,
So we hated like poison the Boss-of-the-board.
We could tolerate 'hands'—
We respected the cook;
But the name of a Boss was a blot in our book.

He'd a row with Big Duggan—a rough sort of Jim—
Or, rather, Jim Duggan was 'laying for' him!
His hate of Injustice and Greed was so deep
That his shearing grew rough—and he ill-used the sheep.
And I fancied that Duggan his manliness lower'd
When he took off his shirt to the Boss-of-the-board,
For the Boss was ten stone,
And the shearer full-grown,
And he might have, they said, let the crawler alone.

Though some of us there wished the fight to the strong,
Yet we knew in our hearts that the shearer was wrong.
And the crawler was plucky, it can't be denied,
For he had to fight Freedom and Justice beside,
But he came up so gamely, as often as floored,
That a blackleg stood up for the Boss-of-the-board!
And the fight was a sight,
And we pondered that night—
'It's surprising how some of those blacklegs can fight!'

Next day at the office, when sadly the wreck
Of Jim Duggan came up like a lamb for his cheque,
Said the Boss, 'Don't be childish! It's all past and gone;
'I am short of good shearers. You'd better stay on.'
And we fancied Jim Duggan our dignity lower'd
When he stopped to oblige a damned Boss-of-the-board.
We said nothing to Jim,
For a joke might be grim,
And the subject, we saw, was distasteful to him.

The Boss just went on as he'd done from the first,
And he favoured Big Duggan no more than the worst;
And when we'd cut out and the steamer came down—
With the hawkers and spielers—to take us to town,
And we'd all got aboard, 'twas Jim Duggan, good Lord!
Who yelled for three cheers for the Boss-of-the-board.
'Twas a bit off, no doubt—
And with Freedom about—
But a lot is forgot when a shed is cut out.

With Freedom of Contract maintained in his shed,
And the curse of the Children of Light on his head,
He's apt to long sadly for sweetheart or wife,
And his views be inclined to the dark side of life.
The Truth must be spread and the Cause must be shored—
But it's just a bit rough on the Boss-of-the-board.
I am all for the Right,
But perhaps (out of sight)
As a son or a husband or father he's white.

Henry Lawson

The Boss's Boots

The Shearers squint along the pens, they squint along the 'shoots;'
The shearers squint along the board to catch the Boss's boots;
They have no time to straighten up, they have no time to stare,
But when the Boss is looking on, they like to be aware.
The 'rouser' has no soul to save. Condemn the rouseabout!
And sling 'em in, and rip 'em through, and get the bell-sheep out ;
And skim it by the tips at times, or take it with the roots—
But 'pink' 'em nice and pretty when you see the Boss's boots.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Henry Lawson

The Brass Well

'Tis a legend of the bushmen from the days of Cunningham,
When he opened up the country and the early squatters came.
Tis the old tale of a fortune missed by men who did seek,
And, perhaps, you haven't heard it—The Brass Well on Myall Creek.
They were north of running rivers, they were south of Queensland rains,
And a blazing drought was scorching every grass-blade from the plains;
So the stockmen drove the cattle to the range where there was grass,
And a couple sunk a well and found what they believed was brass.

'Here's some bloomin' brass!' they muttered when they found it in the clay,
And they thought no more about it and in time they went away;
But they heard of gold, and saw it, somewhere down by Inverell,
And they felt and weighed it, crying: 'Why! we found it in the well!'

And they worked about the station and at times they took the track,
Always meaning to save money, always meaning to go back—
'Always meanin',' like the bushmen, who go drifting round like wrecks,
And they'd get half way to Myall, strike a pub and blew their cheques.

Then they told two more about it and those other two grew old,
And they never found the brass well and they never found the gold.
For the scrub grows dense and quickly and, though many went to seek,
No one ever struck the lost track to the Well on Myall Creek.

And the story is forgotten and I'm sitting here, alas!
With a woeful load of trouble and a woeful lack of brass;
But I dream at times that I might find what many went to seek,
And my luck might lead my footsteps to the Well at Myall Creek.

Henry Lawson

The Briny Grave

You wonder why so many would be buried in the sea,
In this world of froth and bubble,
But I don't wonder, for it seems to me
That it saves such a lot of trouble.
And there ain't no undertaker—
Oh! there ain't no order that your friends can give
On the quiet to the coffin-maker—
To a gimcrack coffin-maker,
They make no differ twixt the absentee swell
And the clerk that cut from a "shortage"—
Oh! there ain't no pauper funer-el,
And there ain't no "impressive cortege."
It may be a chap from the for'ard crowd,
Or a member of the British Peerage,
But they sew his nibs in a canvas shroud
Just the same as the bloke from the steerage—
As that poor bloke from the steerage.
There ain't no need for a gravedigger there,
For you dig your own grave! Lord love yer!
And there ain't no use for a headstone fair
When the waters close above yer!
The little headstone where they come to weep,
May be right for the land's dry-rotters,
But you rest just as sound when you're anchored deep
With the pigiron at your trotters—
(Our fathers had iron at their trotters).
The sea is democratic the wide world round,
And it don't give a hang for no man,
There ain't no Church of England burial ground,
Nor yet there ain't no Roman.
Orthodox and het'rodox by wreck-strewn cliffs,
At peace in the stormiest weather,
Might bob up and down like two brother "stiffs,"
And rest in one shark together—
And mix up their bones together.

The bare-headed skipper is as good any day
As an authorised shifter of sin is,
And the tear of shipmate is better anyway

Than the tear of the next-of-kin is.
It saves your friends, and it fills your needs,
It is best when all is reckoned,
And she can't come there in her widder weeds,
With her eyes on a likely second—
And a spot for the likely second.

Henry Lawson

The Bulletin Hotel

I was drifting in the drizzle past the Cecil in the Strand—
Which, I'm told, is very tony—and its front looks very grand;
And I somehow fell a-thinking of a pub I know so well,
Of a palace in Australia called The Bulletin Hotel.
Just a little six-room'd shanty built of corrugated tin,
And all round a blazing desert—land of camels, thirst and sin;
And the landlord is 'the Spider'— Western diggers know him well—
Charlie Webb!—Ah, there you have it!—of the Bulletin Hotel.

'Tis a big soft-hearted spider in a land where life is grim,
And a web of great good-nature that brings worn-out flies to him:
'Tis the club of many lost souls in the wide Westralian hell,
And the stage of many Mitchells is the Bulletin Hotel.

But the swagman, on his uppers, pulls an undertaker's mug,
And he leans across the counter and he breathes in Charlie's lug—
Tale of thirst and of misfortune. Charlie knows it, and—ah, well!
But it's very bad for business at the Bulletin Hotel.

'What's a drink or two?' says Charlie, 'and you can't refuse a feed;'
But there's many a drink unpaid for, many sticks of 'borrowed' weed;
And the poor old spineless bummer and the broken-hearted swell
Know that they are sure of tucker at the Bulletin Hotel.

There's the liquor and the license and the 'carriage' and the rent,
And the sea or grave 'twixt Charlie and the fivers he has lent;
And I'm forced to think in sorrow, for I know the country well,
That the end will be the bailiff in the Bulletin Hotel.

But he'll pack up in a hurry and he'll seek a cooler clime,
If I make a rise in England and I get out there in time.
For a mate o' mine is Charlie and I stayed there for a spell,
And I owe more than a jingle to the Bulletin Hotel.

But there's lots of graft between us, there are many miles of sea,
So, if you should drop on Charlie, just shake hands with him for me;
Say I think the Bush less lonely than the great town where I dwell,
And—a grander than the Cecil is the Bulletin Hotel.

Henry Lawson

The Bursting Of The Boom

The shipping-office clerks are 'short,' the manager is gruff—
'They cannot make reductions,' and 'the fares are low enough.'
They ship us West with cattle, and we go like cattle too;
And fight like dogs three times a day for what we get to chew. . . .
We'll have the pick of empty bunks and lots of stretching room,
And go for next to nothing at the Bursting of the Boom.
So wait till the Boom bursts!—we'll all get a show:
Then when the Boom bursts is our time to go.
We'll meet 'em coming back in shoals, with looks of deepest gloom,
But we're the sort that battle through at the Bursting of the Boom.

The captain's easy-going when Fremantle comes in sight;
He can't say when you'll get ashore—perhaps tomorrow night;
Your coins are few, the charges high; you must not linger here—
You'll get your boxes from the hold when she's 'longside the pier.'
The launch will foul the gangway, and the trembling bulwarks loom
Above a fleet of harbour craft—at the Bursting of the Boom.

So wait till the Boom bursts!—we'll all get a show;
He'll 'take you for a bob, sir,' and where you want to go.
He'll 'take the big portmanteau, sir, if he might so presume'—
You needn't hump your luggage at the Bursting of the Boom.

It's loafers—Customs-loafers—and you pay and pay again;
They hinder you and cheat you from the gangway to the train;
The pubs and restaurants are full—they haven't room for more;
They charge us each three shillings for a shakedown on the floor;
But, 'Show this gentleman upstairs—the first front parlour room.
'We'll see about your luggage, sir'—at the Bursting of the Boom.

So wait till the Boom bursts!—we'll all get a show;
And wait till the Boom bursts, and swear mighty low.
'We mostly charge a pound a week. How do you like the room?'
And 'Show this gentleman the bath'—at the Bursting of the Boom.

I go down to the timber-yard (I cannot face the rent)
To get some strips of oregon to frame my hessian tent;
To buy some scraps of lumber for a table or a shelf:
The boss comes up and says I might just look round for myself ;

The foreman grunts and turns away as silent as the tomb—
The boss himself will wait on me at the Bursting of the Boom.

So wait till the Boom bursts!—we'll all get a load.
'You had better take those scraps, sir, they're only in the road.'
'Now, where the hell's the carter?' you'll hear the foreman fume;
And, 'Take that timber round at once!' at the Bursting of the Boom.

Each one-a-penny grocer, in his box of board and tin,
Will think it condescending to consent to take you in;
And not content with twice as much as what is just and right,
They charge and cheat you doubly, for the Boom is at its height.
It's 'Take it now or leave it now;' 'your money or your room;'
But 'Who's attending Mr. Brown?' at the Bursting of the Boom.

So wait till the Boom bursts!—and take what you can get,
'There's not the slightest hurry, and your bill ain't ready yet.'
They'll call and get your orders until the crack o' doom,
And send them round directly, at the Bursting of the Boom.

No Country and no Brotherhood—such things are dead and cold;
A camp from all the lands or none, all mad for love of gold ;
Where T'othersider number one makes slave of number two,
And the vilest women of the world the vilest ways pursue;
And men go out and slave and bake and die in agony
In western hells that God forgot, where never man should be.
I feel a prophet in my heart that speaks the one word 'Doom!'
And aye you'll hear the Devil laugh at the Bursting of the Boom.

Henry Lawson

The Bush Beyond The Range

FROM Crow's Nest here by Sydney town
Where crows had nests of old
I see the Range where day goes down—
The dim blue in the gold.
And sometimes wonder, half in doubt,
Has there been so much change
As pictured in the prints about
The Bush beyond the Range.

There's motor car and all the "frills"
But none of my old mates—
The Bush seems run by Buff'lo Bills
And Hayseeds from the States.
I miss the homesteads and the scrub,
The stock and fences too,
The horse and swagmen and the pub.
That Minns and Mahoney drew.

I miss the drivers, diggers, sheep,
And—lots of things—Ah, well!
I wonder if the Kellys keep
The Carrier's Camp Hotel—
If that still stands by hill and plain
As old man Kelly's pride—
Or if he did pull round again
When Mary Kelly died?

And Andy Kelly took to drink,
And Barney took a horse
(And two years' hard without a blink)
And each one took his course.
And what became of Andy Mack,
Tom Browne, and Pat "O'Brine"?
It must be twenty seasons back
Since last I had a line.

I wonder if—but I forget
And wonder like a fool,
Is Bertha Lambert teaching yet

A wretched, half-time school?
I hope—ah! how the memories come,
To bother and defer,
I only hope my boyhood's chum,
Fred Spencer, married her.

I wonder if the farms we had
Are scrub or ploughed ground now?
A fence by Harry Dare or "Dad"
Would last it, anyhow.
I wonder if the cemet'ry,
Fenced in by Dad and Dare,
Is lonely as it used to be
When they were buried there.

I wonder, and the more it seems
So far away and strange,
For I have lost, except in dreams,
The Bush beyond the Range.
I wonder too, in fear and shame,
Do they, like me, forget—
I wonder if they mind the name
Of "Henry Lawson" yet.

Henry Lawson

The Bush Fire

Ah, better the thud of the deadly gun, and the crash of the bursting shell,
Than the terrible silence where drought is fought out there in the western hell;
And better the rattle of rifles near, or the thunder on deck at sea,
Than the sound—most hellish of all to hear—of a fire where it should not be.

On the runs to the west of the Dingo Scrubs there was drought, and ruin, and death,
And the sandstorm came from the dread north-east with the blast of a furnace-breath;
Till at last one day, at the fierce sunrise, a boundary-rider woke,
And saw, in the place of the distant haze, a curtain of light blue smoke.

There is saddling-up by the cockey's hut, and out in the station yard,
And away to the north, north-east, north-west, the bushmen are riding hard.
The pickets are out and many a scout, and many a mulga wire,
While Bill and Jim, with their faces grim, are riding to meet the fire.

It roars for days in the hopeless scrubs, and across, where the ground seems bare,
With a cackle and hiss, like the hissing of snakes, the fire is travelling there;
Till at last, exhausted by sleeplessness, and the terrible toil and heat,
The squatter is crying, 'My God! the wool!' and the farmer, 'My God! the wheat!'

But there comes a drunkard (who reels as he rides), with the news from the roadside pub:—
'Pat Murphy—the cockey—cut off by the fire!—way back in the Dingo Scrub!
'Let the wheat and the woolshed go to—' Well, they do as each great heart bids;
They are riding a race for the Dingo Scrub—for Pat and his wife and kids.

And who is leading the race with death? An ill-matched three, you'll allow;
Flash Jim the breaker and Boozing Bill (who is riding steadily now),
And Constable Dunn, of the Mounted Police, is riding between the two
(He wants Flash Jim, but the job can wait till they get the Murphys through).

As they strike the track through the blazing scrub, the trooper is heard to shout:
'We'll take them on to the Two-mile Tank, if we cannot bring them out!'
A half-mile more, and the rest rein back, retreating, half-choked, halfblind;
And the three are gone from the sight of men, and the bush fire roars behind.

The Bushman wiped the tears of smoke, and like Bushmen wept and swore;
'Poor Bill will be wanting his drink to-night as never he did before.
'And Dunn was the best in the whole damned force!' says a client of Dunn's, with
pride;
I reckon he'll serve his summons on Jim—when they get to the other side.

It is daylight again, and the fire is past, and the black scrub silent and grim,
Except for the blaze of an old dead tree, or the crash of a falling limb;
And the Bushmen are riding again on the run, with hearts and with eyes that fill,
To look for the bodies of Constable Dunn, Flash Jim, and Boozing Bill.

They are found in the mud of the Two-mile Tank, where a fiend might scarce
survive,
But the Bushmen gather from words they hear that the bodies are much alive.
There is Swearing Pat, with his grey beard singed, and his language of lurid hue,
And his tough old wife, and his half-baked kids, and the three who dragged them
through.

Old Pat is deploring his burnt-out home, and his wife the climate warm;
And Jim the loss of his favourite horse, and Dunn his uniform;
And Boozing Bill, with a raging thirst, is cursing the Dingo Scrub—
He'll only ask for the loan of a flask and a lift to the nearest pub.

Flash Jim the Breaker is lying low—blue-paper is after him,
And Dunn, the trooper, is riding his rounds with a blind eye out for Jim,
And Boozing Bill is fighting . in the township of Sudden Jerk—
When they're wanted again in the Dingo Scrubs, they'll be there to do the work.

Henry Lawson

The Bush Girl

So you rode from the range where your brothers "select,"

Through the ghostly grey bush in the dawn---

You rode slowly at first, lest her heart should suspect

That you were glad to be gone;

You had scarcely the courage to glance back at her

By the homestead receding from view,

And you breathed with relief as you rounded the spur,

For the world was a wide world to you.

Grey eyes that grow sadder than sunset or rain,

Fond heart that is ever more true

Firm faith that grows firmer for watching in vain---

She'll wait by the sliprails for you.

Ah! The world is a new and a wide one to you,

But the world to your sweetheart is shut,

For a change never comes to the lonely Bush girl

From the stockyard, the bush, and the hut;

And the only relief from the dullness she feels

Is when ridges grow softened and dim,

And away in the dusk to the sliprails she steals

To dream of past meetings "with him."

Do you think, where, in place of bare fences, dry creeks,

Clear streams and green hedges are seen---

Where the girls have the lily and rose in their cheeks,

And the grass in midsummer is green---

Do you think now and then, now or then, in the whirl

Of the city, while London is new,

Of the hut in the Bush, and the freckled-faced girl

Who is eating her heart out for you?

Grey eyes that are sadder than sunset or rain,

Bruised heart that is ever more true,

Fond faith that is firmer for trusting in vain---

She waits by the sliprails for you

Henry Lawson

The Cab Lamps

The crescent moon and clock tower are fair above the wall
Across the smothered lanes of 'Loo, the stifled vice and all,
And in the shadow yonder—like cats that wait for scraps—
The crowding cabs seem waiting—for you and me, perhaps.

The cab lamps are watching as they watched for you and me,
The cab lamps are a-watching and they watch unblinkingly.
The sea breeze in Macleay Street and star-angels over all,
But the slinking cabs of darkness keep their watch beside the wall.

Oh! the years we slipped like months—and the months like a day—
When our cabs slid from the stand—touched the kerb and sped away—
Oh! the cloak on girlish shoulders—Oh! the theatres and light!
And the private rooms and supper that were all in a night!

Oh! the rickshaw in Colombo! And the flat that no one knew,
Where the cab lamps watched Haymarket—London cabs for me and you.
Oh! the gay run "Home" by Paris when the world was ours to play
And the wild run back by Frisco that seems all in a day.

Oh! the cab lamps and rose curtains, when the lie called love seemed true,
While an honest wife and husband suffered by the lanes of 'Loo.
Oh! the health and strength and beauty and the money with its power—
And those two good lives we ruined that was all in an hour.

But the night policeman's coming with a sharp suspicious eye,
And he'd shift us "quick and lively" to the sweet by and by.
So we'll seek our frowsy bedroom, if the old hag lets us through—
Where our folks died broken-hearted in the cruel lanes of 'Loo.

The cab lamps are watching as they watched across the sea,
The cab lamps are watching, and they watch for you and me.
For you and me they waited, when the thing called love seemed true,
But the bull's-eye of our midnight must not flash on me—and you.

Henry Lawson

The Cambaroora Star

So you're writing for a paper? Well, it's nothing very new
To be writing yards of drivel for a tidy little screw;
You are young and educated, and a clever chap you are,
But you'll never run a paper like the CAMBAROORA STAR.
Though in point of education I am nothing but a dunce,
I myself -- you mayn't believe it -- helped to run a paper once
With a chap on Cambaroora, by the name of Charlie Brown,
And I'll tell you all about it if you'll take the story down.

On a golden day in summer, when the sunrays were aslant,
Brown arrived in Cambaroora with a little printing plant
And his worldly goods and chattels -- rather damaged on the way --
And a weary-looking woman who was following the dray.
He had bought an empty humpy, and, instead of getting tight,
Why, the diggers heard him working like a lunatic all night:
And next day a sign of canvas, writ in characters of tar,
Claimed the humpy as the office of the CAMBAROORA STAR.

Well, I cannot read, that's honest, but I had a digger friend
Who would read the paper to me from the title to the end;
And the STAR contained a leader running thieves and spielers down,
With a slap against claim-jumping, and a poem made by Brown.
Once I showed it to a critic, and he said 'twas very fine,
Though he wasn't long in finding glaring faults in every line;
But it was a song of Freedom -- all the clever critic said
Couldn't stop that song from ringing, ringing, ringing in my head.

So I went where Brown was working in his little hut hard by:
'My old mate has been a-reading of your writings, Brown,' said I --
'I have studied on your leader, I agree with what you say,
You have struck the bed-rock certain, and there ain't no get-away;
Your paper's just the thumper for a young and growing land,
And your principles is honest, Brown; I want to shake your hand,
And if there's any lumping in connection with the STAR,
Well, I'll find the time to do it, and I'll help you -- there you are!'

Brown was every inch a digger (bronzed and bearded in the South),
But there seemed a kind of weakness round the corners of his mouth

When he took the hand I gave him; and he gripped it like a vice,
While he tried his best to thank me, and he stuttered once or twice.
But there wasn't need for talking -- we'd the same old loves and hates,
And we understood each other -- Charlie Brown and I were mates.
So we worked a little `paddock' on a place they called the `Bar',
And we sank a shaft together, and at night we worked the STAR.

Charlie thought and did his writing when his work was done at night,
And the missus used to `set' it near as quick as he could write.
Well, I didn't shirk my promise, and I helped the thing, I guess,
For at night I worked the lever of the crazy printing-press;
Brown himself would do the feeding, and the missus used to `fly' --
She is flying with the angels, if there's justice up on high,
For she died on Cambaroora when the STAR began to go,
And was buried like the diggers buried diggers long ago.

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Lord, that press! It was a jumper -- we could seldom get it right,
And were lucky if we averaged a hundred in the night.
Many nights we'd sit together in the windy hut and fold,
And I helped the thing a little when I struck a patch of gold;
And we battled for the diggers as the papers seldom do,
Though when the diggers erred, why, we touched the diggers too.
Yet the paper took the fancy of that roaring mining town,
And the diggers sent a nugget with their sympathy to Brown.

Oft I sat and smoked beside him in the listening hours of night,
When the shadows from the corners seemed to gather round the light --
When his weary, aching fingers, closing stiffly round the pen,
Wrote defiant truth in language that could touch the hearts of men --
Wrote until his eyelids shuddered -- wrote until the East was grey:
Wrote the stern and awful lessons that were taught him in his day;
And they knew that he was honest, and they read his smallest par,
For I think the diggers' Bible was the CAMBAROORA STAR.

Diggers then had little mercy for the loafer and the scamp --
If there wasn't law and order, there was justice in the camp;
And the manly independence that is found where diggers are
Had a sentinel to guard it in the CAMBAROORA STAR.
There was strife about the Chinamen, who came in days of old
Like a swarm of thieves and loafers when the diggers found the gold --

Like the sneaking fortune-hunters who are always found behind,
And who only shepherd diggers till they track them to the `find'.

Charlie wrote a slinging leader, calling on his digger mates,
And he said: `We think that Chinkies are as bad as syndicates.
What's the good of holding meetings where you only talk and swear?
Get a move upon the Chinkies when you've got an hour to spare.'
It was nine o'clock next morning when the Chows began to swarm,
But they weren't so long in going, for the diggers' blood was warm.
Then the diggers held a meeting, and they shouted: `Hip hoorar!
Give three ringing cheers, my hearties, for the CAMBAROORA STAR.'

But the Cambaroora petered, and the diggers' sun went down,
And another sort of people came and settled in the town;
The reefing was conducted by a syndicate or two,
And they changed the name to `Queensville', for their blood was very blue.
They wanted Brown to help them put the feathers in their nests,
But his leaders went like thunder for their vested interests,
And he fought for right and justice and he raved about the dawn
Of the reign of Man and Reason till his ads. were all withdrawn.

He was offered shares for nothing in the richest of the mines,
And he could have made a fortune had he run on other lines;
They abused him for his leaders, and they parodied his rhymes,
And they told him that his paper was a mile behind the times.
`Let the times alone,' said Charlie, `they're all right, you needn't fret;
For I started long before them, and they haven't caught me yet.
But,' says he to me, `they're coming, and they're not so very far --
Though I left the times behind me they are following the STAR.

`Let them do their worst,' said Charlie, `but I'll never drop the reins
While a single scrap of paper or an ounce of ink remains:
I've another truth to tell them, though they tread me in the dirt,
And I'll print another issue if I print it on my shirt.'
So we fought the battle bravely, and we did our very best
Just to make the final issue quite as lively as the rest.
And the swells in Cambaroora talked of feathers and of tar
When they read the final issue of the CAMBAROORA STAR.

Gold is stronger than the tongue is -- gold is stronger than the pen:
They'd have squirmed in Cambaroora had I found a nugget then;
But in vain we scraped together every penny we could get,

For they fixed us with their boycott, and the plant was seized for debt.
'Twas a storekeeper who did it, and he sealed the paper's doom,
Though we gave him ads. for nothing when the STAR began to boom:
'Twas a paltry bill for tucker, and the crawling, sneaking clown
Sold the debt for twice its value to the men who hated Brown.

I was digging up the river, and I swam the flooded bend
With a little cash and comfort for my literary friend.
Brown was sitting sad and lonely with his head bowed in despair,
While a single tallow candle threw a flicker on his hair,
And the gusty wind that whistled through the crannies of the door
Stirred the scattered files of paper that were lying on the floor.
Charlie took my hand in silence -- and by-and-by he said:
'Tom, old mate, we did our damndest, but the brave old STAR is dead.'

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Then he stood up on a sudden, with a face as pale as death,
And he gripped my hand a moment, while he seemed to fight for breath:
'Tom, old friend,' he said, 'I'm going, and I'm ready to -- to start,
For I know that there is something -- something crooked with my heart.
Tom, my first child died. I loved her even better than the pen --
Tom -- and while the STAR was dying, why, I felt like I did THEN.

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Listen! Like the distant thunder of the rollers on the bar --
Listen, Tom! I hear the -- diggers -- shouting: 'Bully for the STAR!'

Henry Lawson

The Captain Of The Push

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

There was nought to rouse their anger; yet the oath that each one swore
Seemed less fit for publication than the one that went before.
For they spoke the gutter language with the easy flow that comes
Only to the men whose childhood knew the brothels and the slums.
Then they spat in turns, and halted; and the one that came behind,
Spitting fiercely on the pavement, called on Heaven to strike him blind.

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

That which tailors know as `trousers' -- known by him as `bloomin' bags' --
Hanging loosely from his person, swept, with tattered ends, the flags;
And he had a pointed sternpost to the boots that peeped below
(Which he laced up from the centre of the nail of his great toe),
And he wore his shirt uncollar'd, and the tie correctly wrong;
But I think his vest was shorter than should be in one so long.

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

Said the stranger: `I am nothing but a bushy and a dunce;
`But I read about the Bleeders in the WEEKLY GASBAG once;
`Sitting lonely in the humpy when the wind began to "whoosh,"
`How I longed to share the dangers and the pleasures of the push!

` Gosh! I hate the swells and good 'uns -- I could burn 'em in their beds;
` I am with you, if you'll have me, and I'll break their blazing heads.'

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

` Now, look here,' exclaimed the captain to the stranger from the bush,
` Now, look here -- suppose the Bleeders let you come and join the push,
` Would you smash a bleedin' bobby if you got the blank alone?
` Would you break a swell or Chinkie -- split his garret with a stone?
` Would you have a "moll" to keep yer -- like to swear off work for good?
` Yes, my oath!' replied the stranger. ` My kerlonial oath! I would!'

` Now, look here,' exclaimed the captain to the stranger from the bush,
` Now, look here -- before the Bleeders let yer come and join the push,
` You must prove that you're a blazer -- you must prove that you have grit
` Worthy of a Gory Bleeder -- you must show your form a bit --
` Take a rock and smash that winder!' and the stranger, nothing loth,
Took the rock -- and smash! They only muttered, ` My kerlonial oath!'

So they swore him in, and found him sure of aim and light of heel,
And his only fault, if any, lay in his excessive zeal;
He was good at throwing metal, but we chronicle with pain
That he jumped upon a victim, damaging the watch and chain,
Ere the Bleeders had secured them; yet the captain of the push
Swore a dozen oaths in favour of the stranger from the bush.

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

In the night the captain's signal woke the echoes of the `Rocks,'
Brought the Gory Bleeders sloping thro' the shadows of the blocks;
And they swore the stranger's action was a blood-escaping shame,
While they waited for the nameless, but the nameless never came.

And the Bleeders soon forgot him; but the captain of the push
Still is `laying' round, in ballast, for the nameless `from the bush.'

Henry Lawson

The Captains

The Captains sailed from all the World—from all the world and Spain;
And each one for his country's ease, her glory and her gain;
The Captains sailed to Southern Seas, and sailed the Spanish Main;
And some sailed out beyond the World, and some sailed home again.
And each one for his daily bread, and bitter bread it was,
Because of things they'd left at home—or for some other cause.
Their wives and daughters made the lace to deck the Lady's gown,
Where sailors' wives sew dungarees by many a seaport town.

The Captains sailed in rotten ships, with often rotten crews,
Because their lands were ignorant and meaner than the ooze;
With money furnished them by Greed, or by ambition mean,
When they had crawled to some pig-faced, pig-hearted king or queen.

And when a storm was on the coast, and spray leaped o'er the quays,
Then little Joan or Dorothy, or Inez or Louise,
Would kneel her down on such a night beside her mother's knees,
And fold her little hands and pray for those beyond the seas.
With the touching faith of little girls—the faith by love embalmed—
They'd pray for men beyond the seas who might have been becalmed.

For some will pray at CHRIST His feet, and some at MARY'S shrine;
And some to Heathen goddesses, as I have prayed to mine;
To Mecca or to Bethlehem, to Fire, or Joss, or Sol,
And one will pray to sticks or stones, and one to her rag doll.
But we are stubborn men and vain, and though we rise or fall,
Our children's prayers or women's prayers, GOD knows we need them all!
And no one fights the bitter gale, or strives in combat grim,
But, somewhere in the world, a child is praying hard for him.

The Captains sailed to India, to China and Japan.
They met the Strangers' Welcome and the Friendliness of Man;
The Captains sailed to Southern Seas, and "wondrous sights" they saw—
The Rights of Man in savage lands, and law without a law.
They learnt the truth from savages, and wisdom from the wild,
And learned to walk in unknown ways, and trust them like a child.
(The sailors told of monstrous things that be where sailors roam . . .
But none had seen more monstrous things than they had seen at home.)

They found new worlds for crowded folk in cities old and worn,
And huts of hunger, fog and smoke in lands by Faction torn.
(They found the great and empty lands where Nations might be born.)
They found new foods, they found new wealth, and newer ways to live,
Where sons might grow in strength and health, with all that God would give.
They tracked their ways through unknown seas where Danger still remains,
And sailed back poor and broken men, and some sailed back in chains.
But, bound or free, or ill or well, where'er their sails were furled,
They brought to weary, worn-out lands glad tidings from the World.

The Seasons saw our fathers come, their flocks and herds increase;
They saw the old lands waste in War, the new lands waste in Peace;
The Seasons saw new gardens made, they saw the old lands bleed,
And into new lands introduced the curse of Class and Creed.
They saw the birth of Politics, and all was ripe for Greed.
And Mammon came and built his towers, and Mammon held the fort:
Till one new land went dollar-mad, and one went mad for Sport.

Where men for love of Science sailed in rotten tubs for years,
To hang or starve, while nought availed a wife or daughter's tears—
Where men made life-long sacrifice for some blind Northern Power,
Now Science sinks a thousand souls, and sinks them in an hour.
You would be rich and great too soon—have all that mortal craves;
The day may come ere you have lived when you'll be poor and slaves.
You heeded not the warning voice, for Self and Sport prevailed;
You yet might wish, in dust and dread, those Captains had not sailed.

Henry Lawson

The Cattle-Dog's Death

The Plains lay bare on the homeward route,
And the march was heavy on man and brute;
For the Spirit of Drought was on all the land,
And the white heat danced on the glowing sand.

The best of our cattle-dogs lagged at last,
His strength gave out ere the plains were passed,
And our hearts grew sad when he crept and laid
His languid limbs in the nearest shade.

He saved our lives in the years gone by,
When no one dreamed of the danger nigh,
And the treacherous blacks in the darkness crept
On the silent camp where the drovers slept.

'The dog is dying,' a stockman said,
As he knelt and lifted the shaggy head;
'Tis a long day's march ere the run be near,
'And he's dying fast; shall we leave him here?'

But the super cried, 'There's an answer there!'
As he raised a tuft of the dog's grey hair;
And, strangely vivid, each man descried
The old spear-mark on the shaggy hide.

We laid a 'bluey' and coat across
The camping pack of the lightest horse,
And raised the dog to his deathbed high,
And brought him far 'neath the burning sky.

At the kindly touch of the stockmen rude
His eyes grew human with gratitude;
And though we parched in the heat that fags,
We gave him the last of the water-bags.

The super's daughter we knew would chide
If we left the dog in the desert wide;
So we brought him far o'er the burning sand
For a parting stroke of her small white hand.

But long ere the station was seen ahead,
His pain was o'er, for the dog was dead
And the folks all knew by our looks of gloom
'Twas a comrade's corpse that we carried home.

Henry Lawson

The Christ Of The 'Never'

With eyes that are narrowed to pierce
To the awful horizons of land,
Through the blaze of hot days, and the fierce
White heat-waves that flow on the sand;
Through the Never Land westward and nor'ward,
Bronzed, bearded, and gaunt on the track,
Low-voiced and hard-knuckled, rides forward
The Christ of the Outer Out-back.

For the cause that will ne'er be relinquished
Despite all the cynics on earth---
In the ranks of the bush undistinguished
By manner or dress---if by birth;
God's preacher, of churches unheeded---
God's vineyard, though barren the sod---
Plain spokesman where spokesman is needed,
Rough link 'twixt the bushman and God.

He works where the hearts of a nation
Are withered in flame from the sky,
Where the sinners work out their salvation
In a hell-upon-earth ere they die.
In the camp or the lonely hut lying
In a waste that seems out of God's sight,
He's the doctor---the mate of thee dying
Through the smothering heat of the night.

By his work in the hells of the shearers,
Where the drinking is ghastly and grim,
Where the roughest and worst of his hearers
Have listened bareheaded to him;
By his paths through the parched desolation,
Hot rides, and the long, terrible tramps;
By the hunger, the thirst, the privation
Of his work in the farthest camps;

By his worth in the light that shall search men
And prove---ay! and justify---each,
I place him in front of all churchmen

Who feel not, who know not---but preach!

Henry Lawson

The City Bushman

It was pleasant up the country, City Bushman, where you went,
For you sought the greener patches and you travelled like a gent;
And you curse the trams and buses and the turmoil and the push,
Though you know the squalid city needn't keep you from the bush;
But we lately heard you singing of the `plains where shade is not',
And you mentioned it was dusty -- `all was dry and all was hot'.

True, the bush `hath moods and changes' -- and the bushman hath 'em, too,
For he's not a poet's dummy -- he's a man, the same as you;
But his back is growing rounder -- slaving for the absentee --
And his toiling wife is thinner than a country wife should be.
For we noticed that the faces of the folks we chanced to meet
Should have made a greater contrast to the faces in the street;
And, in short, we think the bushman's being driven to the wall,
And it's doubtful if his spirit will be `loyal thro' it all'.

Though the bush has been romantic and it's nice to sing about,
There's a lot of patriotism that the land could do without --
Sort of BRITISH WORKMAN nonsense that shall perish in the scorn
Of the drover who is driven and the shearer who is shorn,
Of the struggling western farmers who have little time for rest,
And are ruined on selections in the sheep-infested West;
Droving songs are very pretty, but they merit little thanks
From the people of a country in possession of the Banks.

And the `rise and fall of seasons' suits the rise and fall of rhyme,
But we know that western seasons do not run on schedule time;
For the drought will go on drying while there's anything to dry,
Then it rains until you'd fancy it would bleach the sunny sky --
Then it pelts out of reason, for the downpour day and night
Nearly sweeps the population to the Great Australian Bight.
It is up in Northern Queensland that the seasons do their best,
But it's doubtful if you ever saw a season in the West;
There are years without an autumn or a winter or a spring,
There are broiling Junes, and summers when it rains like anything.

In the bush my ears were opened to the singing of the bird,
But the `carol of the magpie' was a thing I never heard.

Once the beggar roused my slumbers in a shanty, it is true,
But I only heard him asking, `Who the blanky blank are you?'
And the bell-bird in the ranges -- but his `silver chime' is harsh
When it's heard beside the solo of the curlew in the marsh.

Yes, I heard the shearers singing `William Riley', out of tune,
Saw 'em fighting round a shanty on a Sunday afternoon,
But the bushman isn't always `trapping brumbies in the night',
Nor is he for ever riding when `the morn is fresh and bright',
And he isn't always singing in the humpies on the run --
And the camp-fire's `cheery blazes' are a trifle overdone;
We have grumbled with the bushmen round the fire on rainy days,
When the smoke would blind a bullock and there wasn't any blaze,
Save the blazes of our language, for we cursed the fire in turn
Till the atmosphere was heated and the wood began to burn.
Then we had to wring our blueys which were rotting in the swags,
And we saw the sugar leaking through the bottoms of the bags,
And we couldn't raise a chorus, for the toothache and the cramp,
While we spent the hours of darkness draining puddles round the camp.

Would you like to change with Clancy -- go a-droving? tell us true,
For we rather think that Clancy would be glad to change with you,
And be something in the city; but 'twould give your muse a shock
To be losing time and money through the foot-rot in the flock,
And you wouldn't mind the beauties underneath the starry dome
If you had a wife and children and a lot of bills at home.

Did you ever guard the cattle when the night was inky-black,
And it rained, and icy water trickled gently down your back
Till your saddle-weary backbone fell a-aching to the roots
And you almost felt the croaking of the bull-frog in your boots --
Sit and shiver in the saddle, curse the restless stock and cough
Till a squatter's irate dummy cantered up to warn you off?
Did you fight the drought and pleuro when the `seasons' were asleep,
Felling sheoaks all the morning for a flock of starving sheep,
Drinking mud instead of water -- climbing trees and lopping boughs
For the broken-hearted bullocks and the dry and dusty cows?

Do you think the bush was better in the `good old droving days',
When the squatter ruled supremely as the king of western ways,
When you got a slip of paper for the little you could earn,
But were forced to take provisions from the station in return --

When you couldn't keep a chicken at your humpy on the run,
For the squatter wouldn't let you -- and your work was never done;
When you had to leave the missus in a lonely hut forlorn
While you `rose up Willy Riley' -- in the days ere you were born?

Ah! we read about the drovers and the shearers and the like
Till we wonder why such happy and romantic fellows strike.
Don't you fancy that the poets ought to give the bush a rest
Ere they raise a just rebellion in the over-written West?
Where the simple-minded bushman gets a meal and bed and rum
Just by riding round reporting phantom flocks that never come;
Where the scalper -- never troubled by the `war-whoop of the push' --
Has a quiet little billet -- breeding rabbits in the bush;
Where the idle shanty-keeper never fails to make a draw,
And the dummy gets his tucker through provisions in the law;
Where the labour-agitator -- when the shearers rise in might --
Makes his money sacrificing all his substance for The Right;
Where the squatter makes his fortune, and `the seasons rise and fall',
And the poor and honest bushman has to suffer for it all;
Where the drovers and the shearers and the bushmen and the rest
Never reach the Eldorado of the poets of the West.

And you think the bush is purer and that life is better there,
But it doesn't seem to pay you like the `squalid street and square'.
Pray inform us, City Bushman, where you read, in prose or verse,
Of the awful `city urchin who would greet you with a curse'.
There are golden hearts in gutters, though their owners lack the fat,
And we'll back a teamster's offspring to outswear a city brat.
Do you think we're never jolly where the trams and buses rage?
Did you hear the gods in chorus when `Ri-tooral' held the stage?
Did you catch a ring of sorrow in the city urchin's voice
When he yelled for Billy Elton, when he thumped the floor for Royce?
Do the bushmen, down on pleasure, miss the everlasting stars
When they drink and flirt and so on in the glow of private bars?

You've a down on `trams and buses', or the `roar' of 'em, you said,
And the `filthy, dirty attic', where you never toiled for bread.
(And about that self-same attic -- Lord! wherever have you been?
For the struggling needlewoman mostly keeps her attic clean.)
But you'll find it very jolly with the cuff-and-collar push,
And the city seems to suit you, while you rave about the bush.

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You'll admit that Up-the Country, more especially in drought,
Isn't quite the Eldorado that the poets rave about,
Yet at times we long to gallop where the reckless bushman rides
In the wake of startled brumbies that are flying for their hides;
Long to feel the saddle tremble once again between our knees
And to hear the stockwhips rattle just like rifles in the trees!
Long to feel the bridle-leather tugging strongly in the hand
And to feel once more a little like a native of the land.
And the ring of bitter feeling in the jingling of our rhymes
Isn't suited to the country nor the spirit of the times.
Let us go together droving, and returning, if we live,
Try to understand each other while we reckon up the div.

Henry Lawson

The Cliffs

They sing of the grandeur of cliffs inland,
But the cliffs of the ocean are truly grand;
And I long to wander and dream and doubt
Where the cliffs by the ocean run out and out.

To the northward far as the eye can reach
Are sandhill, boulder, and sandy beach;
But southward rises the track for me,
Where the cliffs by the ocean run out to sea.

Friends may be gone in the morning fair,
But the cliffs by the ocean are always there;
Lovers may leave when the wind is chill,
But the cliffs by the ocean are steadfast still.

They watch the sea and they ward the land,
And they warn the ships from the treacherous sand;
And I sadly think in the twilight hour
What I might have been had I known my power.

Where the smoke-cloud blurs and the white sails fill,
They point the ships to keep seaward still;
And I think—Ah, me!—and I think—Ah, me!
Of the wreck I'd saved had I kept to sea.

Oh! the cliffs are old and the cliffs are sad,
And they know me sane, while men deem me mad.
Oh! the cliffs are firm and the cliffs are strong,
And they know me right, while men deem me wrong.

And I sometimes think in the dawning gray,
I am old as they, I am old as they;
And I think, I think that in field and town
My spirit shall live till the cliffs come down.

Henry Lawson

The Cockney Soul

From Woolwich and Brentford and Stamford Hill, from Richmond into the Strand,
Oh, the Cockney soul is a silent soul – as it is in every land!
But out on the sand with a broken band it's sarcasm spurs them through;
And, with never a laugh, in a gale and a half, 'tis the Cockney cheers the crew.

Oh, send them a tune from the music-halls with a chorus to shake the sky!
Oh, give them a deep-sea chanty now – and a star to steer them by!

Now this is a song of the great untrained, a song of the Unprepared,
Who had never the brains to plead unfit, or think of the things they dared;
Of the grocer-souled and the draper-souled, and the clerks of the four o'clock,
Who stood for London and died for home in the nineteen-fourteen shock.

Oh, this is a pork-shop warrior's chant – come back from it, maimed and blind,
To a little old counter in Grey's Inn-road and a tiny parlour behind;
And the bedroom above, where the wife and he go silently mourning yet
For a son-in-law who shall never come back and a dead son's room "To Let".

(But they have a boy "in the fried-fish line" in a shop across the "wye",
Who will take them "aht" and "abaht" to-night and cheer their old eyes dry.)

And this is a song of the draper's clerk (what have you all to say?) –
He'd a tall top-hat and a walking-coat in the city every day –
He wears no flesh on his broken bones that lie in the shell-churned loam;
For he went over the top and struck with his cheating yard-wand – home.

(Oh, touch your hat to the tailor-made before you are aware,
And lilt us a lay of Bank-holiday and the lights of Leicester-square!)

Hats off to the dowager lady at home in her house in Russell-square!
Like the pork-shop back and the Brixton flat, they are silently mourning there;
For one lay out ahead of the rest in the slush 'neath a darkening sky,
With the blood of a hundred earls congealed and his eye-glass to his eye.

(He gave me a cheque in an envelope on a distant gloomy day;
He gave me his hand at the mansion door and he said: "Good-luck! Good-bai!")

Henry Lawson

The Country Girl

The Country Girl reflects at last –
And well in her young days –
For she is learning very fast,
The worth of City ways.
The emptiness of Tailors men
The women's paltry strife
The Sham of 'Smart Society'
Compared with Country Life.

The novelty wore off at length,
And flattered at the Ball,
She things of one who has the strength
And brains above them all.
She things of men who Live and Work
For sweetheart and for wife.
And though it be as far as Bourke'
Are true to Country Life

Henry Lawson

The Cross-Roads

Once more I write a line to you,
While darker shadows fall;
Dear friends of mine who have been true,
And steadfast through it all.
If I have written bitter rhymes,
With many lines that halt,
And if I have been false at times
It was not all my fault.

To Heaven's decree I would not bow,
And I sank very low—
The bitter things are written now,
And we must let them go.
But I feel softened as I write;
The better spirit springs,
And I am very sad to-night
Because of many things.

The friendships that I have abused,
The trust I did betray,
The talents that I have misused,
The gifts I threw away.
The things that did me little good,
And—well my cheeks might burn—
The kindly letters that I should
Have answered by return.

But you might deem them answered now,
And answered from my heart;
And injured friends will understand
'Tis I who feel the smart.
But I have done with barren strife
And dark imaginings,
And in my future work and life
Will seek the better things.

Henry Lawson

The Crucifixion [the Light Of The World]

They sunk a post into the ground
Where their leaders bade them stop;
It was a man's height, and they spiked
A crosspiece to the top.
They bound it well with thongs of hide,
To make it firm and good;
Then roughly, with His back to this,
Their enemy they stood.
They held His hands upon the piece,
And they spiked them to the wood.
They mocked Him then—the while He rocked
In agony His head—
With things that He had never done,
And He had never said—
With that which He had never been—
And in His face they spat.
They placed a plank beside the post,
And they spiked His feet to that.

They pelted Him, but not with stones,
Lest He should die too soon;
They stayed to mock His agony
All through the blazing noon.
They did not pelt with stones, lest they
Might kill Him unaware,
But with foul things that lay about
The filthy hovels there.

And this was how they murdered Him
They killed Him in his youth
Because He had been good to men,
Because He told the truth,
Because they did not understand
The things He felt and knew:
He only said the world-old words,
"They know not what they do."

The flaunting harlots taunted Him;
He only bowed His head,

And prayed for public women then,
While "Save Thyself!" they said.
They went with soldiers to the camp,
And the rest went by-and-bye,
When they were weary of the sport—
And they left Him there to die.

He lingered yet, for He was strong,
But He shut His blighted eyes,
And shuddered oft, for round Him swarmed
The loathsome desert flies.
His throat was parched, His temples throbbed,
And when He drooped, the pain
That shot from all His wounds tenfold
Would draw Him up again.

Two thieves were nailed beside Him there—
They raved, their wounds they tore,
And though they both were stronger men,
They seemed to suffer more;
And while with agony great beads
Of sweat stood on His brow,
He'd comfort them in words like these:
"Twill soon be ended now."

His friends had all deserted Him—
They fled in deadly fear
(As friends desert a friend to-day,
Afraid of jibe and sneer):
The same poor human nature now,
As it has ever been—
Small credit to be crucified
Beside a Nazarene.

But when the people in the town
And the drunken soldiers slept,
From some mean huts that stood hard by
Three wretched women crept;
Like thieves, across the stony ground,
They came with stealthy tread,
And they had water in a gourd—
But they found that He was dead.

They brought some still more wretched men,
And O their hearts were good:
In terror, and with pains, they wrenched
The strong spikes from the wood;
They washed His body hurriedly,
For they had lives to save,
And they bore it off and hid it well,
Where none might find his grave.

His name is known where'er the foot
Of Christian man has trod.
They worship in cathedrals now,
They call Him Son of God.
They ask for aid in His dear name
When they suffer care and pain,
And if He came on earth to-day,
They'd murder Him again.

Henry Lawson

The Day Before I Die

There's such a lot of work to do, for such a troubled head!
I'm scribbling this against a book, with foolscap round, in bed.
It strikes me that I'll scribble much in this way by and by,
And write my last lines so perchance the day before I die.

There's lots of things to come and go, and I, in careless rhyme,
And drink and love (it wastes the most) have wasted lots of time.
There's so much good work to be done it makes me sure that I
Will be the sorriest for my death, the day before I die.

But, lift me dear, for I am tired, and let me taste the wine—
And lay your cheek a little while on this lined cheek of mine.
I want to say I love you so—your patient love is why
I'll have such little time, you know, the day before I die.

Henry Lawson

The Days When We Went Swimming

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

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

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

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

We've had some scares, but we looked blank
When, resting there and chumming,
One glanced by chance upon the bank

And saw the farmer coming!
And home impressions linger yet
Of cups of sorrow brimming;
I hardly think that we'll forget
The last day we went swimming.

Henry Lawson

The Distant Drum

Republicans! the time is coming!
Listen to the distant drumming!
Hearken to the whispers humming
In the troubled atmosphere.

Ye are born to do the toiling;
On and on—and no recoiling!
To the fighting, to the foiling
Of the wrongs that wrong us here.

Let the Loyal laugh and jeer you;
Let them in derision cheer you.
Still the cowards show they fear you
By their deeds and all they say.

Let Britannia rule for ever
O'er the wave; but never, never!
Rule a land great oceans sever
Fifteen thousand miles away.

Stained by persecution's fires
Thinned of homes and thick with spires,
They love the land that bred their sires,
Ye the Land that breeds your sons.

And your sons shall have the reaping,
And your sons shall have the keeping
Of your honour while you're sleeping,
Freedom's vanguard, in your graves.

Henry Lawson

The Dons Of Spain

The Eagle screams at the beck of trade, so Spain, as the world goes round,
Must wrestle the right to live or die from the sons of the land she found;
For, as in the days when the buccaneer was abroad on the Spanish Main,
The national honour is one thing dear to the hearts of the Dons of Spain.

She has slaughtered thousands with fire and sword, as the Christian world might
know;

We murder millions, but, thank the Lord! we only starve 'em slow.

The times have changed since the days of old, but the same old facts remain –
We fight for Freedom, and God, and Gold, and the Spaniards fight for Spain.

We fought with the strength of the moral right, and they, as their ships went
down,

They only fought with the grit to fight and their armour to help 'em drown.

It mattered little what chance or hope, for ever their path was plain,

The Church was the Church, and the Pope the Pope – but the Spaniards fought
for Spain.

If Providence struck for the honest thief at times in the battle's din –

If ever it struck at the hypocrite – well, that's where the Turks came in;

But this remains ere we leave the wise to argue it through in vain –

There's something great in the wrong that dies as the Spaniards die for Spain.

The foes of Spain may be kin to us who are English heart and soul,

And proud of our national righteousness and proud of the lands we stole;

But we yet might pause while those brave men die and the death-drink pledge
again –

For the sake of the past, if you're doomed, say I, may your death be a grand
one, Spain!

Then here's to the bravest of Freedom's foes who ever with death have stood –

For the sake of the courage to die on steel as their fathers died on wood;

And here's a cheer for the flag unfurled in a hopeless cause again,

For the sake of the days when the Christian world was saved by the Dons of
Spain.

Henry Lawson

The Drovers

Shrivelled leather, rusty buckles, and the rot is in our knuckles,
Scorched for months upon the pommel while the brittle rein hung free;
Shrunken eyes that once were lighted with fresh boyhood, dull and blighted—
And the sores upon our eyelids are unpleasant sights to see.
And our hair is thin and dying from the ends, with too long lying
In the night dews on the ashes of the Dry Countree.
Yes, we've seen 'em 'bleaching whitely' where the salt-bush sparkles brightly,
But their grins were over-friendly, so we passed and let them be.
And we've seen them 'rather recent,' and we've stopped to hide 'em decent
When they weren't nice to handle and they weren't too nice to see;
We have heard the dry bones rattle under fifteen hundred cattle—
Seen the rags go up in dust-clouds and the brittle joints kicked free;
But there's little time to tarry, if you wish to live and marry,
When the cattle shy at something in the Dry Countree.

No, you needn't fear the blacks on the Never Never tracks—
For the Myall in his freedom's an uncommon sight to see;
Oh! we do not stick at trifles—and the trackers sneak their rifles,
And go strolling in the gloaming while the sergeant's yarning free:
Round the Myalls creep the trackers—there's a sound like firing crackers
And—the blacks are getting scarcer in the Dry Countree.
(Goes an unprotected maiden-'cross the clearing carrion-laden—
Oh they ride 'em down on horseback in the Dry Countree.)

But you don't know what might happen when a tank is but a trap on
Roofs of hell, and there is nothing but the blaze of hell to see;
And the phantom water's lapping—and no limb for saddle-strapping—
Better carry your revolver through the Dry Countree.
But I'm feeling gay and frisky, come with me and have a whisky!
Change of hells is all we live for (that's my mate that's got D.T.);
We have fought through hell's own weather, he and I and death together—
Oh, the devil grins to greet us from the Dry Countree!

Henry Lawson

The Drover's Sweetheart

An hour before the sun goes down
Behind the ragged boughs,
I go across the little run
And bring the dusty cows;
And once I used to sit and rest
Beneath the fading dome,
For there was one that I loved best
Who'd bring the cattle home.

Our yard is fixed with double bails,
Round one the grass is green,
The bush is growing through the rails,
The spike is rusted in;
And 'twas from there his freckled face
Would turn and smile at me --
He'd milk a dozen in the race
While I was milking three.

I milk eleven cows myself
Where once I milked but four;
I set the dishes on the shelf
And close the dairy door;
And when the glaring sunlight fails
And the fire shines through the cracks,
I climb the broken stockyard rails
And watch the bridle-tracks.

He kissed me twice and once again
And rode across the hill,
The pint-pots and the hobble-chain
I hear them jingling still;
He'll come at night or not at all --
He left in dust and heat,
And when the soft, cool shadows fall
Is the best time to meet.

And he is coming back again,
He wrote to let me know,

The floods were in the Darling then --
It seems so long ago;
He'd come through miles of slush and mud,
And it was weary work,
The creeks were bankers, and the flood
Was forty miles round Bourke.

He said the floods had formed a block,
The plains could not be crossed,
And there was foot-rot in the flock
And hundreds had been lost;
The sheep were falling thick and fast
A hundred miles from town,
And when he reached the line at last
He trucked the remnant down.

And so he'll have to stand the cost;
His luck was always bad,
Instead of making more, he lost
The money that he had;
And how he'll manage, heaven knows
(My eyes are getting dim),
He says -- he says -- he don't -- suppose
I'll want -- to -- marry -- him.

As if I wouldn't take his hand
Without a golden glove --
Oh! Jack, you men won't understand
How much a girl can love.
I long to see his face once more --
Jack's dog! thank God, it's Jack! --
(I never thought I'd faint before)
He's coming -- up -- the track.

Henry Lawson

The Drums Of Ages

Drums of all that's right and wrong—of love and hate and scorn,
And the new-born baby hears them and it wails when it is born.
Drums of all that is to be, and all that has gone by,
And we hear them when we're dreaming, and we hear them while we die.

Drums of martyred innocence and drums of driven guilt
Beating backward from the future when the first rude town was built;
Beating louder through the slave days and the dark and hungry nights,
While the hovels filled the valleys and the castles crowned the heights;
Beating louder while the mansions shifted east from miles of slums—
Don't you hear them? Don't you hear them? Don't you hear the alley drums?

Drums of human sacrifice and drums of war at home—
While the Romans conquered nations they were beating loud in Rome.
Children heard them through the ages, mothers paused and glanced behind,
Madmen saw and heard the drummers, but the rest were deaf and blind.
Peasants starved on fields of plenty, workmen rotted in the slums—
Till the drummers came to Paris and the nations heard the drums.

Drums of hope and bursting hearts—the drums of Westward Ho!—
From the homes of generations and their native land they go.
'Groom and bride and grey-haired mother, bent old men who go alone—
Fleeing bitter persecution for the terrible unknown:
Seeking freedom, rest, or justice—and the peace that never comes—
And the wilderness was conquered when the pilgrims beat their drums.

Drums of Greed that followed fast where men had made the way,
Waking drums of stern rebellion when the exiles turned at bay,
Spreading death and desolation, breeding old-world hells anew,
Until England lost a nation for the blindness of a few.
Still the dirty Jewish talon reached from palaces and slums
Till a hundred thousand English died to stop the farmers' drums.

Drums of tortured hearts o' men—the drums that never ceased—
Throbbing through the British Empire from the heart of London East;
Growling louder still wherever, in the wake of those who lead,
Comes the murmur of the board-room and the stealthy steps of greed;
Growling through the Southern cities, murmuring in the Western gums,
Till the Empire falls to pieces at the beating of the drums!

Drums of all that's right and wrong—of love and hate and scorn;
And the new-born baby hears them, and he wails when he is born.
Drums of all that is to be, and all that has gone by—
And we hear there when we're dreaming, and we hear then while we die.

Henry Lawson

The Drums Of Battersea

They can't hear in West o' London, where the worst dine with the best—
Deaf to all save lies and laughter, they can't hear in London West—
Tailored brutes and splendid harlots, and the parasites that be—
They can't hear the warning thunder of the Drums of Battersea.

More drums! War drums!

Drums of Misery—

Beating from the hearts of men—the Drums of Battersea.

Where the hearses hurry ever, and where man lives like a beast,
They can feel the war-drums beating—men of Hell! and London East.

And the far-off foreign farmers, fighting fiercely to be free,
Found new courage in the echo of the Drums of Battersea.

More drums! War drums!

Beating for the free—

Beating on the hearts of men—the Drums of Battersea.

And the drummers! Ah! the drummers!—stern and haggard men are those
Standing grimly at their meetings; and their washed and mended clothes
Speak of worn-out wives behind them and of grinding poverty—
But the English of the English beat the Drums of Battersea!

More drums! War drums!

Drums of agony—

The big bruised heart of England's in the Drums of Battersea.

Where in fields slave Englishwomen, Oh! the sound of drums is there:
I have heard it in the laughter of the nights of Leicester Square—
Sailing southward with the summer, London but a dream to me,
Still I feel the distant thunder of the Drums of Battersea!

More drums! War drums!

Drums of Liberty—

Rolling round the English world—the Drums of Battersea.

Oh! I heard them in the Queen's Hall—aye! and London heard that night—
While we formed up round the leaders while they struck one blow for right!
And the old strength, that old fire, that I thought was dead in me,
Blazed up fiercely at the beating of the Drums of Battersea!

More drums! War drums!

They beat for victory—

When above the roar of Jingoës rolled the Drums of Battersea.

And where'er my feet may wander, and howe'er I lay my head,
I shall hear them while I'm dreaming—I shall hear them when I'm dead!
For they beat for men and women, beat for Christ, and you and me:
There is hope and there is terror in the Drums of Battersea!
More drums! War drums!
Drums of destiny—
There's hope!—there's hope for England in the Drums of Battersea.

Henry Lawson

The Drunkard's Vision

A public parlour in the slums,
The haunt of vice and villainy,
Where things are said unfit to hear,
And things are done unfit to see;
'Mid ribald jest and reckless song,
That mock at all that's pure and right,
The drunkard drinks the whole day long,
And raves through half the dreadful night.

And in the morning now he sits,
With staring eyes and trembling limb;
The harbour in the sunlight laughs,
But morning is as night to him.
And, staring blankly at the wall,
He sees the tragedy complete—
He sees the man he used to be
Go striding proudly up the street.

He turns the corner with a swing,
And, at the vine-framed cottage gate,
The father sees, with laughing eyes,
His little son and daughter wait:
They race to meet him as he comes—
And—Oh! this memory is worst—
Her dimpled arms go round his neck,
She pants, 'I dot my daddy first!'

He sees his bright-eyed little wife;
He sees the cottage neat and clean—
He sees the wrecking of his life
And all the things that might have been!
And, sunk in hopeless, black despair,
That drink no more has power to drown,
Upon the beer-stained table there
The drunkard's ruined head goes down.

But even I, a fearful wreck,
Have drifted long before the storm:
I know, when all seems lost on earth,

How hard it can be to reform.
I, too, have sinned, and we have both
Drunk to the dregs the bitter cup—
Give me your hand, Oh brother mine,
And even I might help you up.

Henry Lawson

The Emigration To New Zealand

I've just received a letter from a chum in Maoriland,
He's working down in Auckland where he days he's doing grand,
The climate's cooler there, but hearts are warmer, says my chum,
He sends the passage money, and he says I'd better come.
(I'd like to see his face again, I'd like to grip his hand),
He says he's sure that I'll get on first-rate in Maoriland.

An' tho' he makes the best of things (it always was his style),
You mostly get on better in a new land for a while,
An' when I see the fading line of my own native shore,
I'll let it fade, and never want to see it anymore.
I'm tire of Sydney pavements, and the Western scrub and sand,
I'd rather fight my troubles for a change in Maoriland.

I'm off to make inquiries as to when the next boat sails,
I'm sick of all these colonies, but most of New South Wales,
An' if you meet a friend of mine who wants to find my track,
Say you, "He's gone to Maoriland, and isn't coming back".
An' should it be the landlord or the rates, you understand,
Just say you'll find him somewhere knocking round in Maoriland.

Henry Lawson

The Empty Glass

THERE ARE three lank bards in a borrowed room—
Ah! The number is one too few—
They have deemed their home and the bars unfit
For the thing that they have to do.
Three glasses they fill with the Land's own wine,
And the bread of life they pass.
Their glasses they take, which they slowly raise—
And they drink to an empty glass.

(There's a greater glare in the street to-night,
And a louder rush and roar,
There's a mad crowd yelling the winner's name,
And howling the cricket score:
Oh! The bright moonlight on the angels white,
And the tombs and the monuments grand—
And down by the water at Waverley
There's a little lone mound of sand.)

Oh, the drinkers would deem them drunk or mad,
And the barmaid stare and frown—
Each lays a hand on the empty glass
Ere they turn it upside down.
There's a name they know, in a hand they know,
Was scratched with a diamond there—
And they place it in sight—turn on more light—
And they fill their glasses fair.

There's a widow that weeps by the Hornsby line,
And she stood by him long and true—
But the widow should think by the Hornsby line
That others have loved him too,
'Twas a peaceful end, and his work was done,
When called with the year away;
And the greatest lady in all the land
Is working for her to-day.

If the widow should fear for her children's fate,
Or brood on a future lot,
In a frivolous land with her widowed state

In a short twelve months forgot.
She can lay her down for a peaceful rest
And forget her grief in sleep,
For his brothers have taken an oath to-night,
An oath that their hearts can keep.

They have taken an oath to his memory,
A pledge they cannot recall,
To stand by the woman that stood by him,
Through poverty, illness and all.
They are young men yet, or the prime of life,
And as each lays down his trust,
May the world be kind to the left behind,
And their native land be just.

(Silence of death in town to-night,
And the streets seem strangely clear—
Have the pitiful slaves of the gambling curse
Fled home for a strange new fear?
Oh, the soft moonlight on the angels white,
Where the beautiful marbles stand—
And down by the rollers at Waverley
There's a mound of the golden sand.)

Henry Lawson

The Fairy West

I.

We wrote and sang of a bush we never
Had known in youth in the Western land;
Of the dear old homes by the shining river,
The deep, clear creeks and the hills so grand.
The grass waved high on the flat and siding,
The wild flowers bloomed on the banks so fair,
And younger sons from the North came riding
To vine-clad homes in the gardens there.
We wrote and sang—and the Lord knows best—
Oh, those dear old songs of the fairy West!

We dreamed and sang of the "bustling mother";
The brick-floored kitchen we saw so clear,
The pranks and jokes of the youngest brother,
The evening songs of our sisters dear.
The old man dozed in the chimney corner,
Or smoked and blinked at the cheerful blaze,
Or yarned with a crony—old Jack Horner—
Who'd known him back in the Digging Days.
We worked and sang—and the Lord knows best—
Oh, those dear old homes of the fairy West!

By tracks that ran 'neath the granite ridges
The children played on their way from school—
By the fairy dells and the sapling bridges,
And stole a swim in the willowed pool.
And home they flocked with their ceaseless chatter,
Till, happy and tired, and washed and fed—
(The wash came after—it doesn't matter)
They said their prayers and they went to bed.
We worked and dreamed—and the Lord knows best—
Oh, those dear old ways of the fairy West!

We rose at daylight, refreshed and hearty,
And drank our tea while the children slept;
We worked with the zest of a camping party,
While the morning breeze through the gum-trees crept.
We worked till the signal of "Breakfast ready!"

And ate our fill of the good land's best;
And Jimmy and Mary, and Nell and Teddy,
And all the children were washed and dressed.
Oh, those grand old farms of pleasure and rest
In the fairy tales of the Golden West!

'Twas a land overflowing with milk and honey,
And eggs and bacon and butter and beer.
We came to Sydney, with whips of money,
To see the world about twice a year.
The girls got married to rich young farmers,
And did no work save to populate;
And we had the pick of the city charmers
And took our brides to the country straight.
We dreamed and sang—and the Lord knows best—
Oh, those dear old dreams of the fairy West!

II.

I dreamed last night of those days long vanished,
And buried in bitterness out of sight;
The scene was gone and the folk were banished,
And this is the vision I saw last night—
It may be false and it may be real;
It may be wrong and it may be right—
A sort of set-off to the grand ideal:
We'll call it "A Vision of Sandy Blight."
We dreamed and sang—and you know the rest—
The Sandy Blight in the Wondrous West.

The daylight comes to the skillion "winder,"
A hole with never a breath of air;
And never a pane of glass to hinder
The reek from the pig-sty adjacent there.
The skillion cowers in the daybreak ghostly,
Criminal-like, as skillions do;
It is fashioned of bark and bagging mostly—
And furnished with bark and bagging, too.

Swiftly—too swiftly—the light comes creeping
Round the corners, cobweb-immeshed,
To the dusty "bunk" where "the boys" lie sleeping,

Gummy-eyed, dirty and unrefreshed.
Huddled like monkeys (I'm tired of coining
Rhyme to brighten this cheerful lay)—
A bang on the slabs of the room adjoining:
"Git up! Are yer gaunter lay there all day?"

Three hides of bones in the yard are bailed up
(We called 'em "k'yows" when my heart was young),
A pitiful calling where calves are railed up,
A stifling cloud from the powdered dung.
A dusty and sleepy head is boring
Into the flank of each dusty cow—
Milk, dust and burrs in the buckets pouring;
Three skinny youngsters are milkin' now.

And rainy weather! I would be plainer—
The filthy tail and the plunging hoof!
(The worst came out in the home-made "strainer,"
But more came down from the "dairy" roof.)
Seven cows each, and the calves are "poddied."
The pigs are fed while the boys can creep;
They've done the work of the able-bodied,
And one sits down in the dust to sleep.

The skimmin', and scaldin' (in loo'-warm water,
And cloudy at that) and the churnin' done,
The hopeless face of the elder daughter
The narrowed mind of the elder son.
The sulky scowl of the younger brother,
The morning greeting of "you're a fool!"
The rasping voice of the worn-out mother:
"Now git yer breakfus' an' git ter school!"

Three miles to the school-house—and often more in
The sparser districts (it makes me sick)—
"Mountins and rivers" and "parsin' " and "drorin' "
Readin' and writin' and 'rithmetic,
Sewin' an' singin' and "objeck lessins,"
Spellin', dicktashin', "home lessins" too!
A bit of "relegin" for all these "blessin's,"
And home in a hurry to milk the Coo.
We slaved and sang—and the Lord knows best—

Oh, those dear old homes of the fairy West!

P.S.: I was in "Yewklid" the day I finished
Me edyercashun in those times dim—
My younger brother cleared out to Queensland,
'Twas "mountains and rivers" that finished him.

Henry Lawson

The Federal City

OH! the folly, the waste, and the pity! Oh, the time that is flung behind!
They are seeking a site for a city, whose eyes shall be always blind,
Whose love for their ease grows greater, and whose care for their country less—
They are seeking a site for a city—a City of Selfishness.

In ignorance, deafness, blindness, in the cities by the sea,
With waste of time and of money, and with local jealousy;
With Anti-Federal envy, and personal paltriness,
They are seeking a site for a city—while Australia moans in distress.

By the coast with the people crowding, where Australia's danger lies,
By the hills and the clear, cool rivers, and under the softer skies,
Where the fat shall not melt, and the ranter grow cool in the fresh'ning breeze,
And the dwellers drivel in comfort and the boodlers swindle at ease.

They are seeking a site for a city in the beauty spots of the land,
While I see so plainly, my children, where the Federal towers should stand!
Where the heart of Australia beats strongest and highest in desert air.
Make a site for a Federal City, and build you your capital there!

Where the crowd should be drawn from the coast line to the great bush that
cradled the race,
Where the bush might be armed and directed should the seaboard be lost for a
space;
Where the waste should be watered and gardened, in the drought-land of Never
Despair,
There build you your Federal City, and make you a paradise there.

It shall be a world-wide object-lesson; it shall stand while a bushman is true,
And I tell you the bushmen will build it to show what a nation can do;
And there shall Australia sit queenly, and there shall her children be schooled,
For, I say, from the heart of Australia shall the whole of Australia be ruled.

Henry Lawson

The Fight At Eureka Stockade

"Was I at Eureka?" His figure was drawn to a youthful height,
And a flood of proud recollections made the fire in his grey eyes bright;
With pleasure they lighted and glisten'd, tho' the digger was grizzled and old,
And we gathered about him and listen'd while the tale of Eureka he told.

"Ah, those were the days," said the digger, "twas a glorious life that we led,
When fortunes were dug up and lost in a day in the whirl of the years that are
dead.

But there's many a veteran now in the land - old knights of the pick and the
spade,
Who could tell you in language far stronger than mine 'bout the fight at Eureka
Stockade.

"We were all of us young on the diggings in days when the nation had birth -
Light-hearted, and careless, and happy, and the flower of all nations on earth;
But we would have been peaceful an' quiet if the law had but let us alone;
And the fight - let them call it a riot - was due to no fault of our own.

"The creed of our rulers was narrow - they ruled with a merciless hand,
For the mark of the cursed broad arrow was deep in the heart of the land.
They treated us worse than the negroes were treated in slavery's day -
And justice was not for the diggers, as shown by the Bently affray.

"P'r'aps Bently was wrong. If he wasn't the bloodthirsty villain they said,
He was one of the jackals that gather where the carcass of labour is laid.
'Twas b'lieved that he murdered a digger, and they let him off scot-free as well,
And the beacon o' battle was lighted on the night that we burnt his hotel.

"You may talk as you like, but the facts are the same (as you've often been told),
And how could we pay when the license cost more than the worth of the gold?
We heard in the sunlight the clanking o' chains in the hillocks of clay,
And our mates, they were rounded like cattle an' handcuffed an' driven away.

"The troopers were most of them new-chums, with many a gentleman's son;
And ridin' on horseback was easy, and hunting the diggers was fun.
Why, many poor devils who came from the vessel in rags and down-heeled,
Were copped, if they hadn't their license, before they set foot on the field.

"But they roused the hot blood that was in us, and the cry came to roll up at last;

And I tell you that something had got to be done when the diggers rolled up in the past.

Yet they say that in spite o' the talkin' it all might have ended in smoke,
But just at the point o' the crisis, the voice of a quiet man spoke.

" `We have said all our say and it's useless, you must fight or be slaves!' said the voice;

" `If it's fight, and you're wanting a leader, I will lead to the end - take your choice!'

I looked, it was Pete! Peter Lalor! who stood with his face to the skies,
But his figure seemed nobler and taller, and brighter the light of his eyes.

"The blood to his forehead was rushin' as hot as the words from his mouth;
He had come from the wrongs of the old land to see those same wrongs in the South;

The wrongs that had followed our flight from the land where the life of the worker was spoiled.

Still tyranny followed! no wonder the blood of the Irishman boiled.

"And true to his promise, they found him - the mates who are vanished or dead,
Who gathered for justice around him with the flag of the diggers o'erhead.
When the people are cold and unb'lieving, when the hands of the tyrants are strong,

You must sacrifice life for the people before they'll come down on the wrong.

"I'd a mate on the diggings, a lad, curly-headed, an' blue-eyed, an' white,
And the diggers said I was his father, an', well, p'r'aps the diggers were right.
I forbade him to stir from the tent, made him swear on the book he'd obey,
But he followed me in, in the darkness, and - was - shot - on Eureka that day.

" `Down, down with the tyrant an' bully,' these were the last words from his mouth

As he caught up a broken pick-handle and struck for the Flag of the South
An' let it in sorrow be written - the worst of this terrible strife,

'Twas under the `Banner of Britain' came the bullet that ended his life.

"I struck then! I struck then for vengeance! When I saw him lie dead in the dirt,
And the blood that came oozing like water had darkened the red of his shirt,
I caught up the weapon he dropped an' I struck with the strength of my hate,
Until I fell wounded an' senseless, half-dead by the side of `my mate'.

"Surprised in the grey o' the morning half-armed, and the Barricade bad,

A battle o' twenty-five minutes was long 'gainst the odds that they had,
But the light o' the morning was deadened an' the smoke drifted far o'er the
town

An' the clay o' Eureka was reddened ere the flag o' the diggers came down.

"But it rose in the hands of the people an' high in the breezes it tost,
And our mates only died for a cause that was won by the battle they lost.
When the people are selfish and narrow, when the hands of the tyrants are
strong,

You must sacrifice life for the public before they come down on a wrong.

"It is thirty-six years this December - (December the first*) since we made
The first stand 'gainst the wrongs of old countries that day in Eureka Stockade,
But the lies and the follies and shams of the North have all landed since then
An' it's pretty near time that you lifted the flag of Eureka again.

"You boast of your progress an' thump empty thunder from out of your drums,
While two of your `marvellous cities' are reeking with alleys an' slums.
An' the landsharks, an' robbers, an' idlers an' -! Yes, I had best draw it mild
But whenever I think o' Eureka my talking is apt to run wild.

"Even now in my tent when I'm dreaming I'll spring from my bunk, strike a light,
And feel for my boots an' revolver, for the diggers' march past in the night.
An' the faces an' forms of old mates an' old comrades go driftin' along,
With a band in the front of 'em playing the tune of an old battle song."

Henry Lawson

The Fire At Ross's Farm

The squatter saw his pastures wide
Decrease, as one by one
The farmers moving to the west
Selected on his run;
Selectors took the water up
And all the black soil round;
The best grass-land the squatter had
Was spoilt by Ross's Ground.

Now many schemes to shift old Ross
Had racked the squatter's brains,
But Sandy had the stubborn blood
Of Scotland in his veins;
He held the land and fenced it in,
He cleared and ploughed the soil,
And year by year a richer crop
Repaid him for his toil.

Between the homes for many years
The devil left his tracks:
The squatter pounded Ross's stock,
And Sandy pounded Black's.
A well upon the lower run
Was filled with earth and logs,
And Black laid baits about the farm
To poison Ross's dogs.

It was, indeed, a deadly feud
Of class and creed and race;
But, yet, there was a Romeo
And a Juliet in the case;
And more than once across the flats,
Beneath the Southern Cross,
Young Robert Black was seen to ride
With pretty Jenny Ross.

One Christmas time, when months of drought
Had parched the western creeks,

The bush-fires started in the north
And travelled south for weeks.
At night along the river-side
The scene was grand and strange --
The hill-fires looked like lighted streets
Of cities in the range.

The cattle-tracks between the trees
Were like long dusky aisles,
And on a sudden breeze the fire
Would sweep along for miles;
Like sounds of distant musketry
It crackled through the brakes,
And o'er the flat of silver grass
It hissed like angry snakes.

It leapt across the flowing streams
And raced o'er pastures broad;
It climbed the trees and lit the boughs
And through the scrubs it roared.
The bees fell stifled in the smoke
Or perished in their hives,
And with the stock the kangaroos
Went flying for their lives.

The sun had set on Christmas Eve,
When, through the scrub-lands wide,
Young Robert Black came riding home
As only natives ride.
He galloped to the homestead door
And gave the first alarm:
'The fire is past the granite spur,
'And close to Ross's farm.'

'Now, father, send the men at once,
They won't be wanted here;
Poor Ross's wheat is all he has
To pull him through the year.'
'Then let it burn,' the squatter said;
'I'd like to see it done --
I'd bless the fire if it would clear
Selectors from the run.

`Go if you will,' the squatter said,
`You shall not take the men --
Go out and join your precious friends,
And don't come here again.'
`I won't come back,' young Robert cried,
And, reckless in his ire,
He sharply turned his horse's head
And galloped towards the fire.

And there, for three long weary hours,
Half-blind with smoke and heat,
Old Ross and Robert fought the flames
That neared the ripened wheat.
The farmer's hand was nerved by fears
Of danger and of loss;
And Robert fought the stubborn foe
For the love of Jenny Ross.

But serpent-like the curves and lines
Slipped past them, and between,
Until they reached the bound'ry where
The old coach-road had been.
`The track is now our only hope,
There we must stand,' cried Ross,
`For nought on earth can stop the fire
If once it gets across.'

Then came a cruel gust of wind,
And, with a fiendish rush,
The flames leapt o'er the narrow path
And lit the fence of brush.
`The crop must burn!' the farmer cried,
`We cannot save it now,'
And down upon the blackened ground
He dashed the ragged bough.

But wildly, in a rush of hope,
His heart began to beat,
For o'er the crackling fire he heard
The sound of horses' feet.
`Here's help at last,' young Robert cried,

And even as he spoke
The squatter with a dozen men
Came racing through the smoke.

Down on the ground the stockmen jumped
And bared each brawny arm,
They tore green branches from the trees
And fought for Ross's farm;
And when before the gallant band
The beaten flames gave way,
Two grimy hands in friendship joined --
And it was Christmas Day.

Henry Lawson

The Firing-Line

They are creeping on through the cornfields yet, and they clamber amongst the rocks,
Ere they rush to stab with the bayonet and smash with the rifle-stocks.
And many are wounded, many are dead—some reel as if drunk with wine,
And fling them down on a blood-stained bed, and sleep in the firing-line.
And they dream, perhaps, of the days shut back, while the shrapnel shrieks and crashes,
And field-guns hammer and rifles crack, and the blood of a comrade splashes.
In horrible shambles they rest a while from murder by right divine;
They curse or jest, and they frown or smile—and they dream in the firing-line.

In the dreadful din of a ghastly fight they are shooting, murdering, men;
In the smothering silence of ghastly peace we murder with tongue and pen.
Where is heard the tap of the typewriter—where the track of reform they mine—
Where they stand to the frame or the linotype—we are all in the firingline.

Weary and parched in the world-old war we are fighting with quivering nerves;
The dead are our fathers who charged before, and the children are our reserves.
In the world-old war, with the world-old wrongs that shall last while the stars still shine,
My comrades and I, who would sing their songs, are all in the firing-line.

There are some of us cowards who hug the ground, and some of us reckless who jest;
And some of us careless who slumber sound, and some of us weary who rest.
There are some of us dreamers, whose beds seem soft, and O heart! O friend of mine!
The brightest and bravest of earth too oft lie drunk in the firing-line.

But the sleeper may wake ere the fort we storm, and the coward be first to dare,
And the weak grow strong, and the drunkard reform, and the dreamer strike hardest there.
God give me strength in my country's need, though shame and disgrace be mine,
And death be certain, to rise and lead when we charge from the firing-line.

Henry Lawson

The First Dingo

The kangaroo was formed to run,
but not from man alone -
it ran before the horse or gun
or native dog was known.
It ran when drought left waterholes
three hundred miles between -
from great floods and greater fires
than we have ever seen.

The blacks beside the coastal springs,
where mountain sides are steep,
they bred and kept their kangaroo
much tamer than are sheep.
And when the men fought inland tribes
or when they roamed at large,
they drove their flocks down to the sea
and left the gins in charge.

And so, alert, with startled eyes
the shepherdess in fear
perceives with wonder and surprise
some foreign beats appear.
She watches, creeping through the trees,
and round the blackened logs
the strangest sight by southern seas -
the stranded Dutchmans's dogs.

Henry Lawson

The Flag Of Our Destinies

With our boundaries swung to the circling seas and a nation named to the world!
And the six-starred flag of our destinies on every port unfurled!
God grant from Greed or the dust of sleep – or the right by a lie maintained –
From all save our blood, if we must, we'll keep the silver and blue unstained!

We yield no praise and we speak no blame, for our history `s weeds and flowers –

But the work of a hundred years we claim as our father's work and ours!
Through peace to prosper or war to save – wherever the future runs –
May God make noble and strong and brave the hearts of our father's sons.

Henry Lawson

The Flour Bin

By Lawson's Hill, near Mudgee,
On old Eurunderree –
The place they called "New Pipeclay",
Where the diggers used to be –
On a dreary old selection,
Where times were dry and thin,
In a slab and shingle kitchen
There stood a flour bin.

'Twas "ploorer" with the cattle,
'Twas rust and smut in wheat,
'Twas blight in eyes and orchards,
And coarse salt-beef to eat.
Oh, how our mothers struggled
Till eyes and brain were dull –
Oh, how our fathers slaved and toiled
To keep those flour bins full!

We've been in many countries,
We've sailed on many seas;
We've travelled in the steerage
And lived on land at ease.
We've seen the world together
Through laughter and through tears –
And not been far from baker's bread
These five and thirty years.

The flats are green as ever,
The creeks go rippling through;
The Mudgee Hills are showing
Their deepest shades of blue;
Those mountains in the distance
That ever held a charm
Are fairer than a picture
As seen from Cox's farm.

On a German farm by Mudgee,
That took long years to win,
On the wide bricked back verandah

There stands a flour bin;
And the dear old German lady –
Though the bakers' carts run out –
Still keeps a "fifty" in it
Against a time of drought.

It was my father made it,
It stands as good as new,
And of the others like it
There still remain a few.
God grant, when drought shall strike us,
The young will "take a pull",
And the old folk their strength anew
To keep those flour bins full.

Henry Lawson

The Foreign Drunk

When you get tight in foreign lands
You never need go slinking,
No female neighbours lift their hands
And say "The brute!—he's drinking!"
No mischief-maker runs with smiles
To give your wife a notion,
For she may be ten thousand miles
Across the bounding ocean.

Oh! I've been Scottish "fu" all night,
(O'er ill's o' life victorious),
And I've been Dutch and German tight,
And French and Dago glorious.
We saw no boa-constrictors then,
In every lady's boa,
Though we got drunk with Antwerp men,
And woke up in Genoa!

When you get tight in foreign lands,
All foreigners are brothers—
You drink their drink and grasp their hands
And never wish for others.
Their foreign ways and foreign songs—
And girls—you take delight in:
The war-whoop that you raise belongs
To the country you get tight in.

When you get tight in a foreign port—
(Or rather bacchanalian),
You need no tongue for love or sport
Save your own good Australian.
(A girl in Naples kept me square—
Or helped me to recover—
For mortal knoweth everywhere
The language of the lover).

When you get tight in foreign parts,
With tongue and legs unstable,
They do their best, with all their hearts

And help you all they're able.
Ah me! It was a happy year,
Though all the rest were "blanky,"
When I got drunk on lager beer,
And sobered up on "Swankey."

Henry Lawson

The Free-Selector's Daughter

I met her on the Lachlan Side --
A darling girl I thought her,
And ere I left I swore I'd win
The free-selector's daughter.

I milked her father's cows a month,
I brought the wood and water,
I mended all the broken fence,
Before I won the daughter.

I listened to her father's yarns,
I did just what I `oughter',
And what you'll have to do to win
A free-selector's daughter.

I broke my pipe and burnt my twist,
And washed my mouth with water;
I had a shave before I kissed
The free-selector's daughter.

Then, rising in the frosty morn,
I brought the cows for Mary,
And when I'd milked a bucketful
I took it to the dairy.

I poured the milk into the dish
While Mary held the strainer,
I summoned heart to speak my wish,
And, oh! her blush grew plainer.

I told her I must leave the place,
I said that I would miss her;
At first she turned away her face,
And then she let me kiss her.

I put the bucket on the ground,
And in my arms I caught her:
I'd give the world to hold again

That free-selector's daughter!

Henry Lawson

The Friends Of Fallen Fortunes

The battlefield behind us,
And night loomed on the track;
The Friends of Fallen Fortunes
Were riding at my back.
Save those who lay face upward
Upon the sodden plain,
Not one of all I'd trusted
Was missing from my train.

A draggled train and blood-stained,
With helmets dented in,
With battered, loosened armour,
But with a cheerful grin.
No dark look bent upon me;
I noted to my shame
That Friends of Fallen Fortunes
Are aye the last to blame.

Not one of all I'd trusted,
Who'd followed to their cost,
Save those who lay face upward
On that red field I'd lost;
And here and there a soldier
I'd trusted not at all,
Like an unexpected mourner
At a poor man's funeral.

And as the horses stumbled,
And the footmen limped along,
They all joined in the chorus
Of a good old Next Time song.
Behind us in the distance,
By hill and lane and wood,
My ever-dwindling rear-guard
Fell back again and stood.

They reeked not wounds nor losses,
They all seemed very kind,

From knight who rode beside me
To boor who limped behind;
And some borne in their litters
Through that long agony—
Their death-white, pain-drawn faces
Had no reproach for me.

And so from noon till darkness,
Till morning grim and grey,
The Earl's son and the Peasant's
Were brothers that dark day.
I straightened in my saddle,
And proudly glanced me round—
I still was King of Comrades,
Whoever might be crowned!

I straightened in my saddle,
And glanced round proudly then—
Who'er might reign a season,
I held the hearts of men!
No power of gold can buy them
While battles shall be fought—
The Friends of Fallen Fortunes
Are never to be bought.

Through rain and marsh and hunger,
To what their fate might bring,
The remnants of my legions
Toiled on to join their King.
From north and south the captains
Of scattered bands won through—
Beneath its beaten colours
My beaten army grew.

And in the West before us—
The West was ever thus—
More Friends of Fallen Fortunes
Were gathering food for us;
For refuge and for succour—
For safety, food and rest—
The best of beaten armies
For ever seek the West.

With these men for my captains,
When we marched east again,
Our enemies were scattered
Like dust across the plain.
Our city lay before us,
And as we marched along,
We joined the grand old chorus
Of the glorious Next Time song.
And though they wear no armour,
And bear no blade nor bill,
The Friends of Fallen Fortunes
Are riding with me still;
And, many times defeated
By city, field, and sea,
The Friends of Fallen Fortunes
March on to Victory.

Henry Lawson

The Gathering Of The Brown-Eyed

The brown eyes came from Asia, where all mystery is true,
Ere the masters of Soul Secrets dreamed of hazel, grey, and blue;
And the Brown Eyes came to Egypt, which is called the gypsies' home,
And the Brown Eyes went from Egypt and Jerusalem to Rome.

There was strife amongst the Brown Eyes for the false things and the true;
There was war amongst the Brown Eyes for the old gods and the new;
But the old gods live for ever, and their goddesses are bright
In the temples of Old Passions with the Brown Eyes of the White.

The Brown Eyes east, by Africa, they saw and conquered Spain,
And the Brown Eyes marched as Christians till a Brown Eye met a Dane,
The Dane had Brown-Eyed children who in blue eyes took delight—
And a son of blue-eyed sailors, brown-eyed, reads the stars to-night.

Oh, Knowledge from Old Deserts, where the great stars rocked the world!
Oh, courage from grim seaboards, where the Viking ships were hurled!
The clear skin of the Norseman, and the desert strength and sight,
The power to fathom mankind, and the glorious gift to write!

We can look in souls of women, aye! and let them know we do;
We can fix the false eyes earthward; we can meet and match the true;
We can startle Voice from Silence, and from Darkness flash the Light—
And the eyes to fathom Asia are the Brown Eyes of the White.

There's a legend in the nations that all Brown Eyes once were true,
But were taught in love and warfare by the sinful shades of blue;
There's a story amongst sinners that all Brown Eyes once were kind,
Till the Steel-Blue struck the Red-Fire in a hatred that was blind.

But the Brown Eyes are the saddest at the death of Love and Truth.
And the Brown Eyes are the grandest and the dreamiest of Youth.
They have risen in rebellion unto leadership sublime—
And the grey-eyed queens of women loved, and love them for all time!

Brown Eyes never married Brown Eyes but unhappiness held sway,
For the real mates of the Brown Eyes have for ever been the grey.
But though Brown Eyes quarrel hotly, though their very souls be wrenched,
Never Blue-Eye wronged a Brown-Eye but the Brown-Eye was avenged!

Through the breadth of wide Australia, waiting desert-like and vast,
We have sent our Brown-Eyed children, who are multiplying fast.
Patriots, picture-writers, sages, fill the Brown-Eyed rolls to-night—
'Tis the gathering from all ages of the Brown-Eyed of the White.

Henry Lawson

The Gentlemen Of Dickens

The gentlemen of Dickens
Were mostly very poor,
And innocent of grammar,
And of parentage obscure;
But rich or poor or thriving,
Of high or lowly birth,
The gentlemen of Dickens
Were the grandest on the earth.

The gentlemen of Dickens,
They wore no fancy names—
Like Reginald or Percy
Fitzgerald or FitzJames;
But names for fools to laugh at,
That sound like hob-nailed boots,
Like Newman Noggs and Knubbles,
Toodles and Mr Toots.

They'd little save their kindness,
Their honesty and truth;
They mostly came embarrassed,
And stammering and uncouth;
But the gentlemen of Dickens,
Their women and their girls,
Could speak their minds if need be
To ladies and to earls.

But one who wore a title
A lesson, too, could teach:
Lord Feenix—Cousin Feenix
Of wandering legs and speech.
O he might teach a lesson
A gentleman could give,
Where he stands by his "lovely
And accomplished relative".

The gentlemen of Dickens
Were gamblers now and then

(And looked upon the ladies,
No doubt, like other men);
And some of them were drunkards,
It cannot be denied;
But one washed all their sins away
When Sidney Carton died.

The gentlemen of Dickens
Are round us here to-day,
For their self-sacrificing
Brave spirits live for aye.
They cheer my heart and lift it,
They set my blood aglow,
For I was once a gentleman,
Though it was years ago.

Henry Lawson

The Ghost

Down the street as I was drifting with the city's human tide,
Came a ghost, and for a moment walked in silence by my side --
Now my heart was hard and bitter, and a bitter spirit he,
So I felt no great aversion to his ghostly company.
Said the Shade: `At finer feelings let your lip in scorn be curled,
`Self and Pelf', my friend, has ever been the motto for the world.'

And he said: `If you'd be happy, you must clip your fancy's wings,
Stretch your conscience at the edges to the size of earthly things;
Never fight another's battle, for a friend can never know
When he'll gladly fly for succour to the bosom of the foe.
At the power of truth and friendship let your lip in scorn be curled --
`Self and Pelf', my friend, remember, is the motto of the world.

`Where Society is mighty, always truckle to her rule;
Never send an `i' undotted to the teacher of a school;
Only fight a wrong or falsehood when the crowd is at your back,
And, till Charity repay you, shut the purse, and let her pack;
At the fools who would do other let your lip in scorn be curled,
`Self and Pelf', my friend, remember, that's the motto of the world.

`Ne'er assail the shaky ladders Fame has from her niches hung,
Lest unfriendly heels above you grind your fingers from the rung;
Or the fools who idle under, envious of your fair renown,
Heedless of the pain you suffer, do their worst to shake you down.
At the praise of men, or censure, let your lip in scorn be curled,
`Self and Pelf', my friend, remember, is the motto of the world.

`Flowing founts of inspiration leave their sources parched and dry,
Scalding tears of indignation sear the hearts that beat too high;
Chilly waters thrown upon it drown the fire that's in the bard;
And the banter of the critic hurts his heart till it grows hard.
At the fame your muse may offer let your lip in scorn be curled,
`Self and Pelf', my friend, remember, that's the motto of the world.

`Shun the fields of love, where lightly, to a low and mocking tune,
Strong and useful lives are ruined, and the broken hearts are strewn.
Not a farthing is the value of the honest love you hold;

Call it lust, and make it serve you! Set your heart on nought but gold.
At the bliss of purer passions let your lip in scorn be curled --
'Self and Pelf', my friend, shall ever be the motto of the world.'

Then he ceased and looked intently in my face, and nearer drew;
But a sudden deep repugnance to his presence thrilled me through;
Then I saw his face was cruel, by the look that o'er it stole,
Then I felt his breath was poison, by the shuddering of my soul,
Then I guessed his purpose evil, by his lip in sneering curled,
And I knew he slandered mankind, by my knowledge of the world.

But he vanished as a purer brighter presence gained my side --
'Heed him not! there's truth and friendship
in this wondrous world,' she cried,
And of those who cleave to virtue in their climbing for renown,
Only they who faint or falter from the height are shaken down.
At a cynic's baneful teaching let your lip in scorn be curled!
'Brotherhood and Love and Honour!' is the motto for the world.'

Henry Lawson

The Ghost At The Second Bridge

You'd call the man a senseless fool,—
A blockhead or an ass,
Who'd dare to say he saw the ghost
Of Mount Victoria Pass;
But I believe the ghost is there,
For, if my eyes are right,
I saw it once upon a ne'er-
To-be-forgotten night.
'Twas in the year of eighty-nine—
The day was nearly gone,
The stars were shining, and the moon
Is mentioned further on;
I'd tramped as far as Hartley Vale,
Tho' tired at the start,
But coming back I got a lift
In Johnny Jones's cart.

'Twas winter on the mountains then—
The air was rather chill,
And so we stopped beside the inn
That stands below the hill.
A fire was burning in the bar,
And Johnny thought a glass
Would give the tired horse a spell
And help us up the Pass.

Then Jimmy Bent came riding up—
A tidy chap was Jim—
He shouted twice, and so of course
We had to shout for him.
And when at last we said good-night
He bet a vulgar quid
That we would see the "ghost in black",
And sure enough we did.

And as we climbed the stony pinch
Below the Camel Bridge,
We talked about the "Girl in black"
Who haunts the Second Bridge.

We reached the fence that guards the cliff
And passed the corner post,
And Johnny like a senseless fool
Kept harping on the ghost.

“She’ll cross the moonlit road in haste
And vanish down the track;
Her long black hair hangs to her waist
And she is dressed in black;
Her face is white, a dull dead white—
Her eyes are opened wide—
She never looks to left or right,
Or turns to either side.”

I didn’t b’lieve in ghosts at all,
Tho’ I was rather young,
But still I wished with all my heart
That Jack would hold his tongue.
The time and place, as you will say,
(’Twas twelve o’clock almost)—
Were both historically fa-
Vourable for a ghost.

But have you seen the Second Bridge
Beneath the “Camel’s Back”?
It fills a gap that broke the ridge
When convicts made the track;
And o’er the right old Hartley Vale
In homely beauty lies,
And o’er the left the mighty walls
Of Mount Victoria rise.

And there’s a spot above the bridge,
Just where the track is steep,
From which poor Convict Govett rode
To christen Govett’s Leap;
And here a teamster killed his wife—
For those old days were rough—
And here a dozen others had
Been murdered, right enough.

The lonely moon was over all

And she was shining well,
At angles from the sandstone wall
The shifting moonbeams fell.
In short, the shifting moonbeams beamed,
The air was still as death,
Save when the listening silence seemed
To speak beneath its breath.

The tangled bushes were not stirred
Because there was no wind,
But now and then I thought I heard
A startling noise behind.
Then Johnny Jones began to quake;
His face was like the dead.
"Don't look behind, for heaven's sake!
The ghost is there!" he said.

He stared ahead—his eyes were fixed;
He whipped the horse like mad.
"You fool!" I cried, "you're only mixed;
A drop too much you've had.
I'll never see a ghost, I swear,
But I will find the cause."
I turned to see if it was there,
And sure enough it was!

Its look appeared to plead for aid
(As far as I could see),
Its hands were on the tailboard laid,
Its eyes were fixed on me.
The face, it cannot be denied
Was white, a dull dead white,
The great black eyes were opened wide
And glistened in the light.

I stared at Jack; he stared ahead
And madly plied the lash.
To show I wasn't scared, I said—
"Why, Jack, we've made a mash."
I tried to laugh; 'twas vain to try.
The try was very lame;
And, tho' I wouldn't show it, I

Was frightened, all the same.

“She’s mashed,” said Jack, “I do not doubt,
But ‘tis a lonely place;
And then you see it might turn out
A breach of promise case.”
He flogged the horse until it jibbed
And stood as one resigned,
And then he struck the road and ran
And left the cart behind.

Now, Jack and I since infancy
Had shared our joys and cares,
And so I was resolved that we
Should share each other’s scares.
We raced each other all the way
And never slept that night,
And when we told the tale next day
They said that we were—intoxicated.

Henry Lawson

The Glass On The Bar

Three bushmen one morning rode up to an inn,
And one of them called for the drinks with a grin;
They'd only returned from a trip to the North,
And, eager to greet them, the landlord came forth.
He absently poured out a glass of Three Star.
And set down that drink with the rest on the bar.

`There, that is for Harry,' he said, `and it's queer,
'Tis the very same glass that he drank from last year;
His name's on the glass, you can read it like print,
He scratched it himself with an old piece of flint;
I remember his drink -- it was always Three Star' --
And the landlord looked out through the door of the bar.

He looked at the horses, and counted but three:
`You were always together -- where's Harry?' cried he.
Oh, sadly they looked at the glass as they said,
`You may put it away, for our old mate is dead;'
But one, gazing out o'er the ridges afar,
Said, `We owe him a shout -- leave the glass on the bar.'

They thought of the far-away grave on the plain,
They thought of the comrade who came not again,
They lifted their glasses, and sadly they said:
`We drink to the name of the mate who is dead.'
And the sunlight streamed in, and a light like a star
Seemed to glow in the depth of the glass on the bar.

And still in that shanty a tumbler is seen,
It stands by the clock, ever polished and clean;
And often the strangers will read as they pass
The name of a bushman engraved on the glass;
And though on the shelf but a dozen there are,
That glass never stands with the rest on the bar.

Henry Lawson

The God-Forgotten Election

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

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

Pat M'Durmer said, 'Ye schaymers, please to shut yer ugly faces,
'Lend yer dirty ears a momint while I give ye all a hint:
'Keep ye sober till to-morrow and record yer vote for Blazes
'If ye want to send a ringer to the commin Parlymint.
'As a young and growin' township God-Forgotten's been neglected,
'And, if we'd be ripresented, now's the moment to begin—
'Have the local towns encouraged, local industries purtected:
'Vote for Blazes, and Protection, and the land ye're livin' in.

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

Pat M'D. went on the war-path, and he worked like salts and senna,
For he organised committees full of energy and push;
And those wild committees riding through the whisky-fed Gehenna

Routed out astonished voters from their humpies in the bush.
Everything on wheels was 'ranted,' and half-sobered drunks were shot in;
Said M'Durmer to the driver, 'If ye want to save yer skin,
'Never stop to wet yer whistles—drive like hell to God-Forgotten,
'Make the villains plump for Blazes, and the land they're livin, in.'

Half the local long-departed (for the purpose resurrected)
Plumped for Blazes and Protection, and the country where they died;
So he topped the poll by sixty, and when Blazes was elected
There was victory and triumph on the God-Forgotten side.
Then the boys got up a banquet, and our chairman, Pat M'Durmer,
Was next day discovered sleeping in the local baker's bin—
All the dough had risen round him, but we heard a smothered murmur,
'Vote for Blazes—and Protection—and the land ye're livin' in.'

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

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

Henry Lawson

The Good Old Concertina

'Twas merry when the hut was full
Of jolly girls and fellows.
We danced and sang until we burst
The concertina's bellows.
From distant Darling to the sea,
From the Downs to Riverina,
Has e'er a gum in all the west
Not heard the concertina?

'Twas peaceful round the campfire blaze,
The long white branches o'er us;
We'd play the tunes of bygone days,
To some good old bush chorus.
Old Erin's harp may sweeter be,
The Scottish pipes blow keener;
But sing an old bush song for me
To the good old concertina.

'Twas cosy by the hut-fire bright
When the pint pot passed between us;
We drowned the voice of the stormy night
With the good old concertina's.
Though trouble drifts along the years,
And the pangs of care grow keener,
My heart is gladdened when it hears
That good old concertina.

Henry Lawson

The Good Samaritan

He comes from out the ages dim—
The good Samaritan;
I somehow never pictured him
A fat and jolly man;
But one who'd little joy to glean,
And little coin to give—
A sad-faced man, and lank and lean,
Who found it hard to live.
His eyes were haggard in the drought,
His hair was iron-grey—
His dusty gown was patched, no doubt,
Where we patch pants to-day.
His faded turban, too, was torn—
But darned and folded neat,
And leagues of desert sand had worn
The sandals on his feet.

He's been a fool, perhaps, and would
Have prospered had he tried,
But he was one who never could
Pass by the other side.
An honest man whom men called soft,
While laughing in their sleeves—
No doubt in business ways he oft
Had fallen amongst thieves.

And, I suppose, by track and tent,
And other ancient ways,
He drank, and fought, and loved, and went
The pace in his young days.
And he had known the bitter year
When love and friendship fail—
I wouldn't be surprised to hear
That he had been in jail.

A silent man, whose passions slept,
Who had no friends or foes—
A quiet man, who always kept
His hopes and sorrows close.

A man who very seldom smiled,
And one who could not weep
Be it for death of wife or child
Or sorrow still more deep.

But sometimes when a man would rave
Of wrong, as sinners do,
He'd say to cheer and make him brave
'I've had my troubles too.'
(They might be twittered by the birds,
And breathed high Heaven through,
There's beauty in those world-old words:
'I've had my sorrows too.')

And if he was a married man,
As many are that roam,
I guess that good Samaritan
Was rather glum at home,
Impatient when a child would fret,
And strict at times and grim—
A man whose kinsmen never yet
Appreciated him.

Howbeit—in a study brown—
He had for all we know,
His own thoughts as he journeyed down
The road to Jericho,
And pondered, as we puzzle yet,
On tragedies of life—
And maybe he was deep in debt
And parted from his wife.

(And so 'by chance there came that way,'
It reads not like romance—
The truest friends on earth to-day,
They mostly come by chance.)
He saw a stranger left by thieves
Sore hurt and like to die—
He also saw (my heart believes)
The others pass him by.

(Perhaps that good Samaritan

Knew Levite well, and priest)
He lifted up the wounded man
And sat him on his beast,
And took him on towards the inn—
All Christ-like unawares—
Still pondering, perhaps, on sin
And virtue—and his cares.

He bore him in and fixed him right
(Helped by the local drunk),
And wined and oiled him well all night,
And thought beside his bunk.
And on the morrow ere he went
He left a quid and spoke
Unto the host in terms which meant—
'Look after that poor bloke.'

He must have known them at the inn,
They must have known him too—
Perhaps on that same track he'd seen
Some other sick mate through;
For 'Whatsoe'er thou spendest more'
(The parable is plain)
'I will repay,' he told the host,
'When I return again.'

He seemed to be a good sort, too,
The boss of that old pub—
(As even now there are a few
At shanties in the scru .
The good Samaritan jogged on
Through Canaan's dust and heat,
And pondered over various schemes
And ways to make ends meet.

He was no Christian, understand,
For Christ had not been born—
He journeyed later through the land
To hold the priests to scorn;
And tell the world of 'certain men'
Like that Samaritan,

And preach the simple creed again—
Man's duty! Man to man!

'Once on a time there lived a man,'
But he has lived alway,
And that gaunt, good Samaritan
Is with us here to-day;
He passes through the city streets
Unnoticed and unknown,
He helps the sinner that he meets—
His sorrows are his own.
He shares his tucker on the track
When things are at their worst
(And often shouts in bars outback
For souls that are athirst).
To-day I see him staggering down
The blazing water-course,
And making for the distant town
With a sick man on his horse.

He'll live while nations find their graves
And mortals suffer pain—
When colour rules and whites are slaves
And savages again.
And, after all is past and done,
He'll rise up, the Last Man,
From tending to the last but one—
The good Samaritan.

Henry Lawson

The Great Grey Plain

Out West, where the stars are brightest,
Where the scorching north wind blows,
And the bones of the dead gleam whitest,
And the sun on a desert glows --
Yet within the selfish kingdom
Where man starves man for gain,
Where white men tramp for existence --
Wide lies the Great Grey Plain.

No break in its awful horizon,
No blur in the dazzling haze,
Save where by the bordering timber
The fierce, white heat-waves blaze,
And out where the tank-heap rises
Or looms when the sunlights wane,
Till it seems like a distant mountain
Low down on the Great Grey Plain.

No sign of a stream or fountain,
No spring on its dry, hot breast,
No shade from the blazing noontide
Where a weary man might rest.
Whole years go by when the glowing
Sky never clouds for rain --
Only the shrubs of the desert
Grow on the Great Grey Plain.

From the camp, while the rich man's dreaming,
Come the `traveller' and his mate,
In the ghastly dawnlight seeming
Like a swagman's ghost out late;
And the horseman blurs in the distance,
While still the stars remain,
A low, faint dust-cloud haunting
His track on the Great Grey Plain.

And all day long from before them
The mirage smokes away --

That daylight ghost of an ocean
Creeps close behind all day
With an evil, snake-like motion,
As the waves of a madman's brain:
'Tis a phantom NOT like water
Out there on the Great Grey Plain.

There's a run on the Western limit
Where a man lives like a beast,
And a shanty in the mulga
That stretches to the East;
And the hopeless men who carry
Their swags and tramp in pain --
The footmen must not tarry
Out there on the Great Grey Plain.

Out West, where the stars are brightest,
Where the scorching north wind blows,
And the bones of the dead seem whitest,
And the sun on a desert glows --
Out back in the hungry distance
That brave hearts dare in vain --
Where beggars tramp for existence --
There lies the Great Grey Plain.

'Tis a desert not more barren
Than the Great Grey Plain of years,
Where a fierce fire burns the hearts of men --
Dries up the fount of tears:
Where the victims of a greed insane
Are crushed in a hell-born strife --
Where the souls of a race are murdered
On the Great Grey Plain of Life!

Henry Lawson

The Green-Hand Rouseabout

Call this hot? I beg your pardon. Hot!—you don't know what it means.
(What's that, waiter? lamb or mutton! Thank you—mine is beef and greens.
Bread and butter while I'm waiting. Milk? Oh, yes—a bucketful.)
I'm just in from west the Darling, 'picking-up' and rolling wool.'
Mutton stewed or chops for breakfast, dry and tasteless, boiled in fat;
Bread or brownie, tea or coffee—two hours' graft in front of that;
Legs of mutton boiled for dinner—mutton greasy-warm for tea—
Mutton curried (gave my order, beef and plenty greens for me.)

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

Dusty patch in baking mulga—glaring iron hut and shed—
Feel and smell of rain forgotten—water scarce and feed-grass dead.
Hot and suffocating sunrise—all-pervading sheep yard smell—
Stiff and aching green-hand stretches—'Slushy' rings the bullock-bell—
Pint of tea and hunk of brownie—sinners string towards the shed—
Great, black, greasy crows round carcass—screen behind of dust-cloud red.
Engine whistles. 'Go it, tigers!' and the agony begins,
Picking up for seven devils out of Hades—for my sins;
Picking up for seven devils, seven demons out of Hell!
Sell their souls to get the bell-sheep—half-a-dozen Christs they'd sell!
Day grows hot as where they come from—too damned hot for men or brutes;
Roof of corrugated iron, six-foot-six above the shoots!

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

'Take my combs down to the grinder, will yer?' 'Seen my cattle-pup?'
'There's a sheep fell down in my shoot—just jump down and pick it up.'

'Give the office when the boss comes.' 'Catch that gory sheep, old man.'
'Count the sheep in my pen, will yer?' 'Fetch my combs back when yer can.'
'When yer get a chance, old feller, will yer pop down to the hut?
'Fetch my pipe—the cook'll show yer—and I'll let yer have a cut.'

Shearer yells for tar and needle. Ringer's roaring like a bull:

'Wool away, you (son of angels). Where the hell's the (foundling) WOOL!!'

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

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

Henry Lawson

The Grog-An'Grumble Steeplechase

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

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

Friends would argue with M'Durmer, and they said he was in error
To put up his horse the Screamer, for he'd lose in any case,
And they said a city racer by the name of Holy Terror
Was regarded as the winner of the coming steeplechase;
But he said he had the knowledge to come in when it was raining,
And irrevelantly mentioned that he knew the time of day,
So he rose in their opinion. It was noticed that the training
Of the Screamer was conducted in a dark, mysterious way.

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

"Off ye go!" the starter shouted, as down fell a stupid jockey –
Off they started in disorder – left the jockey where he lay –
And they fell and rolled and galloped down the crooked course and rocky,

Till the pumping of the Screamer could be heard a mile away.
But he kept his legs and galloped; he was used to rugged courses,
And he lumbered down the gully till the ridge began to quake:
And he ploughed along the siding, raising earth till other horses
An' their riders, too, were blinded by the dust-cloud in his wake.

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

Nose to nose with Holy Terror as across the creek they swung,
An' M'Durmer shouted loudly, "Put yer toungue out! put yer tongue out!"
An ' the Screamer put his tongue out, and he won by half-a-tongue.

Henry Lawson

The Heart Of Australia

When the wars of the world seemed ended, and silent the distant drum,
Ten years ago in Australia, I wrote of a war to come:
And I pictured Australians fighting as their fathers fought of old
For the old things, pride or country, for God or the Devil or gold.

And they lounged on the rim of Australia in the peace that had come to last,
And they laughed at my "cavalry charges" for such things belonged to the past;
Then our wise men smiled with indulgence – ere the swift years proved me right
–

Saying: "What shall Australia fight for? And whom shall Australia fight?"

I wrote of the unlocked rivers in the days when my heart was full,
And I pleaded for irrigation where they sacrifice all for wool.
I pictured Australia fighting when the coast had been lost and won –
With arsenals west of the mountains and every spur its gun.

And what shall Australia fight for? The reason may yet be found,
When strange shells scatter the wickets and burst on the football ground.
And "Who shall invade Australia?" let the wisdom of ages say
"The friend of a further future – or the ally of yesterday!"

Aye! What must Australia fight for? In the strife that never shall cease,
She must fight for her work unfinished: she must fight for her life and peace,
For the sins of the older nations. She must fight for her own reward.
She has taken the sword in her blindness and shall live or die by the sword.

But the statesman, the churchman, the scholar still peer through their glasses
dim
And they see no cloud on the future as they roost on Australia's rim:
Where the farmer works with the lumpers and the drover drives a dray,
And the shearer on Garden Island is shifting a hill to-day.

Had we used the wealth we have squandered and the land that we kept from the
plough,
A prosperous Federal City would be over the mountains now,
With farms that sweep to horizons and gardens where plains lay bare,
And the bulk of the population and the Heart of Australia there.

Had we used the time we have wasted and the gold we have thrown away,

The pick of the world's mechanics would be over the range to-day –
In the Valley of Coal and Iron where the breeze from the bush comes down,
And where thousands of makers of all things should be happy in Factory Town.

They droned on the rim of Australia, the wise men who never could learn;
Our substance we sent to the nations, and their shoddy we bought in return.
In the end, shall our soldiers fight naked, no help for them under the sun –
And never a cartridge to stick in the breech of a Brummagem gun?

With the Wars of the World coming near us the wise men are waking to-day.
Hurry out ammunition from England! Mount guns on the cliffs while you may!
And God pardon our sins as a people if Invasion's unmerciful hand
Should strike at the heart of Australia drought-cramped on the verge of the land.

Henry Lawson

The Heart Of The Swag

Oh, the track through the scrub groweth ever more dreary,
And lower and lower his grey head doth bow;
For the swagman is old and the swagman is weary—
He's been tramping for over a century now.
He tramps in a worn-out old "side spring" and "blucher,"
His hat is a ruin, his coat is a rag,
And he carries forever, far into the future,
The key of his life in the core of his swag.
There are old-fashioned portraits of girls who are grannies,
There are tresses of dark hair whose owner's are grey;
There are faded old letters from Marys and Annies,
And Toms, Dicks, and Harrys, dead many a day.
There are broken-heart secrets and bitter-heart reasons—
They are sewn in a canvas or calico bag,
And wrapped up in oilskin through dark rainy seasons,
And he carries them safe in the core of his swag.

There are letters that should have been burnt in the past time,
For he reads them alone, and a devil it brings;
There were farewells that should have been said for the last time,
For, forever and ever the love for her springs.
But he keeps them all precious, and keeps them in order,
And no matter to man how his footsteps may drag,
There's a friend who will find, when he crosses the Border,
That the Heart of the Man's in the Heart of his swag.

Henry Lawson

The Horse And Cart Ferry

It was old Jerry Brown,
Who'd an office in town,
And he used to get jocular, very;
And he'd go to the Shore
When they'd serve him no more,
And, of course, by the passenger ferry,
A sight on the passenger ferry.
Now this is a song of the ferry,
And a lay of the juice of the berry;
'Tis the ballad of Brown,
Who'd a business in town,
And commenced to go down
Very slow,
Don't you know?
By coming home just a bit merry.

By the Drunks' Boat—that's right—
On a Saturday night
He would often be past being merry;
With his back teeth afloat,
On the twelve o'clock boat,
And a spectacle there on the ferry
(A picture to all on the ferry).

In the mornings, ashamed—
'Twas the last drink he blamed,
Though the first was the matter with Jerry,
With his nerve out of joint,
He'd sneak down to Blue's Point,
And he'd cross by the horse-and-cart ferry,
Like a thief—by the horse-and-cart ferry.

But long before night
He'd most likely be tight,
And a subject and theme for George Perry;
And he'd cross to the Shore,
Somewhat worse than before,
And a nuisance to all on the ferry;
Singing-drunk on the passenger ferry.

And so it went on
Till his reason seemed gone,
And the Law, so it seemed, got a derry
On Brown. He went down,
And they sent him to town
One day, by "the trap," on the ferry—
The Government trap on the ferry.

He was sober and sane
When he came back again,
And the past he'd determined to bury—
Or, I mean, live it down—
And he crossed from the town
Like a man, on the passenger ferry.
(There were sceptical souls on that ferry.)

They say 'twas the jaw
Of his mother-in-law
Drove him back to the juice of the berry;
But he soon got afloat
On the passenger boat
Or adrift on the horse-and-cart ferry
(Wrongly called the ve-hic-ular ferry).

The drink had him fast,
And he drank till at last
He dried up—a withered old cherry;
And they thought him no loss
When they sent him across
In a box, on the cart-and-horse ferry—
In a low, covered trap on the ferry.

Which I rise to explain—
If the moral ain't plain,
And if you're a cove that gets merry—
Always stick, when "afloat,"
To the passenger boat;
Or else to the cart-and-horse ferry,
Or you'll make matters worse, like old Jerry.

But this is the song of the ferry,

And the lay of the juice of the berry;
And you will not deny—
If you read by-and-bye—
That the casual eye
Of the Tight
At first sight
Misses much in the song of the ferry.

Henry Lawson

The Hymn Of The Socialists

By the bodies and minds and souls that rot in a common sty
In the city's offal-holes, where the dregs of its horrors lie —
By the prayers that bubble out, but never ascend to God,
We swear the tyrants of earth to rout, with tongue and with pen and sword!
By the child that sees the light, where the pestilent air stagnates,
By the woman, worn and white, who under the street-lamp waits,
By the horror of vice that thrives in the dens of the wretched poor,
We swear to strike when the time arrives, for all that is good and pure!

By the rights that were always ours — the rights that we ne'er enjoyed,
And the gloomy cloud that lowers on the brow of the unemployed;
By the struggling mothers and wives — by girls in the streets of sin —
We swear to strike when the time arrives, for our kind and our kith and kin!

By our burning hate for men who rob us of ours by might,
And drive to the slum and den, the poor from the sun and light,
By the hell-born greed that drives our sons o'er the world to roam,
We swear to strike when the time arrives, and strike for our friends and home.

By the little of manhood left in a world of want and sin,
By the rift in the dark cloud's brow where the light still struggles in,
By the love that scarce survives in a stream that is sluggish and thin,
We swear to work till the time arrives for ourselves and our kind and kin.

The little of love may dry in its stream that scarcely flows,
The little of manhood die and the rift in the dark clouds close,
And hope may vanish from earth and all that is pure and bright,
But we swear to strike ere that time has birth with the whole of our gathered
might!

Henry Lawson

The Imported Servant

The Blue Sky arches o'er mountain and valley,
The scene is as fair as a scene can be,
But I'm breaking my heart for a London alley,
And fogs that shall never come back to me.
I choke with tears when the day is dying—
The sunsets grand and the stars are bright;
But it's O! for the smell of the fried fish frying
By the flaring stalls on a Saturday night.
And this, oh, this is the lonely sequel
Of all I pictured would come to pass!
They are treating me here as a friend and equal,
But they'd say in London that they're no class.
When I think of their kindness my tears flow faster—
The girls are free and the chaps are grand:
It's "the boss" and "the missus" for mistress and master,
And they may be right—But I don't understand.

I see the air in its warm pulsation
On sandstone cliffs where the ocean dips,
But I'm miles and miles from the railway station
Where trains run down to the wharves and ships.
Those streets are dingy and dark and narrow,
The soot comes down with the rain and sleet;
But, O! for the sight of a coster's barrow,
And Sunday morning in Chapel Street!

Henry Lawson

The Iron Wedding Rings

In these days of peace and money, free to all the Commonweal,
There are ancient dames in Buckland wearing wedding rings of steel;
Wedding rings of steel and iron, worn on wrinkled hands and old,
And the wearers would not give them, not for youth nor wealth untold.

In the days of black oppression, when the best abandoned hope,
And all Buckland crouched in terror of the prison and the rope,
Many fair young wives in Buckland prayed beside their lonely beds
For the absent ones who knew not where to lay their outlawed heads.

But a whisper went through Buckland, to the rebels only known,
That the man across the border had a chance to hold his own.
There were men that came in darkness, quiet, grim and travel-worn,
And, by twos, and threes, the young men stole away to join Kinghorn.

Slipping powder-horns and muskets from beneath the floors and thatch,
There were boys who kissed their mothers ere they softly dropped the latch;
There were hunters' wives in backwoods who sat strangely still and white
Till the dawn, because their men-folk went a-hunting in the night.

But the rebels needed money, and so, through the Buckland hills,
Came again, by night, the gloomy men of monosyllables;
And the ladies gave their jewels to be smuggled out and sold,
And the homely wives of Buckland gave their wedding rings of gold.

And a Buckland smith in secret, and in danger, in his shed
Made them rings of baser metals (from the best he had, to lead),
To be gilt and worn to market, or to meetings where d,
Lest the spies should get an inkling, and the husbands be betrayed.

Then a silence fell on Buckland; there was peace throughout the land,
And a loyalty that puzzled all the captains in command;
There was too much Law and Order for the men who weren't blind,
And the greatest of the king's men wasn't easy in his mind.

They were hunting rebels, certes, and the troops were understood
To be searching for a stronghold like a needle in a wood;
But whene'er the king was prayed for in the meeting-houses, then
It was strange with how much unction ancient sinners cried "Ah-men!"

Till at last, when all was quiet, through the gloomy Buckland hills
Once again there came those furtive men of monosyllables;
And their message was – "Take warning what the morrow may reveal,
Death and Freedom may be married with a wedding ring of steel."

In the morning, from the marshes, rose the night-mist, cold and damp,
From the shipping in the harbour and the sleeping royal camp;
From the lanes and from the by-streets and the high streets of the town,
And above the hills of Buckland, where the rebel guns looked down.

And the first one sent a message to the camp to fight or yield,
And the wintry sun looked redly on a bloody battlefield;
Till the man from 'cross the border marched through Buckland once again,
With a charter for the people and ten thousand fighting men.

There are ancient dames in Buckland with old secrets to reveal,
Wearing wedding rings of iron, wearing wedding rings of steel;
And their tears drop on the metal when their thoughts are far away
In the past where their young husbands died on Buckland field that day.

Henry Lawson

The Jolly Dead March

If I ever be worthy or famous—
Which I'm sadly beginning to doubt—
When the angel whose place 'tis to name us
Shall say to my spirit, 'Pass out!'
I wish for no sniv'ling about me
(My work was the work of the land),
But I hope that my country will shout me
The price of a decent brass band.
Thump! thump! of the drum and 'Ta-ra-rit,'
Thump! thump! and the music—it's grand,
If only in dreams, or in spirit,
To ride or march after the band!
And myself and my mourners go straying,
And strolling and drifting along
With a band in the front of us playing
The tune of an old battle song!

I ask for no 'turn-out' to bear me;
I ask not for railings or slabs,
And spare me! my country—oh, spare me!
The hearse and the long string of cabs!
I ask not the baton or 'starts' of
The bore with the musical ear,
But the music that's blown from the hearts of
The men who work hard and drink beer.

And let 'em strike up 'Annie Laurie,'
And let them burst out with 'Lang Syne'—
Twin voices of sadness and glory,
That have ever been likings of mine.
And give the French war-hymn deep-throated
The Watch of the Germans between,
And let the last mile be devoted
To 'Britannia' and 'Wearing the Green.'

And if, in the end—more's the pity—
There is fame more than money to spare—
There's a van-man I know in the city
Who'll convey me, right side up with care.

True sons of Australia, and noble,
Have gone from the long dusty way,
While the sole mourner fought down his trouble
With his pipe on the shaft of the dray.
But let them strike up 'Annie Laurie,' &c.

And my spirit will join the procession—
Will pause, if it may, on the brink—
Nor feel the least shade of depression
When the mourners drop out for a drink;
It may be a hot day in December,
Or a cold day in June it may be,
And the drink will but help them remember
The good points the world missed in me.
And help 'em to love 'Annie Laurie,'
And help 'em to raise 'Auld Lang Syne,' &c.

'Unhook the West Port' for an orphan,
An old digger chorus revive—
If you don't hear a whoop from the coffin,
I am not being buried alive.
But I'll go with a spirit less bitter
Than mine own on the earth may have been,
And, perhaps, to save trouble, Saint Peter
Will pass me, two comrades between.

And let them strike up 'Annie Laurie,'
And let 'em burst out with 'Lang Syne,'
Twin voices of sadness and glory
That have ever been likings of mine.
Let them swell the French war-hymn deep-throated
(And I'll not buck at 'God Save the Queen'),
But let the last mile be devoted
To 'Britannia' and 'Wearing the Green.'

Thump! thump! of the drums we inherit—
War-drums of my dreams! Oh it's grand,
If only in fancy or spirit,
To ride or march after a band!
And we, the World-Battlers, go straying
And loving and laughing along—
With Hope in the lead of us playing

The tune of a life-battle song!

Henry Lawson

The King (Ii)

And now a son has come again
To keep the peace or strike the blow,
And have a long, great, glorious reign,
Through calm or tempest, weal or woe.
And strange things set me wondering –
As man and youth, we knew him here,
The one the only British King,
To see his Southern Hemisphere.

'Midst pealing bells and cannons' din
The countless thousands cheer and strive
To catch one glance of their new King
And queenly Mary, his fair bride;
'Til on their knees, within the Fane,
The Royal couple meekly kneel,
The Great God's clemency to claim,
And pray Him for their people's weal.

And so I see, in vision clear,
The long reign of this noble line,
How on and on, from year to year
The star of peace shall brighter shine,
How men and nations, without fear
Shall hope and labour, strive and sing:
"The day of liberty is here!
The King is Dead! Long Live the King"

Henry Lawson

The King [I]

AMONG the sons of Englishmen
Full many feel like real tears,
For, though he reigned but scarcely ten,
He bore the burden many years.
He lived the dead past doubly down,
He shamed, by manliness and truth,
The lies that beat about a crown,
And round a known man in his youth.

For he had lived as men have done
Since Adam's time, to prove them true.
He proved it in his manhood's prime,
And to the end, as strong men do.
And so he died, and, ever since,
And on through years the words shall ring:
"He lived a man, he lived a prince,
And died a gentleman and King."

Unto the friends of his hot youth,
In his wise age, he still was true.
He showed, by steadfastness and truth,
What kings as well as men can do;
Till all was manlike or forgot,
Long years ere he found his release;
He made them loyal who were not,
He won respect, and kept the peace.

Henry Lawson

The King And Queen And I

Oh, Scotty, have you visited the Picture Gallery,
And did you see the portraits of the King and Queen and me?
The portraits made by Longstaff, and the pictures done by Jack,
Of the King and Queen and Lawson and the lady all in black?
The King is robed in royal state, with medals on his breast,
And, like the mother Queen she is, Her Majesty is dressed.
The lady's dressed in simple black and sports no precious stones,
And I a suit of reach-me-downs I bought from Davy Jones.

We're strangers two to two, and each unto the other three—
I do not know the lady and I don't think she knows me.
We're strangers to each other here, and to the other two,
And they themselves are strangers yet, if all we hear is true.

I s'pose we're just as satisfied as folks have ever been:
The lady would much rather be her own self than the Queen;
And though I'm down and precious stiff and I admire King Ned,
I'd sooner just be Harry, with his follies on his head.

We four may meet together—stranger folk have met, I ween,
Than a rhymer and a monarch and a lady and a queen.
Ned and I might talk it over on the terrace, frank and free,
With cigars, while Alexandra and the lady's having tea.

Anyway, we'll never quarrel while we're hanging on the wall—
Friends! we all have had our troubles—we are human, one and all!
If by chance we hang together—hang together on the line,
And the thing should shock the Godly—then it's Longstaff's fault, not mine.

Henry Lawson

The King Of Our Republic

He is coming! He is coming! without heralds, without cheers.
He is coming! He is coming! and he's been with us for years:
And, if you should pause to wonder who's the man of whom I sing—
'Tis the King of our Republic, and the man we shall call King.
No, he comes not to amuse us, and he comes not to explain,
With the bathos of the old things over all the land again.
The debatable and tangled, and the vain imagining
Shall be swept out of our pathway by the man that we'll call King.

He is coming! He is coming! He has heard our spirit call;
He'll be greatest man since Cromwell in the English nations all,
And he'll take his place amongst us while the rest are wondering—
Shall the King of our Republic, and the man we will call King.

If you find him stern, unyielding, where his living task is set,
I have told you that a tyrant shall uplift the nation yet;
He will place his country's welfare over all and everything,
Shall the King of our Republic, and the man that we'll call King.

Yet his heart shall still be gentle with his brothers gone astray,
For the Great Man of Australia shall be simple in his day—
Modest, kindly, but unyielding, while the watching world shall ring
With the name of our Republic and the man that we call King.

Henry Lawson

The Labour Agitator

LET the liar call me liar,
And the robber call me thief.
They can only fan the fire
That is born of my belief.
While I'm speaking, while I'm writing,
To reform the wrongful laws,
Well I know that I am fighting
For the grand old Cause.

See the army of the rebels
Marching on for evermore.
We are countless as the pebbles
That are strewn along the shore.
Agitating, agitating,
Till the Truth has sealed the fate
Of the wrongs that I am hating
With the grand old Hate.

Though no battle banner rustles
In a smoke that blurs the blue,
As when "heroes" poured from Brussels
To the field of Waterloo,
Though we do not hear the rattle
Of the rifles in the wars,
There is glory in the battle
For the grand old Cause.

See the army of the rebels
Marching on for evermore.
We are countless as the pebbles
That are strewn along the shore.
Agitating, agitating,
Till the Truth has sealed the fate
Of the wrongs that I am hating
With the grand old Hate.

No! I look not to the reaping

In the dynasty of men,
For I know that I'll be sleeping
In a slandered grave e'er then.
Till his right to man is given
We'll rebel, and we'll rebel
As we would rebel in heaven
If it proved a hell.

See the army of the rebels
Marching on for evermore.
We are countless as the pebbles
That are strewn along the shore.
Agitating, agitating,
Till the Truth has sealed the fate
Of the wrongs that I am hating
With the grand old Hate.

No! There's neither creed nor nation
Where the Labour flag's unfurled,
For the Labour agitation
Breaks the barriers of the world.
Let the rulers fly in terror
With their scornful lips uncurled,
One by one the gods of error
From their thrones are hurled.

See the army of the rebels
Marching on for evermore.
We are countless as the pebbles
That are strewn along the shore.
Agitating, agitating,
Till the Truth has sealed the fate
Of the wrongs that I am hating
With the grand old Hate.

Henry Lawson

The Lady Of The Motor Car

The Lady of the Motor-car she stareth straight ahead;
Her face is like the stone, my friend, her face is like the dead;
Her face is like the stone, my friend, because she is "well-bred"—
Because her heart is dead, my friend, as all her life was dead.
The Lady of the Motor-car she speaketh like a man,
Because her girlhood never was, nor womanhood began.
She says, "To the Aus-traliah, John!" and "Home" when she hath been.
And to the husband at her side she says, "Whhat doo you mean?"

The Lady of the Motor-car her very soul is dead,
Because she never helped herself nor had to work for bread;
The Lady of the Motor-car sits in her sitting-room,
Her stony face has never changed though all the land is gloom.

Her motor-car hath gone to hell—the hell that man hath made;
She sitteth in her sitting-room, and she is not afraid;
Nor fear of life or death, or worse, could change her well-bred mien;
She knits socks in a stony way, and says, "Whhat doo they mean?"

The lady in her carriage sits, with cushions turning green—
And once it was a mourning-coach, and once it held a queen.
Behind a coachman and a horse too old to go to war,
She driveth to her "four o'clocks" and to her sick and poor.

And when the enemy bombards and walls begin to fall,
The Lady of the Motor-car shall stand above you all;
Amongst the strong and silent brave, and those who pray or shriek,
She'll nurse the wounded from the grave and pacify the weak.

And if the enemy prevails, with death on every side,
The Lady of the Car shall die as heroines have died,
But if the victory remains, she'll be what she hath been,
And, sitting in her motor-car, shall say: "
Whhat doo you mean?
"

Henry Lawson

The Last Review

Turn the light down, nurse, and leave me, while I hold my last review,
For
the Bush
is slipping from me, and the town is going too:
Draw the blinds, the streets are lighted, and I hear the tramp of feet—
And I'm weary, very weary, of the
Faces in the Street

.

In the dens of Grind and Heartbreak, in the streets of Never-Rest,
I have lost the scent and colour and the music of the West:
And I would recall old faces with the memories they bring—
Where are Bill and Jim and Mary and the
Songs They used to Sing
?

They are coming! They are coming! they are passing through the room
With the smell of gum leaves burning, and the scent of
Wattle bloom!

And behind them in the timber, after dust and heat and toil,
Others sit beside the camp fire yarning while the billies boil.

In the Gap above the ridges there's a flash and there's a glow—
Swiftly down the scrub-clad siding come the
Lights of Cobb and Co

∴

Red face from the box-seat beaming—Oh, how plain those faces come!
From his 'Golden-Hole' 'tis Peter M'Intosh who's going home.

Dusty patch in desolation, bare slab walls and earthen floor,
And a blinding drought is blazing from horizons to the door:
Milkless tea and ration sugar, damper junk and pumpkin mash—
And a
Day on our Selection
passes by me in a flash.

Rush of big wild-eyed store bullocks while the sheep crawl hopelessly,
And the loaded wool teams rolling, lurching on like ships at sea:

With his whip across his shoulder (and the wind just now abeam),
There goes
Jimmy Nowlett
ploughing through the dust beside his team!

Sunrise on the diggings! (Oh! what life and hearts and hopes are here)
From a hundred pointing forges comes a tinkle, tinkle clear—
Strings of drays with wash to puddle, clack of countless windlass boles,
Here and there
the red flag flying
, flying over golden holes.

Picturesque, unreal, romantic, chivalrous, and brave and free;
Clean in living, true in mateship—reckless generosity.
Mates are buried here as comrades who on fields of battle fall—
And—the dreams, the aching, hoping lover hearts beneath it all!

Rough-built theatres and stages where the world's best actors trod—
Singers bringing reckless rovers nearer boyhood, home and God;
Paid in laughter, tears and nuggets in the play that fortune plays—
'Tis the palmy days of Gulgong—Gulgong in
the Roaring Days.

Pass the same old scenes before me—and again my heart can ache—
There the
Drover's Wife
sits watching (not as Eve did) for a snake.
And I see the drear deserted goldfields when the night is late,
And the stony face of Mason watching by his
Father's Mate.

And I see my
Haggard Women
plainly as they were in life,
'Tis the form of Mrs. Spicer and her friend,
Joe Wilson's wife,

Sitting hand in hand
'Past Carin
' , ' not a sigh and not a moan,

Staring steadily before her and the tears just trickle down.

It was

No Place for a Woman

—where the women worked like men—

From the Bush and Jones' Alley come their haunting forms again.

And, let this thing be remembered when I've answered to the roll,

That I pitied haggard women—wrote for them with all my soul.

Narrow bed-room in the City in the hard days that are dead—

An alarm clock on the table, and a pale boy on the bed:

Arvie Aspinalls Alarm Clock with its harsh and startling call

Never more shall break his slumbers—I was Arvie Aspinall.

Maoriland

and

Steelman

, cynic, spieler, stiff-lipped, battler-through

(Kept a wife and child in comfort, but of course they never knew—

Thought he was an honest bagman)—Well, old man, you needn't hug—

Sentimental; you of all men!—Steelman, Oh! I was a mug!

Ghostly lines of scrub at daybreak—dusty daybreak in the drought—

And a lonely swagman tramping on the track to

Further Out

:

Like a shade the form of Mitchell, nose-bag full and bluey up

And between the swag and shoulders lolls his foolish cattle-pup.

Kindly cynic, sad comedian! Mitchell! when you've left the Track,

And have shed your load of sorrow as we slipped our swags out back,

We shall have a yarn together in the land of

Rest Awhile

—

And across his ragged shoulder Mitchell smiles his quiet smile.

Shearing sheds and tracks and shanties—girls that wait at homestead gates—

Camps and stern-eyed Union leaders, and

Joe Wilson and his Mates

True and straight, and to my fancy, each one as he passes through

Deftly down upon the table slips a dusty 'note' or two.

So at last the end has found me—(end of all the human push)

And again in silence round me come my

Children of the Bush

!—

Listen, who are young, and let them—if I in late and bitter days

Wrote some reckless lines—forget them—there is little there to praise.

I was human, very human, and if in the days misspent

I have injured man or woman, it was done without intent.

If at times I blundered blindly—bitter heart and aching brow—

If I wrote a line unkindly—I am sorry for it now.

Days in London

like a nightmare—dreams of foreign lands and sea—

And

Australia

is the only land that seemeth real to me.

Tell the Bushmen to Australia and each other to be true—

'Tell the boys to stick together!' I have held my

Last Review.

Henry Lawson

The Leader And The Bad Girl

Because he had sinned and suffered, because he loved the land,
And because of his wonderful sympathy, he held men's hearts in his hand.
Born and bred of the people, he knew their every whim,
And because he had struggled through poverty he could draw the poor to him:
Speaker and leader and poet, tall and handsome and strong,
With the eyes of a dog for faith and truth that blazed at the thought of a wrong.

They thought in his country's crisis that his time had come at last—
For they measured his brilliant future by the light of his brilliant past.
At every monster meeting the thousands called his name,
And a burst of triumphant cheering greeted him when he came.
They had faith in the strength of a single man, when their fighting lines were
weak,
And a pregnant silence fell on all whenever he rose to speak.

But just when his power was greatest and the people's cause went well,
And just as they needed their leader most, the leader stumbled and fell;
And his pitiful rivals exulted, for they thought that his star had set,
And the hearts of the people who worshipped him were filled with a keen regret;
The cowardly sneer was printed, and whispered the shameful word,
And the scandal was heard by thousands—the world and a bad girl heard.

Down in the frowsy alley, in a dark and narrow room,
On a mattress the shattered drunkard lay ghastly in his gloom;
And the bad girl nursed him and kept him from the drink for which he craved,
And she gave him broth and she watched him, and she soothed him when he
raved,
For she'd heard the boast of his rivals and had sworn to lift him above—
And by day and by night she held him with the strength of a woman's love.

They were holding a monster meeting, and the hour was close at hand
When his rivals would be triumphant and bad laws rule the land;
His people swayed and wavered and scattered like storm-swept birds,
For they needed his magical presence and the sound of his burning words.
But he heard the Drums of the Alley and the feeble answering cheer,
And he felt the strength to his limbs return, and his brain grow cool and clear.

He rose, and the bad girl dressed him well in the den where the lights were dim,
And her eyes grew bright as an angel's might—for she knew the strength in him.

They had sneered when his name was mentioned in the hall with lights aglare.
But the crowd surged back to the platform when 'twas whispered that he was
there.

Like the cry of a crowd from a sinking ship, his people called his name,
And gaunt and white but with eyes alight with the fire of old he came.

He spoke of the shameful sacrifice of the land where he was born;
Spoke with the burning words of truth and the withering words of scorn.
He spoke as he never had done before and his rivals were stricken dumb,
For the little men knew their master, and they knew that he had come;
His song of salvation went through the land in a loud, triumphant strain—
He held them all in the palm of his hand, and he was a king again.

So a man might fall to the gutter, though he be a king of men,
But a man might rise from the gutter with the strength of ten times ten;
And the people's poet and leader for a long time led them all,
Wiser because of his weakness and stronger because of the fall.
They found the girl in the river—the river that flowed by the town—
She died that her spirit might strengthen him, where her love would drag him
down.

Henry Lawson

The League Of Nations

Light on the towns and cities, and peace for evermore!
The Big Five met in the world's light as many had met before,
And the future of man is settled and there shall be no more war.

The lamb shall lie down with the lion, and trust with treachery;
The brave man go with the coward, and the chained mind shackle the free,
And the truthful sit with the liar ever by land and sea.

And there shall be no more passion and no more love nor hate;
No more contempt for the paltry, no more respect for the great;
And the people shall breed like rabbits and mate as animals mate.

For lo! the Big Five have said it, each with a fearsome frown;
Each for his chosen country, State, and city and town;
Each for his lawn and table and the bed where he lies him down.

Cobbler and crank and chandler, magpie and ape disguised;
Each bound to his grocery corner – these are the Five we prized;
Bleating the teaching of others whom they ever despised.

But three shall meet in a cellar, companions of mildew and rats;
And three shall meet in a garret, pungent with stench of the cats,
And three in a cave in the forest where the torchlight maddens the bats –

Bats as blind as the people, streaming into the glare –
And the Nine shall turn the nations back to the plain things there;
Tracing in chalk and charcoal treaties that none can tear:

Truth that goes higher than airships and deeper than submarines,
And a message swifter than wireless – and none shall know what it means –
Till an army is rushed together and ready behind the scenes.

The Big Five sit together in the light of the World and day,
Each tied to his grocery corner though he travel the world for aye,
Each bleating the dreams of dreamers whom he has despised away.

And intellect shall be tortured, and art destroyed for a span –
The brute shall defile the pictures as he did when the age began;
He shall hawk and spit in the palace to prove that he is a man.

Cobbler and crank and chandler, magpie and ape disguised;
Each bound to his grocery corner – these are the Five we prized;
Bleating the teaching of others whom they ever despised.

Let the nations scatter their armies and level their arsenals well,
Let them blow their airships to Heaven and sink their warships to Hell,
Let them maim the feet of the runner and silence the drum and the bell;

But shapes shall glide from the cellar who never had dared to "strike",
And shapes shall drop from the garret (ghastly and so alike)
To drag from the cave in the forest powder and cannon and pike.

As of old, we are sending a message to Garcia still –
Smoke from the peak by sunlight, beacon by night from the hill;
And the drum shall throb in the distance – the drum that never was still.

Henry Lawson

The Legend Of Cooee Gully

The night came down thro' Deadman's Gap,
Where the ghostly saplings bent
Before a wind that tore the fly
From many a digger's tent.
Dark as pitch, and the rain rushed past
On a wind that howled again;
And we crowded into the only but
That stood on the hillside then.

The strong pine rafters creaked and strained,
'Til we thought that the roof would go;
And we felt the box-bark walls bend in
And bulge like calico.

A flood had come from the gorges round:
Thro' the gully's bed it poured.
Down many a deep, deserted shaft
The yellow waters roared.

The scene leapt out when the lightning flashed
And shone with a ghastly grey;
And the night sprang back to the distant range
'Neath a sky as bright as day.

Then the darkness closed like a trap that was sprung,
And the night grew black as coals,
And we heard the ceaseless thunder
Of the water down the holes.

And now and then like a cannon's note
That sounds in the battle din,
We heard the louder thunder spring
From a shaft, when the sides fell in.

We had gathered close to the broad but fire
To yarn of the by-gone years,
When a coo-ee that came from the flooded grounds
Fell sharp on our startled ears.

We sprang to our feet, for well we knew
That in speed lay the only hope;
One caught and over his shoulder threw
A coil of yellow rope.

Then, blinded oft by the lightning's flash,
Down the steep hillside we sped,
And at times we slipped on the sodden path
That ran to the gully's bed.

And on past many a broken shaft
All reckless of risk we ran,
For the wind still brought in spiteful gusts
The cry of the drowning man.

But the cooeing ceased when we reached the place;
And then, ere a man could think,
We heard the treacherous earth give way
And fall from a shaft's black brink.

And deep and wide the rotten side
Slipped into the hungry hole,
And the phosphorus leapt and vanished
Like the flight of the stranger's soul.

And still in the sound of the rushing rain,
When the night comes dark and drear,
From the pitch-black side of that gully wide
The coo-ee you'll hear and hear.

Coo-ee — coo-e-e-e, low and eerily,
It whispers afar and drear —
And then to the heart like an icy dart
It strikes thro' the startled ear!

Dreadier than wrung from the human tongue
It shrieks o'er the sound of the rain,
And back on the hill when the wind is still
It whispers and dies again.

And on thro' the night like the voice of a sprite
That tells of a dire mishap

It echoes around in the gully's bound
And out thro' Deadman's Gap.

Henry Lawson

The Legend Of Mammon Castle

IN THE days that will be olden after many years are gone,
Ere the world emerged from darkness floating out into the dawn,
On a mountain rising steeply from the depth of marsh and wood
Raised in scorn above the lowlands Mammon Castle proudly stood—

Mammon Castle, built of marble that was cut and reared with pain
By the poor and starving wretches who were serfs on that domain—
All the jewel-studded windows shone at sunset like a fire,
And a diamond was flashing from the needle of the spire.

Now the nobles held the castle by a title that was old,
And they drank from crystal goblets and they ate from plates of gold;
The coffers of the castle they were plenshed by the thralls,
And many were the revels that were held in Mammon's halls.

And the plunder from the toilers more than paid for silks and wine,
So the flower-beds were bordered with the jewels of the mine,
All the serfs were taught to worship both the lady and the lord,
And the nobles taught their children to be wiser far than God.

But a vassal preached sedition and in a gloomy hour
Came the wild and haggard vassals to the gate of Mammon Tower;
They asked for food and shelter and were answered by a blow,
And, rising in their anger, soon they laid the castle low.

The jewels of the castle went to buy the people bread,
And according to his labour was the toiler clothed and fed.
And with the wood and marble—my dreaming tells me so—
Many little homes were builded in the valleys down below.

Henry Lawson

The Light On The Wreck

Out there by the rocks, at the end of the bank,
In the mouth of the river, the Wanderer sank.
She is resting where meet the blue water and green,
And only her masts and her funnel are seen;
And you see, when is fading the sunset's last fleck,
On her foremast a lantern—a light on a wreck.
'Tis a light on a wreck, warning ships to beware
Of the drowned iron hull of the Wanderer there;
And the ships that come in and go out in the night
Keep a careful lookout for the Wanderer's light.
There are rules for the harbour and rules for the wave;
But all captains steer clear of the Wanderer's grave.

And the stories of strong lives that ended in wrecks
Might be likened to lights over derelict decks;
Like the light where, in sight of the streets of the town,
In the mouth of the channel the Wanderer went down.
Keep a watch from the desk, as they watch from the deck;
Keep a watch from your home for the light on the wreck.

But the lights on the wrecks since creation began
Have been shining in vain for the vagabond clan.
They will never take warning, they will not beware,
For they hold for their mottoes 'What matter?' 'What care?'
And they sail without compass, they sail without check,
Till they steer to their grave 'neath a light on a wreck.

Henry Lawson

The Lights Of Cobb & Co.

Fire lighted; on the table a meal for sleepy men;

A lantern in the stable; a jingle now and then;

The mail-coach looming darkly by light on moon and star;

The growl of sleepy voices; a candle in the bar;

A stumble in the passage of folk with wits abroad;

A swear-word from a bedroom---the shout of "All aboard!"

"Tekh tehk! Git-up!" "Hold fast, there!" and down the range we go;

Five hundred miles of scattered camps will watch for Cobb and Co.

Old coaching towns already decaying for their sins;

Uncounted "Half-way Houses," and scores of "Ten-Mile Inns;"

The riders from the stations by lonely granite peaks;

The black-boy for the shepherds on sheep and cattle creeks;

The roaring camps of Gulgong, and many a Digger's Rest;"

The diggers on the Lachlan; the huts of Farthest West;

Some twenty thousand exiles who sailed for weal or woe---

The bravest hearts of twenty lands will wait for Cobb and Co.

The morning star has vanished, the frost and fog are gone.

In one of those grand mornings which but on mountains dawn;

A flask of friendly whisky---each other's hopes we share---

And throw our top-coats open to drink the mountain air.

The roads are rare to travel, and life seems all complete;
The grind of wheels on gravel, the trop of horses' feet,
The trot, trot, trot and canter, as down the spur we go---
The green sweeps to horizons blue that call for Cobb and Co.
We take a bright girl actress through western dust and damp,
To bear the home-world message, and sing for sinful camps,
To stir our hearts and break them, wind hearts that hope and ache---
(Ah! When she thinks again of these her own must nearly break!)

Five miles this side of the gold-field, a loud, triumphant shout:
Five hundred cheering diggers have snatched the horses out:
With "Auld Lang Syne" in chorus, through roaring camp they go
That cheer for her, and cheer for Home, and cheer for Cobb and Co.
Three lamps above the ridges and gorges dark and deep,
A flash on sandstone cuttings where sheer the sidlings sweep,
A flash on shrouded wagons, on water ghastly white;
Weird brush and scattered remnants of "rushes in the night;"
Across the swollen river a flash beyond the ford:
Ride hard to warn the driver! He's drunk or mad, good Lord!
But on the bank to westward a broad and cheerful glow---
New camps extend across the plains new routes for Cobb and Co.
Swift scramble up the sidling where teams climb inch by inch;

Pause, bird-like, on the summit--then breakneck down the pinch;
By clear, ridge-country rivers, and gaps where tracks run high,
Where waits the lonely horseman, cut clear against the sky;
Past haunted half-way houses--where convicts made the bricks---
Scrub-yards and new bark shanties, we dash with five and six;
Through stringy-bark and blue-gum, and box and pine we go---
A hundred miles shall see to-night the lights of Cobb and Co!

Henry Lawson

The Lily And The Bee

I Looked upon the lilies
When the morning sun was low,
And the sun shone through a lily
With a softened honey glow.
A spot was in the lily
That moved incessantly,
And when I looked into the cup
I saw a morning bee.
"Consider the lilies!"
But, it occurs to me,
Does any one consider
The lily and the bee?

The lily stands for beauty,
Use, purity, and trust,
It does a four-fold duty,
As all good mortals must.
Its whiteness is to teach us,
Its faith to set us free,
Its beauty is to cheer us,
And its wealth is for the bee.

"Consider the lilies!"
But, it occurs to me,
Does any one consider
The lily and the bee?

Henry Lawson

The Lily Of St Leonards

'TIS sunrise over Watson,
Where I sailed out to sea,
On that wild run to London
That wrecked and ruined me.
The beauty of the morning
On bluff and point and bay,
But the Lily of St Leonards
Was fairer than the day.

O Lily of St Leonards!
And I was mad to roam—
She died with loving words for me
Three days ere I came home.

As fair as lily whiteness,
As pure as lily gold,
And bright with childlike brightness
And wise as worlds of old.
Her heart for all was beating
And all hearts were her own—
Like sunshine through the Lily
Her purity was shown.

O Lily of St Leonards!
My night is on the track,
'Tis well you never lived to see
The wreck that I came back.

A leaden sky shuts over
A sobbing leaden sea,
For the Lily of St Leonards
Is never more for me.
I seek the wharf of Outward
Where the deck no longer thrills
Where she stood with great tears starting
Like the lights on dark wet hills.

The world was all before me
The laurels on my brow—

'Twas the world-star of the rovers,
'Tis the Star of Exile now.

Henry Lawson

The Little Czar

Oh, Great White Czar of Russia, who hid your face and ran,
You've flung afar the grandest chance that ever came to man!
You might have been, and could have been—ah, think it to your shame!—
The Czar of all the Russias, in fact as well as name.

'The Father of your People,' your children called to you
To do the things to save them which only you could do.
Your soldiers whipped their faces—the trodden snow is red
With the blood of men and women; and the blood is on your head!

I saw in dreams a monarch, of his power all unaware,
Step down amongst his people from off his palace stair:
The Grand Dukes shrank and trembled, the traitors fled afar—
Through all the mighty Russias rang the order of the Czar!

You might have journeyed freely, wherever path is made,
Through all your vast dominions, alone and unafraid;
And, in the eyes of subjects, the cultured and the rude,
Have seen, instead of hatred, the tears of gratitude.

Oh, little Czar of Russia, a weak man and a fool,
At the mercy of your nobles—their prisoner and their tool—
Your freedom and your people's and their love was to be won:
Ah, me! it would have been a deed a coward might have done.

Yet we who know so little might say one word for you:
How many in our weakness have lost our kingdoms, too!
And facing death and exile, when all the world seemed black,
How many in our after-strength have won our kingdoms back!

Henry Lawson

The Little Native Rose

There is a lasting little flower,
That everybody knows,
Yet none has thought to think about
The little Native Rose.

The wattle and the waratah—
The world has heard of those;
But who, outside Australia, kens
The little Native Rose.

Yet first for faint, far off perfume,
That lives where memory goes;
And first of all for fadelessness—
The little Native Rose.

Henry Lawson

The Little Slit In The Tail

I'M GLAD that the Bushmen can't see me now
A-doing it tall in the town;
I've an inch-brimmed hat on my sun-burnt brow—
And my collar jumps up and down.
I'm wearing a vest that would charm a snake,
And a tie like a lost soul's wail;
And I'm dressed in a coat of the latest make,
With a little slit in the tail:
With a little slit in the tail of it,
With a little slit in the tail.

My pants alone are a thing of joy,
And they're built to show my bends,
With a crease behind and a crease before,
And a little curl in the ends.
I carry my nose-rag in my cuff,
And the lot should get me gaol—
I paid five guineas for my rig-out,
And one for the slit in the tail:
For the little slit in the tail of it,
For the little slit in the tail.

Henry Lawson

The Loveable Characters

I long for the streets but the Lord knoweth best,
For there I am never a saint;
There are lovable characters out in the West,
With humour heroic and quaint;
And, be it Up Country, or be it Out Back,
When I shall have gone to my Home,
I trust to be buried 'twixt River and Track
Where my lovable characters roam.

There are lovable characters drag through the scrub,
Where the Optimist ever prevails;
There are lovable characters hang round the pub,
There are lovable jokers at sales
Where the auctioneer's one of the lovable wags
(Maybe from his "order" estranged),
And the beer is on tap, and the pigs in the bags
Of the purchasing cockies are changed.

There were lovable characters out in the West,
Of fifty hot summers, or more,
Who could not be proved, when it came to the test,
Too old to be sent to the war;
They were all forty-five and were orphans, they said,
With no one to keep them, or keep;
And mostly in France, with the world's bravest dead,
Those lovable characters sleep.

I long for the streets, but the Lord knoweth best,
For there I am never a saint;
There are lovable characters out in the West,
With humour heroic and quaint;
And, be it Up Country, or be it Out Back,
When I shall have gone to my Home,
I trust to be buried 'twixt River and Track
Where my lovable characters roam.

Henry Lawson

The Man From Waterloo (With Kind Regards To Banjo)

It was the Man from Waterloo,
When work in town was slack,
Who took the track as bushmen do,
And humped his swag out back.
He tramped for months without a bob,
For most the sheds were full,
Until at last he got a job
At picking up the wool.
He found the work was rather rough,
But swore to see it through,
For he was made of sterling stuff—
The Man from Waterloo.
The first remark was like a stab
That fell his ear upon,
'Twas—'There's another something scab
'The boss has taken on!'
They couldn't let the towny be—
They sneered like anything;
They'd mock him when he'd sound the 'g'
In words that end in 'ing.'

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

The towny saw he must be up

Or else be underneath,
And so one day, before them all,
He dared to clean his teeth.
The men came running from the shed,
And shouted, 'Here's a lark!
'It's gone to clean its tooties!' said
The man from Ironbark.
His feeble joke was much enjoyed;
He sneered as bullies do,
And with a scrubbing-brush he guyed
The Man from Waterloo.

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

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

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

Henry Lawson

The Man Who Raised Charlestown

They were hanging men in Buckland who would not cheer King George –
The parson from his pulpit and the blacksmith from his forge;
They were hanging men and brothers, and the stoutest heart was down,
When a quiet man from Buckland rode at dusk to raise Charlestown.

Not a young man in his glory filled with patriotic fire,
Not an orator or soldier, or a known man in his shire;
He was just the Unexpected – one of Danger's Volunteers,
At a time for which he'd waited, all unheard of, many years.

And Charlestown met in council, the quiet man to hear –
The town was large and wealthy, but the folks were filled with fear,
The fear of death and plunder; and none to lead had they,
And Self fought Patriotism as will always be the way.

The man turned to the people, and he spoke in anger then.
And crooked his finger here and there to those he marked as men.
And many gathered round him to see what they could do –
For men know men in danger, as they know the cowards too.

He chose his men and captains, and sent them here and there,
The arms and ammunition were gathered in the square;
While peaceful folk were praying or croaking, every one,
He was working with his blacksmiths at the carriage of a gun.

While the Council sat on Sunday, and the church bells rang their peal,
The quiet man was mending a broken waggon wheel;
While they passed their resolutions on his doings (and the likes),
From a pile his men brought to him he was choosing poles for pikes.

(They were hanging men in Buckland who would not cheer King George –
They were making pikes in Charlestown at every blacksmith's forge:
While the Council sat in session and the same old song they sang,
They heard the horsemen gallop out, and the blacksmiths' hammers clang.)

And a thrill went through the city ere the drums began to roll,
And the coward found his courage, and the drunkard found his soul.
So a thrill went through the city that would go through all the land,
For the quiet man from Buckland held men's hearts in his right hand.

And he caught a Charlestown poet (there are many tell the tale),
And he took him by the collar when he'd filled him up with ale;
"Now, then, write a song for Charlestown that shall lift her on her way,
For she's marching out to Buckland and to Death at break o' day."

And he set the silenced women tearing sheet and shift and shirt
To make bandages and roll them for the men that would get hurt.
And he called out his musicians and he told them what to play:
"For I want my men excited when they march at break o' day."

And he set the women cooking – with a wood-and-water crew –
"For I want no empty stomachs for the work we have to do."
Then he said to his new soldiers: "Eat your fill while yet you may;
'Tis a heavy road to Buckland that we'll march at break o' day."

And a shout went through the city when the drums began to roll
(And the coward was a brave man and the beggar had a soul),
And the drunken Charlestown poet cared no more if he should hang,
For his song of "Charlestown's Coming" was the song the soldiers sang.

And they cursed the King of England, and they shouted in their glee,
And they swore to drive the British and their friends into the sea;
But when they'd quite finished swearing, said their leader "Let us pray,
For we march to Death and Freedom, and it's nearly dawn of day."

There were marching feet at daybreak, and close upon their heels
Came the scuffling tread of horses and the heavy crunch of wheels;
So they took the road to Buckland, with their scout out to take heed,
And a quiet man of fifty on a grey horse in the lead.

There was silence in the city, there was silence as of night –
Women in the ghostly daylight, kneeling, praying, deathly white,
As their mothers knelt before them, as their daughters knelt since then,
And as ours shall, in the future, kneel and pray for fighting men.

For their men had gone to battle, as our sons and grandsons too
Must go out, for Life and Freedom, as all nations have to do.
And the Charlestown women waited for the sounds that came too soon –
Though they listened, almost breathless, till the early afternoon.

Then they heard the tones of danger for their husbands, sweethearts, sons,

And they stopped their ears in terror, crying, "Oh, my God! The guns!"
Then they strained their ears to listen through the church-bells' startled chime –
Far along the road to Buckland, Charlestown's guns were marking time.

"They advance!" "They halt!" "Retreating!" "They come back!" The guns are
done!"

But the calmer spirits, listening, said: "Our guns are going on."
And the friend and foe in Buckland felt two different kinds of thrills
When they heard the Charlestown cannon talking on the Buckland hills.

And the quiet man of Buckland sent a message in that day,
And he gave the British soldiers just two hours to march away.
And they hang men there no longer, there is peace on land and wave;
On the sunny hills of Buckland there is many a quiet grave.

There is peace upon the land, and there is friendship on the waves –
On the sunny hills of Buckland there are rows of quiet graves.
And an ancient man in Buckland may be seen in sunny hours,
Pottering round about his garden, and his kitchen stuff and flowers.

Henry Lawson

The March Of Ivan

Are you coming, Ivan, coming?—Ah, the ways are long and slow,
In the vast land that we know not—and we never sought to know.
We are watching through the daybreak, when the anxious night is done,
For the dots upon the skyline—black against the rising sun;
We are watching through the morning haze, and waiting through the night,
For the long, dark, distant columns that proclaim the Muscovite!
Are you coming, Ivan, coming? (Oh! the world is growing gray
With the terror of the future and the madness of to-day!)
Are you marching, Ivan—forward? (Oh! the world is dark'ning fast,
For the crimes of greater nations 'gainst the small ones in the past.)
Yours, in part, to make atonement, so remember what you are!
Ivan! Sing!—"The Slav is coming! On for Russia and the Czar!"

Ivan's Song

"Yes, I'm coming, Ivan, coming—I am marching out again
On the weary roads of Russia, past the forest, marsh and plain;
Past the field and past the village, in the shine and in the rain—
By the cart-rut and the grass-track and the jolting cattle-train.
(And, maybe, some gleam of glory penetrates my sluggish brain)
I am marching out for Russia, and for Europe and for you—
But, maybe, I'm mainly marching just because they told me to.

"I have marched to many frontiers, in the pregnant days gone by,
When they told us where to march to, but they did not tell us why.
And they showed us whom to fight with, and they told us where to die.
I have seen our grey battalions to their Heaven—or Hades—hurled—
'Twas enough it was for Russia!—what cared we about the world?

"Did one moan of Ivan's mother penetrate to other lands?
Did one prayer of Ivan's father—with his old and knotted hands?
Did one sob from Ivan's sweetheart, or one cry from Ivan's wife?
Or a wail from Ivan's children, for the loss of Ivan's life?
Marching with the Wolf of Hunger—marching with the Bear of Strength!
We have marched for many winters—but the end is near at length!

"'Tis a long, long march from Plevna, when the Bear went to his den.
It is far from the Crimea; Oh! you did not want us then!

From the shambles of Port Arthur, 'twas a weary way and slow—
And our track was always dotted with the black dots on the snow.
By black dots and crimson splashes you may trace poor Ivan's track—
And I think that Ivan's banner should be red, and white and black.

"Ne'er was Present-blinded tyrant who learnt wisdom from the Past,
And there's one forgot the errand that brought Ivan this way last!
'To the frontier, and no further' seemed our motto and our vow,
Since we marched from burning Moscow—but we're marching further now!
Neighbour's burning house—or city!—they are easy to forget;
But we lit a light for Europe that shall be rekindled yet!

"Never song of Ivan's valour, or of 'Russia's Flag Unfurled!'
Or the Iron Cross of Russia, penetrates the Outer World.
Ye! who civilise and peddle, ye who hesitate and lag,
Never heard the Russian March and never saw the Russian flag!
You have called on us to save you, never saying why, or how,
But the samovar is boiling! and you'll hear and see us now.

"From our garrets and our cellars—from the little all we had—
Where the winter brings the sleigh-bells to the streets of Petrograd;
From our huts and from our hutches—from wherever we may be—
From our goat's-flesh and our mare's milk and our black unsweetened tea,
From the silence of Siberia, and the strange, snow-deadened streets—
From the blazing banks of Jordan, where we dip our winding-sheets.
From our black bread and our vodka—asking naught, and undismayed—
From our never-empty cradles!—we are coming to your aid.

"Oh, we leave no bands behind us, blaring tunes of Tyranny,
And we wave no swords above us, yelling songs of Liberty;
And no blatant voice of ruler, as we tramp through dry and wet,
Blares: 'Remember You are Russians!'—we're not likely to forget.
There are some who have forgotten—merely men, like you and me—
And one object of our marching is to jog their memory.

"You shall hear us, you shall see us—save the dead and deaf and blind—
While the armour of our winter hardens thick and fast behind.
We are marching, we are coming, and we are not on the sea—
You shall see us on the furthest frontier of our enemy!
And while you fix up your frontiers, and remember what you are,
We shall march with Peace for Europe!—back to Russia and the Czar."

Henry Lawson

The Memories They Bring

I would never waste the hours
Of the time that is mine own,
Writing verses about flowers
For their own sweet sakes alone;
Gushing as a schoolgirl gushes
Over babies at their best—
Or as poets trill of thrushes,
Larks, and starlings and the rest.
I am not a man who praises
Beauty that he cannot see,
But the buttercups and daisies
Bring my childhood back to me;
And before life's bitter battle,
That breaks lion hearts and kills,
Oh the waratah and wattle
Saw my boyhood on the hills.

It was "Cissy" or Cecilia,
And I loved her very much,
When I wore the white camelia
That will wither at a touch.
Ah, the fairest chapter closes
With lilies white and blue,
When the wild days with the roses
Cast their glamour over you!

Vine leaves fall and laurels wither
(Madd'ning drink and pride insane),
And the fate that sends us hither
Ever takes us back again.
Fading flowers—slow pulsations—
Flowers pressed for memory
But the red and pink carnations
Speak most bitter things to me.

Henry Lawson

The Men We Might Have Been

When God's wrath-cloud is o'er me,
Affrighting heart and mind;
When days seem dark before me,
And days seem black behind;
Those friends who think they know me --
Who deem their insight keen --
They ne'er forget to show me
The man I might have been.

He's rich and independent,
Or rising fast to fame;
His bright star is ascendant,
The country knows his name;
His houses and his gardens
Are splendid to be seen;
His fault the wise world pardons --
The man I might have been.

His fame and fortune haunt me;
His virtues wave me back;
His name and prestige daunt me
When I would take the track;
But you, my friend true-hearted --
God keep our friendship green! --
You know how I was parted
From all I might have been.

But what avails the ache of
Remorse or weak regret?
We'll battle for the sake of
The men we might be yet!
We'll strive to keep in sight of
The brave, the true, and clean,
And triumph yet in spite of
The men we might have been.

Henry Lawson

The Men Who Come Behind

There's a class of men (and women) who are always on their guard—
Cunning, treacherous, suspicious—feeling softly—grasping hard—
Brainy, yet without the courage to forsake the beaten track—
Cautiously they feel their way behind a bolder spirit's back.
If you save a bit of money, and you start a little store—
Say, an oyster-shop, for instance, where there wasn't one before—
When the shop begins to pay you, and the rent is off your mind,
You will see another started by a chap that comes behind.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Henry Lawson

The Men Who Live It Down

I have sinned, like others, blindly, without thought and without fear,
And my best friends say it kindly, 'You should go away from here.'
Shall I fly the paltry spirit of a narrow little town,
While the battle-drums are beating for the men who live it down?
Down the street where all men know me I can walk with level eyes,
They believe the lies about me, they can sneer, but I despise.
From my black and bitter childhood, from my dull and joyless youth,
It is I who—it is I who—I and Christ who know the truth!

I have sinned, but as a man might; like a man I'll rise again
From long nights of mental torture, from long days of care and pain.
Pass me by with eyes averted, with a shrug or with a frown,
But their heads shall bow in ashes long ere my head shall go down!

Ah! the curs, who dare not trespass, quick to sneer and quick to blame;
But the wider world is kinder—it takes long to damn a name.
There's a heart that's worth a million and a head that's worth a crown,
And the flash of bright eyes sometimes for the men who live it down.

There's a hand-grip close and silent, firm in trust and sympathy,
Sends the old thrill through my being, sends the old hopes up in me.
There is one who'll stand beside me when the screen is round my bed,
And the godly pass their stricture on the sinner who is dead.

When the crape is round my picture and my mad, wild spirit's free—
And you realise how little you have ever known of me
When the worst is said and printed by the coward and the clown,
Then, I trust, a friend might answer—'There lies one who lived it down.'

Henry Lawson

The Men Who Made Australia

There'll be royal times in Sydney for the Cuff and Collar Push,
There'll be lots of dreary drivel and clap-trap
From the men who own Australia, but who never knew the Bush,
And who could not point their runs out on the map.
Oh, the daily Press will grovel as it never did before,
There'll be many flags of welcome in the air,
And the Civil Service poet, he shall write odes by the score—
But the men who made the land will not be there.
You shall meet the awful Lady of the latest Birthday Knight—
(She is trying to be English, don't-cher-know?)
You shall hear the empty mouthing of the champion blatherskite,
You shall hear the boss of local drapers blow.
There'll be 'majahs' from the counter, tailors' dummies from the fleet,
And to represent Australia here to-day,
There's the today with his card-case and his cab in Downing-street;
But the men who made Australia—where are they?

Call across the blazing sand wastes of the Never-Never Land!
There are some who will not answer yet awhile,
Some whose bones rot in the mulga or lie bleaching on the sand,
Died of thirst to win the land another mile.
Thrown from horses, ripped by cattle, lost on deserts; and the weak,
Mad through loneliness or drink (no matter which),
Drowned in floods or dead of fever by the sluggish slimy creek—
These are men who died to make the Wool-Kings rich.

Call across the scrubby ridges where they clear the barren soil,
And the gaunt Bush-women share the work of men—
Toil and loneliness for ever—hardship, loneliness and toil—
Where the brave drought-ruined farmer starts again!
Call across the boundless sheep-runs of a country cursed for sheep—
Call across the awful scrublands west of Bourke!
But they have no time to listen—they have scarcely time to sleep—
For the men who conquer deserts have to work.

Dragged behind the crawling sheep-flock on the hot and dusty plain,
They must make a cheque to feed the wife and kids—
Riding night-watch round the cattle in the pelting, freezing rain,
While world-weariness is pressing down the lids.

And away on far out-stations, seldom touched by Heaven's breath,
In a loneliness that smothers love and hate—
Where they never take white women—there they live the living death
With a half-caste or a black-gin for a mate.

They must toil to save the gaunt stock in the blazing months of drought,
When the stinging, blinding blight is in men's eyes—
On the wretched, burnt selections, on the big runs further out
Where the sand-storm rises lurid to the skies.
Not to profit when the grass is waving waist-high after rain,
And the mighty clip of wool comes rolling in—
For the Wool-King goes to Paris with his family again
And the gold that souls are sacrificed to win.

There are carriages in waiting for the swells from over-sea,
There are banquets in the latest London style,
While the men who made Australia live on damper, junk and tea—
But the quiet voices whisper, 'Wait a while!'
For the sons of all Australia, they were born to conquer fate—
And, where charity and friendship are sincere,
Where a sinner is a brother and a stranger is a mate,
There the future of a nation's written clear.

Aye, the cities claim the triumphs of a land they do not know,
But all empty is the day they celebrate!
For the men who made Australia federated long ago,
And the men to rule Australia—they can wait.
Though the bed may be the rough bunk or the gum leaves or the sand,
And the roof for half the year may be the sky—
There are men amongst the Bushmen who were born to save the land!
And they'll take their places sternly by-and-by.

There's a whisper on the desert though the sunset breeze hath died
In the scrubs, though not a breath to stir a bough,
There's a murmur, not of waters, down the Lachlan River side,
'Tis the spirit of Australia waking now!
There's the weird hymn of the drought-night on the western water-shed,
Where the beds of unlocked rivers crack and parch;
'Tis the dead that we have buried, and our great unburied dead,
Who are calling now on living men to march!

Round the camp fire of the fencers by the furthest panel west,

In the men's hut by the muddy billabong,
On the Great North-Western Stock-routes where the drovers never rest,
They are sorting out the right things from the wrong.
In the shearers' hut the slush lamp shows a haggard, stern-faced man
Preaching war against the Wool-King to his mates;
And wherever go the billy, water-bag and frying-pan,
They are drafting future histories of states!

Henry Lawson

The Men Who Made Bad Matches

'Tis the song of many husbands, and you all must understand
That you cannot call me coward now that women rule the land;
I have written much for women, where I thought that they were right,
But the men who made bad matches claim a song from me to-night.
Oh, the men who made bad matches are of every tribe and clime,
And, if Adam was the first man, then they date from Adam's time.
They shall live and they shall suffer, until married life is past,
And the last sad son of Adam stands alone—at peace at last.

Oh, the men who made bad matches, and the Great Misunderstood,
Are through all the world a mighty and a silent brotherhood.
If a wife is discontented, every other woman knows—
But the men who made bad matches keep the cruel secret close.

You may say that you can tell them, by their clothing, if you will,
But a man may seem neglected, and his home be happy still.
You may tell by their assumption of conventional disguise—
But, the men who made bad matches, I can tell them by their eyes!

I have seen them by the camp-fire, where a child's voice never comes,
I have seen them by the fireside, in their seeming happy homes—
Seen their wives' false arms go round them, and the kisses that were lies—
Oh, the men who made bad matches! I can tell them by their eyes.

I have seen them bad in prison—seen them sullen, seen them sad;
I have seen them (in the mad-house)—I have seen them raving mad.
Watched them fight the battle bravely, for the children's sake alone,
Like a father who has wronged them, and who lives but to atone.

But it's cruel, oh! it's cruel, for the husband and the wife,
Who have not one thought in common, and are yoked for weary life.
They must see it through and suffer, for the children they must rear—
Oh, the folk who made bad matches have a heavy cross to bear.

There is not a ray of comfort, in the future's gloomy sky,
For the children of bad matches will make trouble by-and-bye.
And though second wives be angels, while the first wives were the worst,
No second wife yet wedded makes a man forget the first.

Ah! the men who made bad matches think more often than we know,
Of the girls they should have married, in the glorious long ago,
And there's many a wife and mother thinks with bitter pain to-day,
Of her giddy, silly girlhood, and the man she sent away.

Life is sad for men and women, but the thoughts are bitter sad
Of the girls we should have married, and the boys we should have had.
But we'll part now with a handshake, if we cannot with a kiss,
And bad matches may be mended in a better world than this.

Henry Lawson

The Men Who Sleep With Danger

The men who camp with Danger
Are mostly quiet men:
And one may use a rifle,
And one may use a pen,
And one may strap a camera
In deserts to his bike;
But men who sleep with Danger
Are pretty much alike.
To men in places pleasant
Or in the barren West
There's Danger ever present –
A half unheeded guest.
But , thoughtful for the stranger,
The timid or the weak –
The men who camp with Danger
Keep watch but do not speak.
The men who go with Danger
Are mostly dreamy-eyed
Upon the swooping fo'c'sle.
Or by the camp-fire side,
And when they sit in darkness,
To show us where they are:
The glowing of a pipe-bowl
And often a cigar
The men who camp with Danger
Have quiet humour too,
And songs that you've forgotten,
And real good yarns for you.
There's little you can tell them
Of yourself or your own
That men who've lived with Danger
Have never felt or known.
The men who sleep with Danger
Sleep soundly while they may,
But always wake at midnight
Or just before the day.
A something in the darkness
That shudders at the dawn –
A side-mate softly wakened,

A rifle swiftly drawn.
The men who sail with Danger
As actors are ideal:
They lightly laugh to fool you
When Danger's very real.
The men who sail with Danger
A wondrous insight have:
They know if you are timid,
They know if you are brave.
The stewards set the tables
With careless, practised care,
And take accustomed comforts
To sea-sick cabins there.
They knock at doors of state-rooms
With broth and tea and toast,
While well they know, it's touch and go,
And death sits on the coast.
The man who lives with Danger
Has knowledge all his own;
The instinct of a woman,
Of men who fight alone.
He learns from peace and comfort,
He learns from care and strife;
Unwittingly from all things
And from his native wife.
The men who live with Danger
See sermons in a log;
They have the nerves of horses,
The instincts of a dog,
When illness comes to loved ones
They know where'er they roam –
Have you seen, without for reason,
A farther start for home?
They know and feel our 'warnings'
As only Gipsies do;
They know the Norse Vardoger –
They hear and see it, too.
They know when death has passed them,
And the death watch is at end.
They know when he is coming –
The Unexpected Friend.
The men who live with Danger,

They take things as they go –
In seeming unpreparedness,
To those who do not know.
They sleep when they have toiled and laughed
And fought for someone's sake;
But Danger whispers in their ear,
And they are wide awake !

Henry Lawson

The Men Who Stuck To Me

They were men of many nations, they were men of many stations,
They were men in many places, and of high and low degree;
Men of many types and faces, but, alike in all the races,
They were men I met in trouble, and the men who stuck to me.
Some were friends, but most were strangers; some were weary world-wide
rangers;
Some in freedom were in prison, and in prison some were free,
Oh, I have a vivid vision of the men I met in prison—
In the craving for tobacco they were men who stuck to me.

Some I never met and never knew their great but vain endeavour,
For my sake! And some were old mates whom I never more may see;
Never heard me, some I talked with; never saw me, some I walked with;
Blind and deaf, and dumb and foreign were the men who stuck to me.

“Yes, I’ll stick!” the words most human, be the trouble man or woman;
Stick with money or without it, and whoever you may be;
Right or wrong—in drink or sadness—“stick” in sanity or madness—
Such as these, the men I stuck to, and the men who stuck to me.

Ah! we see not in our blindness that the world is full of kindness,
Kindness to make full atonement for all evil that there be;
Oh! my life was deadly fateful, but my heart was always grateful,
And I send this song at Christmas to the men who stuck to me.

Henry Lawson

The Motor Car

The motor car is sullen, like a thing that should not be;
The motor car is master of Smart Society.
'Twas born of sweated genius and collared by a clown;
'Twas planned by Retribution to ride its riders down.
And straight for Caesar's Column,
It runs to Caesar's Column,
Last section, Caesar's Column
To ride its riders down!

The motor car is shame-struck, for greed and misery,
For mad and hopeless self-lust, and the sins that need not be.
The motor car is vicious, for its conscience makes it so,
It aye would smash the victims while it runs the riders low.
And straight for Caesar's Column,
Its goal is Caesar's Column,
It longs for Caesar's Column
To lay its riders low.

The motor car is maddened like a horse that's had a fright,
The shameful day behind it and the Coming of the Night!
It flees across the country and it flees back to the town
And straight for Caesar's Column to run its riders down.
And straight for Caesar's Column,
What ho! for Caesar's Column!
Hurrah! for Caesar's Column!
To seal its riders down.

The motor car is reckless like a gambler losing fast;
The motor car's in terror of the Future—and the Past;
The motor car is worn out and has passed Sin's boundary by,
And is bound for Caesar's Column where to pile its riders high.
It's bound for Caesar's Column
And marked for Caesar's Column,
And doomed for Caesar's Column
To pile its riders high.

The motor car is brainless, and scornful of all tears,
Its dust is in our faces, its giggle in our ears,
Its harsh laugh is the last laugh of the last lost soul alone,

'Tis nearing Caesar's Column to set self-damned in stone.
Change here for Caesar's Column!
All out for Caesar's Column!
Past Hope—and Caesar's Column
To lodge self-damned in stone.

I don't know how 'twill happen, or when 'twill come to pass,
But folk shall yet pass sanely by river, tree and grass;
By homesteads and farm wagons, they'll ride each pleasant mile,
And back from Caesar's Column where the world went mad awhile.
And back from Caesar's Column
With lessons from the Column;
Grown sane at Caesar's Column
To save the world awhile.

Henry Lawson

The Mountain Splitter

He works in the glen where the waratah grows,
And the gums and the ashes are tall,
'Neath cliffs that re-echo the sound of his blows
When the wedges leap in from the mawl.

He comes of a hardy old immigrant race,
And he feels not the rain nor the drouth.
His sinews are tougher than wire; and his face
Has been tanned by the sun of the south.

Now doomed to be shorn of its glory at last
Is the stately old tree he attacks;
Its moments of life he is numbering fast
With the keen steady strokes of his axe.

Loud cracks at the butt; and the strong wood is burst;
And the splitter steps backward, and turns
His eyes to the boughs that move slowly at first
Ere they rush to their grave in the ferns.

He strips off the bark with slight effort of strength
And stretches it out on the weeds,
And marks off the trunk with a measure the length
Of the rails or the palings he needs.

The teeth of his crosscut so truly are set
That it swings from his elbow at ease;
And the song of the saw—I am hearing it yet—
Has the music of wind in the trees.

Strong blows on the wedge, and a rip and a tear,
And the log opens up to the butt;
And, spreading around through the pure mountain air,
Is the scent of the wood newly cut.

A lover of comfort and cronies is he;
And when the day's work is behind,
A fire, and a yarn, and a billy of tea,
At the hut of the splitter you'll find.

His custom is sought in the town by the range;
For well to the future he looks:
His cheques in an instant the storekeepers change;
And his name is the best on the books.

Henry Lawson

The Muscovy Duck

The rooster is a brainless dude, although he sports a crest,
The hen's an awful fool we know, though hen-eggs are the best;
She'll flutter, cackling, anywhere save through a gate or door,
And try to hatch a door-knob, too, for forty days or more.
The turkey is of small account, we'll let it go in peace,
And other fowls are ornaments, and geese are simply geese;
But over all that cackle, hiss, or gobble, quack, or cluck,
My favourite shall always be the quaint Muscovy duck.

I'm fond of Mrs Muscovy, I think she knows the most
Of all the different kinds of fowls that poultry-breeders boast.
She knows best how to build her nest when laying time is past,
And you should see the knowing pride with which she sets at last.
She waddles out for food and drink—she's not afraid of us,
And if we fix her now and then she doesn't make a fuss;
No frantic flaps of useless wings, no cackle, hiss, nor cluck,
She's queen of all philosophers—the quaint Muscovy duck.

It is a wondrous thing to see, and a wondrous thing to tell,
Her ducklings know as much as ducks the day they leave the shell.
That she is proud as proud can be, is plain to any dunce—
The little ducklings set to work to grow up ducks at once;
And, on a sunny winter's day, 'tis a good thing for the eyes
To see her waddle round and watch her ducklings catching flies,
I love her for her waddle, and her patience, and her pluck,
Her wag of tail and nod of head—the quaint Muscovy duck.

Henry Lawson

The Never-Never Country

By homestead, hut, and shearing-shed,
By railroad, coach, and track --
By lonely graves of our brave dead,
Up-Country and Out-Back:
To where 'neath glorious the clustered stars
The dreamy plains expand --
My home lies wide a thousand miles
In the Never-Never Land.

It lies beyond the farming belt,
Wide wastes of scrub and plain,
A blazing desert in the drought,
A lake-land after rain;
To the sky-line sweeps the waving grass,
Or whirls the scorching sand --
A phantom land, a mystic land!
The Never-Never Land.

Where lone Mount Desolation lies,
Mounts Dreadful and Despair --
'Tis lost beneath the rainless skies
In hopeless deserts there;
It spreads nor'-west by No-Man's-Land --
Where clouds are seldom seen --
To where the cattle-stations lie
Three hundred miles between.

The drovers of the Great Stock Routes
The strange Gulf country know --
Where, travelling from the southern drought
The big lean bullocks go;
And camped by night where plains lie wide,
Like some old ocean's bed,
The watchmen in the starlight ride
Round fifteen hundred head.

And west of named and numbered days
The shearers walk and ride --
Jack Cornstalk and the Ne'er-do-well

And the grey-beard side by side;
They veil their eyes -- from moon and stars,
And slumber on the sand --
Sad memories steep as years go round
In Never-Never Land.

By lonely huts north-west of Bourke,
Through years of flood and drought,
The best of English black-sheep work
Their own salvation out:
Wild fresh-faced boys grown gaunt and brown --
Stiff-lipped and haggard-eyed --
They live the Dead Past grimly down!
Where boundary-riders ride.

The College Wreck who sank beneath,
Then rose above his shame,
Tramps west in mateship with the man
Who cannot write his name.
'Tis there where on the barren track
No last half-crust's begrudged --
Where saint and sinner, side by side,
Judge not, and are not judged.

Oh rebels to society!
The Outcasts of the West --
Oh hopeless eyes that smile for me,
And broken hearts that jest!
The pluck to face a thousand miles --
The grit to see it through!
The communion perfected! --
And -- I am proud of you!

The Arab to true desert sand,
The Finn to fields of snow,
The Flax-stick turns to Maoriland,
While the seasons come and go;
And this old fact comes home to me --
And will not let me rest --
However barren it may be,
Your own land is the best!

And, lest at ease I should forget
True mateship after all,
My water-bag and billy yet
Are hanging on the wall;
And if my fate should show the sign
I'd tramp to sunsets grand
With gaunt and stern-eyed mates of mine
In the Never-Never Land.

Henry Lawson

The New Chum Jackaroo

Let bushmen think as bushmen will,
And say whate'er they choose,
I hate to hear the stupid sneer
At New Chum Jackaroos.
He may not ride as you can ride,
Or do what you can do;
But sometimes you'd seem small beside
The New Chum Jackaroo.

His share of work he never shirks,
And through the blazing drought,
He lives the old things down, and works
His own salvation out.

When older, wiser chums despond
He battles brave of heart—
'Twas he who sailed of old beyond
The margin of the chart.

'Twas he who proved the world was round—
In crazy square canoes;
The lands you're living in were found
By New Chum Jackaroos.

He crossed the deserts hot and bare,
From barren, hungry shores—
The plains that you would scarcely dare
With all your tanks and bores.

He fought a way through stubborn hills
Towards the setting sun—
Your fathers all and Burke and Wills
Were New Chums, every one.

When England fought with all the world
In those brave days gone by,
And all its strength against her hurled,
He held her honour high.

By Southern palms and Northern pines—
Where'er was life to lose—
She held her own with thin red lines
Of New Chum Jackaroos.

Through shot and shell and solitudes,
Wherever feet have gone,
The New Chums fought while eye-glass dudes
And Johnnies led them on.

And though he wear a foppish coat,
And these old things forget,
In stormy times I'd give a vote
For Cuffs and Collars yet.

Henry Lawson

The Old Bark School

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Henry Lawson

The Old Jimmy Woodser

The old Jimmy Woodser comes into the bar
Unwelcomed, unnoticed, unknown,
Too old and too odd to be drunk with, by far;
So he glides to the end where the lunch baskets are
And they say that he tipples alone.

His frockcoat is green and the nap is no more,
And his hat is not quite at its best;
He wears the peaked collar our grandfathers wore,
The black-ribbon tie that was legal of yore,
And the coat buttoned over his breast.

When first he came in, for a moment I thought
That my vision or wits were astray;
For a picture and page out of Dickens he brought---
'Twas an old file dropped in from the Chancery Court
To the wine-vault just over the way.

But I dreamed, as he tasted his "bitter" to-night
And the lights in the bar-room grew dim,
That the shades of the friends of that other day's light,
And of girls that were bright in our grandfathers' sight,
Lifted shadowy glasses to him.

Then I opened the door, and the old man passed out,
With his short, shuffling step and bowed head;
And I sighed; for I felt, as I turned me about,
An odd sense of respect---born of whisky no doubt---
For the life that was fifty years dead.

And I thought---there are times when our memory trends
Through the future, as 'twere on its own---
That I, out-of-date ere my pilgrimage ends,
In a new-fashioned bar to dead loves and dead friends
Might drink, like the old man, alone.

Henry Lawson

The Old Mile-Tree

OLD coach-road West by Nor'-ward—
Old mile-tree by the track:
A dead branch pointing forward,
And a dead branch pointing back.
And still in clear-cut romans
On his hard heart he tells
The miles that were to fortune,
The miles from Bowenfels.
Old chief of Western timber!
A famous gum you've been.
Old mile-tree, I remember
When all your boughs were green.

There came three boyish lovers
When golden days begun;
There rode three boyish rovers
Towards the setting sun.
And Fortune smiled her fairest
And Fate to these was kind—
The truest, best and rarest,
The girls they'd left behind.
By the camp-fire's dying ember
They dreamed of love and gold;
Old mile-tree, I remember
When all our hearts were bold.

And when the wrecks of those days
Were sadly drifting back,
There came a lonely swagman
Along the dusty track;
And save for limbs that trembled—
For weak and ill was he—
Old mile-tree, he resembled
The youngest of the three.
Beneath you, dark and lonely,
A wronged and broken man
He crouched, and sobbed as only
The strong heart broken can.
The darkness wrapped the timber,

The stars seemed dark o'erhead—
Old mile-tree, I remember
When all green leaves seemed dead.

Henry Lawson

The Old Stockman's Lament

Wrap me up in me stockwhip and blanket,
And bury me deep down below,
Where this piffle and sham won't disgust me,
In the land where the coolibahs grow;
For I've stayed with some well-to-do people,
And I've dined with some middle-class folk;
And I've sorrowed by clock-tower and steeple
Till my heart for the Commonwealth's broke.
They have flown in another direction,
Who used to clack-clack by the hour
Of "this awful Freetrade and Protection,"
Of our dear darling member "in power,"
And the Higher Religion for Dossers,
And the Need of an Object for Drunks—
Now they're all of them Red or Blue Crossers,
With their tails sticking out of their trunks.

There are citified Martins in dozens—
The Darling Point Martins the pick—
Who used to be horrified cousins
Of a Martin we knew as "Mad Mick."
He is hanging out somewhere where French is;
But they heard he'd enlisted—somehow,
And 'twould paralyse Mick in the trenches
To know how he's glorified now.

You remember the George Henry Crosses?
They've packed up twelve trunks in despair.
He's the boss of the back-station bosses,
And Ernie's the son and the heir.
He has never put hands on a wether,
Nor heard a pithed store-bullock grunt;
So they're taking the mailboat to England
To see Ernie safe to the Front.

And each of the war-going parsons
Costs many a heart-breaking tear—
Like that caddish young cub of old Carson's,
All found and four hundred a year.

He feels not a word that he preaches,
But he will not be criticised there,
Where, out where the flying shell screeches,
Poor Tommy must fight, sweat and swear.

“Our relatives, too” (hang the Censor!)
Each girl has a tear on her cheek.
Cousin Roger has gone as dispenser
(Expenses and three pounds a week.
More risky than list’ning to sermons,
As some of our fellows will find,
Is a fierce fortnight’s fight with the Germans
In front—and with Roger behind.)

And the Girls, they are writing like blazes,
And Auntie is moaning like hell;
And I wish I was under the daisies—
Or the bluegum would do just as well.
So I want to be wropped in me blanket,
And buried down—deep down—below;
Where this cant and this cackle won’t reach me—
In the land where the coolibahs grow.

Henry Lawson

The Old, Old Story And The New Order

They proved we could not think nor see,
They proved we could not write,
They proved we drank the day away
And raved through half the night.
They proved our stars were never up,
They've proved our stars are set,
They've proved we ne'er saw sorrow's cup,
And they're not happy yet.
They proved that in the Southern Land
We all led vicious lives;
They've proved we starved our children, and—
They've proved we beat our wives.
They've proved we never worked, and we
Were never out of debt;
They've proved us bad as we can be
And they're not happy yet.

The Daily Press, with paltry power—
For reasons understood—
Have aye sought to belittle our
Unhappy brotherhood.
Because we fought in days like these,
Where rule the upper tens—
Because we'd not write journalese,
Nor prostitute our pens.

They gave our rivals space to sneer—
Their mediocrities;
The drunkard's mind is pure and clear
Compared with minds like these.
They sought to damn with pitying praise
Or the coward's unsigned sneer,
For honour in the "critics'" ways
Had never virtue here.

They've proved our names shall not be known
A few short years ahead;
They hied them back through years of moan,
And damned our happy dead.

A newer tribe of scribes we've got,
Exclusive and alone,
To prove our work was childish rot,
And none of it our own.

The cultured cads of First Gem cells,
Of Mansion, Lawn and Club,
Not fit to clean the busted boots
Of "Poets of the Pub."
They prove the partners of the part,
The wholeness of the whole,
The gizzardness of gizzards, and
The Soulness of the Soul.

They've proved that all is nought—but there
Are things they cannot do—
The summer skies are just as fair
And just as brightly blue.
They've buried us with muddied shrouds,
When our strong hearts they've broke.
They can't bring down yon fleecy clouds
And make them factory smoke.

They've proved the simple bard a fool,
But still, for all their pains,
The children prattling home from school
Go tripping down the lanes.
They've proved that Love is lust or hate,
True marriage is no more,
But Jim and Mary at the gate
Are happy as of yore.

These insects seeking to unloose
The Bards of Sympathy!
Who strike with the sledge hammer force
Of their simplicity.
(They cannot turn the world about,
Nor damp the father's joy,
When some old doctor bustles out,
And nurse says "It's a boy!")

They want no God but many a god,

And many gods, and none—
The preacher by the upturned sod
Shall pray when all is done.
Amongst the great 'twas aye the same—
The envious crawler's part—
The lies that blackened Byron's name
And banished poor Brett Harte.

We've learnt in bitter schools to teach
Man's glory and his shame
Since Gordon walked along the beach
In search of bigger game.
Maybe, our talents we've abused
At times, and ne'er been blind
Since Barcroft Boake went out and used
His stockwhip to be kind.

But laugh, my chums, in prose and rhyme,
And worry not at all,
They're insects whom the wheels of time
Shall crush exceeding small.
Have faith, my friends, who stand by me,
In spite of all the lies—
I tell you that a man shall die
On the day that Lawson dies.

Henry Lawson

The Other Gum

Well Boory, I have read your "grin",
And listened to your whine;
I only wish you'd sent it in
Before I printed mine.
You see, I never meant to hit
The new-chum Jackaroo;
I only tried to write a skit
On poets – such as you.
We're sinners all – the world knows that,
But damned mean sinners some –
(The 'possum you are barking at
is up the other gum).

But sneer in safety if you choose
I've no hand in the game;
I will not fight the crawlers who's
Afraid to sign his name.
I never strike without a mark –
'Tis safer in the end;
For he who hits back in the dark
Might chance to hurt a 'friend'!
The game is stale, your jokes are flat,
You might as well be dumb –
(The 'possum you are howling at
Is up another gum).

Henry Lawson

The Outside Track

There were ten of us there on the moonlit quay,
And one on the for'ard hatch;
No straighter mate to his mates than he
Had ever said: 'Len's a match!'
'Twill be long, old man, ere our glasses clink,
'Twill be long ere we grip your hand!—
And we dragged him ashore for a final drink
Till the whole wide world seemed grand.
For they marry and go as the world rolls back,
They marry and vanish and die;
But their spirit shall live on the Outside Track
As long as the years go by.

The port-lights glowed in the morning mist
That rolled from the waters green;
And over the railing we grasped his fist
As the dark tide came between.
We cheered the captain and cheered the crew,
And our mate, times out of mind;
We cheered the land he was going to
And the land he had left behind.

We roared Lang Syne as a last farewell,
But my heart seemed out of joint;
I well remember the hush that fell
When the steamer had passed the point
We drifted home through the public bars,
We were ten times less by one
Who sailed out under the morning stars,
And under the rising sun.

And one by one, and two by two,
They have sailed from the wharf since then;
I have said good-bye to the last I knew,
The last of the careless men.
And I can't but think that the times we had
Were the best times after all,
As I turn aside with a lonely glass
And drink to the bar-room wall.

But I'll try my luck for a cheque Out Back,
Then a last good-bye to the bush;
For my heart's away on the Outside Track,
On the track of the steerage push.

Henry Lawson

The Paroo

It was a week from Christmas-time,
As near as I remember,
And half a year since, in the rear,
We'd left the Darling timber.
The track was hot and more than drear;
The day dragged out for ever;
But now we knew that we were near
Our camp - the Paroo River.
With blighted eyes and blistered feet,
With stomachs out of order,
Half-mad with flies and dust and heat
We'd crossed the Queensland border.
I longed to hear a stream go by
And see the circles quiver;
I longed to lay me down and die
That night on Paroo River.

The "nose-bags" heavy on each chest
(God bless one kindly squatter!),
With grateful weight our hearts they pressed -
We only wanted water.
The sun was setting in a spray
Of colour like a liver -
We'd fondly hoped to camp and stay
That night by Paroo River.
A cloud was on my mate's broad brow,
And once I heard him mutter:
'What price the good old Darling now? -
God bless that grand old gutter!"
And then he stopped and slowly said
In tones that made me shiver:
"It cannot well be on ahead -
I think we've crossed the river."
But soon we saw a strip of ground
Beside the track we followed,
No damper than the surface round,
But just a little hollowed.
His brow assumed a thoughtful frown -
This speech did he deliver:

"I wonder if we'd best go down
Or up the blessed river?"

"But where," said I, "'s the blooming stream?
And he replied, 'we're at it!"
I stood awhile, as in a dream,
"Great Scott!" I cried, "is that it?
Why, that is some old bridle-track!"
He chuckled, "Well, I never!
It's plain you've never been Out Back -
This is the Paroo River!"

Henry Lawson

The Passing Of Scotty

WE THROW us down on the dusty plain
When the gold has gone from the west,
But we rise and tramp on the track again,
For we're tired—too tired to rest.
Darker and denser the shadows fall
That are cramping each aching brow—
Scotty the Wrinkler! you've solved it all,
Give us a wrinkle now.

But no one lieth so still in death
As the rover who never could rest;
And he's free of thought as he's free of breath—
And his hands are crossed on his breast.
You have earned your rest—you brave old tramp—
As I hope in the end we will.
Ah me! 'Twas a long, long way to camp
Since the days when they called you "Phil'.

What have they done with your quaint old soul
Now they have passed you through?
But we can't but think, as our swags we roll,
That it's right, old man, with you;
You learned some truth in the storm and strife
Of the outcast battler's ways;
And you left some light in the vagabond's life
Ere you vanished beyond the haze.

One by one in the far ahead,
In the smothering haze of drought—
Where hearts are loyal and hopes are dead—
The forms of our mates fade out.
'Tis a distant goal and a weary load,
But we follow the Wrinkler home,
As, staggering into the short, straight road,
From the blind branch tracks we come.

We leave our mark and we play our part
In the nation's pregnant days,
And we find a place in the Bushman's heart

Ere we vanish beyond the haze.

Henry Lawson

The Patriotic League

Behold! the biased foes of Right
Are conscious of their danger,
They're startled by the dawning light,
So very long a stranger.
And fearing for their rotting laws—
Whose reign is nearly ended—
To study out the People's cause
At last they've condescended.

"And this they call the 'People's Cause',
Why this is insurrection!
They would revoke the very laws
We made for our protection!
An equal right with us they claim!
They'll rob us by and by, sir!
We'll form a league and steal a name
And tell another lie, sir."

They took to gloss a base intrigue
A name that was demotic.
They stole a name and formed a league
And called it "Patriotic".
They've resurrected ancient lies—
The world had most forgotten—
The liars think the world will rise
To back a Cause that's rotten.

I know their creed, and know it well,
Too mean are its creators
To hope for heaven, or fear the hell
They'd make for agitators.
Old as the hills—and quite as dense
Though shaking like a jelly.
Time honoured to magnificence,
Religion of the Belly!

Henry Lawson

The Patteran

From over the leagues of ice and snow, and the miles of scorching sand;
From back of the days of long ago, and the lonely sea and land—
To the end of the world and our Gipsy race, to the death of our dark-eyed line,
I have set the lines on my children's palms as my fathers did on mine,
That the world shall know and my name shall glow in the light of the aftershine—
I have set the lines on my children's palms as my fathers did on mine.
I have given them health and strength, pure blood, clear skins for a glorious
youth;
I have set in their souls contempt for sham, and a deathless regard for truth;
I have bequeathed the spirit to fight, I have given the will to rise,
And the slumbering fires of Hate and Love in their dreaming, dreaming eyes.
That the world shall know and my name shall glow in the light of the aftershine,
I have set the lines on my children's palms as my fathers did on mine.

I have given the love for their native land, wherever that land may be
(My children came from the East, my friends, and round by the Northern Sea),
And a son of a son of mine enemy, to the end of his treacherous line,
Shall be stricken to earth, if he dare but speak, by a son of a son of mine.
That the world shall know and my name shall glow in the light of the aftershine,
I have set the lines on my children's palms as my fathers did on mine.

Henry Lawson

The Pavement Stones :A Song Of The Unemployed

WHEN first I came to town, resolved
To fight my way alone,
No prouder foot than mine e'er trod
Upon the pavement stone;
But I am one in thousands,
And why should I repine?
The pavement stones have broken springs
In stronger feet than mine.

I brought to aid me all the hope
And energy of youth;
And in my heart I felt the strength
Of plain bucolic truth:
The independence nourished
Amid the hills and trees—
But, ah! the city hath a cure
For qualities like these.

I wonder oft how e'er I made
The efforts that I made,
For after three long weary years
I taught myself a trade.
And two more years and I was free
With strength and hope elate,
For "he that hath a trade," they say,
"Hath also an estate."

I tramped the streets and looked for work
And begged for work in vain,
Until I recked not, though I ne'er
Might touch my tools again.
I tramped the streets despairing;
My cheeks grew white and thin;
I felt the pavement wearing through
The leather, sock, and skin.

The bitter war goes on between
The idlers and the drones,
Until the hearts of men grow cold

And hard as pavement stones;
But I am one amid the crowd,
Then why should I repine?
The pavement stones have broken springs
In stronger feet than mine.

Henry Lawson

The Peace Maker

It has a "point" of neither sex
But comes in guise of both,
And, doubly dangerous complex,
It is a thing to loathe—
A lady with her sweet, sad smile,
A gentleman on oath.

Strip off the mother-veil, and fur!
And signs of "quiet taste".
The dead child's locket take from her
(The dead man's gift in haste)
And wash from every evil line
The layers of filling paste!

From "saddened eyes" the hell's own glare!
From "sweet mouth" blasphemy!
Wrench out the gold-filled false teeth there
That twice mock honesty,
And leave the evil face awry
For married folk to see.

For foolish girl wives in despair,
For men's and children's sakes,
Let loose the glossed and padded hair
To writhe like scorching snakes!
And strip the barren body bare
To show what Satan makes.

Aye! I could take her by the throat
More sure than hangman's noose,
And set my teeth and set my nails,
And hate would set my thews.
And fling her to the drought-starved swine,
Were all my brethren Jews.

There was the kindest man I knew,
Brave, handsome, straight and tall—
Between his loved ones and the world

He stood, a fortress wall.
He whines, a ruined drunkard now,
And this thing did it all.

There was the girl who married me
And bore my children twain,
We'll never meet each other's eyes
Like boy and girl again.
The very children's love and trust
By this foul thing was slain.

There was a girl my manhood loved,
She'd Love's own red gold hair,
And grey eyes that were Pity's own
And courage that was rare.
She sleeps amongst the suicides,
And this thing sent her there.

And all because the town was dull
And goodness was too tame,
And people took no interest
In one they could not blame.
And all because my life was clean
And I had won a name.

And now, for years of senseless hate
And paltry, bitter strife,
For "reparation" come too late,
For sweetheart, mate and wife,
I tread her vile heart in the dust
And ashes of my life.

Henry Lawson

The Pink Carnation

I may walk until I'm fainting, I may write until I'm blinded,
I might drink until my back teeth are afloat,
But I can't forget my ruin and the happy days behind it,
When I wore a pink carnation in my coat.

Oh, I thought that time could conquer, and I thought my heart would harden,
But it sends a sudden lump into my throat,
When I think of what I have been, and the cottage and the garden,
When I wore a pink carnation in my coat.

God forgive you, girl, and bless you! Let no line of mine distress you –
I am sorry for the bitter lines I wrote;
But remember, and think kindly, for we met and married blindly,
When I wore a pink carnation in my coat.

Henry Lawson

The Poets Of The Tomb

The world has had enough of bards who wish that they were dead,
'Tis time the people passed a law to knock 'em on the head,
For 'twould be lovely if their friends could grant the rest they crave --
Those bards of `tears' and `vanished hopes', those poets of the grave.
They say that life's an awful thing, and full of care and gloom,
They talk of peace and restfulness connected with the tomb.

They say that man is made of dirt, and die, of course, he must;
But, all the same, a man is made of pretty solid dust.
There is a thing that they forget, so let it here be writ,
That some are made of common mud, and some are made of GRIT;
Some try to help the world along while others fret and fume
And wish that they were slumbering in the silence of the tomb.

'Twixt mother's arms and coffin-gear a man has work to do!
And if he does his very best he mostly worries through,
And while there is a wrong to right, and while the world goes round,
An honest man alive is worth a million underground.
And yet, as long as sheoaks sigh and wattle-blossoms bloom,
The world shall hear the drivel of the poets of the tomb.

And though the graveyard poets long to vanish from the scene,
I notice that they mostly wish their resting-place kept green.
Now, were I rotting underground, I do not think I'd care
If wombats rooted on the mound or if the cows camped there;
And should I have some feelings left when I have gone before,
I think a ton of solid stone would hurt my feelings more.

Such wormy songs of mouldy joys can give me no delight;
I'll take my chances with the world, I'd rather live and fight.
Though Fortune laughs along my track, or wears her blackest frown,
I'll try to do the world some good before I tumble down.
Let's fight for things that ought to be, and try to make 'em boom;
We cannot help mankind when we are ashes in the tomb.

Henry Lawson

The Port O'Call

Our hull is seldom painted,
Our decks are seldom stoned;
Our sails are patched and cobbled
And chains by rust marooned.
Our rigging is untidy,
And all things in accord:—
We always sail on Friday
With thirteen souls on board.
For all the days save Friday
Were days of dark despair—
The fourteenth died of fever
Whenever he was there.
Our good ship is the Chancit—
Her oldest name of all;
But, in the ports we're blown to,
She's called the 'Port o' Call.'

Our captain old Wot Matters—
Our first mate young Hoo Kares,
Our cook is Wen Yew Wan Tit,
And so the Chancit fares.
The sweethearts, wives, and others—
And all we left behind—
Have many names to go by;
But mine is Never Mind.

We fear no hell hereafter,
We hope for no reward—
We always sail on Friday
With thirteen men on board.
And every wind's a fair wind,
That suits us, one and all,
And every port we're blown to
We call our port-of-call.

I've seen the poor boy striving
For just one chance to rise:
The light of truth and honour
And genius in his eyes.

His school-mates jeered and mocked him,
They mocked him through the town:
And his relatives scarce pitied,
While his parents crushed him down.

I've seen the young man fighting
The present and the past,
Till he triumphed in the city,
And fame was his at last!
And generous, but steadfast,
All for his Country then,
Unspoiled and all unconscious
He stood, a prince of men.

I've seen the husband ruined,
And drunken in the street,
When the World was all before him,
And the ball was at his feet—
Thrust down by fate most bitter,
Most cruel and unjust;
His children taught to loathe him,
And his name dragged in the dust.

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Our hull is never painted,
Our decks are never stoned,
The cabin air is tainted,
The good ship is disowned;
Our rigging is untidy,
And all things in accord—
We always sail on Friday,
With thirteen hands on board.
I've seen strong bushmen slaving,
As men ne'er slaved before,
To win homes from the scrublands
And win their country more.
And I've seen their children scattered
As work-slaves on the soil;
And the old-age-pension begged for
After fifty years of toil!

And the Bush Muse is discarded,

There's a wanton on the track,
And her panderers are sneering
At old soldiers of Out Back
The motor cars go racing
Past the Heroes of Long Years,
And the dust is in their faces
And the laughter in their ears.

We care not where we're bound for,
Nor how the storm might howl;
For every wind's a fair wind,
And every wind a foul.
There's nothing left to sail for
Save that we keep our decks,
And watch for other castaways
On rafts from other wrecks.

Henry Lawson

The Ports Of The Open Sea

Down here where the ships loom large in
The gloom when the sea-storms veer,
Down here on the south-west margin
Of the western hemisphere,
Where the might of a world-wide ocean
Round the youngest land rolls free—
Storm-bound from the world's commotion,
Lie the Ports of the Open Sea.
By the bluff where the grey sand reaches
To the kerb of the spray-swept street,
By the sweep of the black sand beaches
From the main-road travellers' feet,
By the heights like a work Titanic,
By a bluff lined coast volcanic
Lie the Ports of the wild South-east.

By the steeps of the snow-capped range,
By the scarped and terraced hills—
Far away from the swift life-changes,
From the wear of the strife that kills—
Where the land in the Spring seems younger
Than a land of the Earth might be—
Oh! the hearts of the rovers hunger
For the Ports of the Open Sea.

But the captains watch and hearken
For a sign of the South Sea wrath—
Let the face of the South-east darken,
And they turn to the ocean path.
Ay, the sea-boats dare not linger,
Whatever the cargo be;
When the South-east lifts a finger
By the Ports of the Open Sea.

South by the bleak Bluff faring,
North where the Three Kings wait,
South-east the tempest daring—
Flight through the storm-tossed strait;
Yonder a white-winged roamer

Struck where the rollers roar—
Where the great green froth-flaked comber
Breaks down on a black-ribbed shore.

For the South-east lands are dread lands
To the sailor in the shrouds,
Where the low clouds loom like headlands,
And the black bluffs blur like clouds.
When the breakers rage to windward
And the lights are masked a-lee,
And the sunken rocks run inward
To a Port of the Open Sea.

But oh! for the South-east weather—
The sweep of the three-days' gale—
When, far through the flax and heather,
The spindrift drives like hail.
Glory to man's creations
That drive where the gale grows gruff,
When the homes of the sea-coast stations
Flash white from the dark'ning bluff!

When the swell of the South-east rouses
The wrath of the Maori sprite,
And the brown folk flee their houses
And crouch in the flax by night,
And wait as they long have waited—
In fear as the brown folk be—
The wave of destruction fated
For the Ports of the Open Sea.

Grey cloud to the mountain bases,
Wild boughs that rush and sweep;
On the rounded hills the tussocks
Like flocks of flying sheep;
A lonely storm-bird soaring
O'er tussock, fern and tree;
And the boulder beaches roaring
The Hymn of the Open Sea.

Henry Lawson

The Pride That Comes After

It knows it all, it knows it all,
The world of groans and laughter,
It sneers of pride before a fall,
But the bitter pride comes after:
So leave me and I'll seek you not,
So seek me and you'll find me—
But till I know your hand-grip's true
I'll stand with hands behind me.

It knows it all, it knows it all,
The world of lies and sorrow—
It prates of pride before a fall,
And of the humble morrow;
But shame and blame are but a name,
Oh, heart that's hurt past curing!
We'll drink to-night the sinner's pride,
The pride that's most enduring.

They know it all, they know it all,
The curs that pass the sentence.
They preach of pride before a fall
And bitter black repentance:
So leave me when my star is set,
I'll glory that you leave me,
While one has pride to love me yet
There's nought on earth shall grieve me.

Henry Lawson

The Prime Of Life

OH, the strength of the toil of those twenty years, with father, and master, and men!

And the clearer brain of the business man, who has held his own for ten:
Oh, the glorious freedom from business fears, and the rest from domestic strife!
The past is dead, and the future assured, and I'm in the prime of life!

She bore me old, and they kept me old, and they worked me early and late;
I carried the loads of my selfish tribe, from seven to thirty eight:
I slaved with dad, in the dust and heat, that my brothers might enjoy—
But I rest to-day in the prime of life, and I'll live and die a boy!

When the last crop failed, and the stock were gone, did the old man's head go down?
No! he started business, on what was left, in the produce line in town.
They sent my brothers to boarding schools, when our way to the front we'd won—
They'd borrow, and borrow, but never had aught but contempt for the eldest son.

My brothers they went to the world away, and they left the home in strife.
They sowed wild oats in the pride of youth, and they pawned the prime of life.
They sowed too fast, and they sowed too far; and they came back one by one—
You couldn't tell which is the eldest son and which is the youngest son.

Oh, I longed for a love that I could not claim, and a breath of the youth denied—
But I stuck to the store when the old man went, and the mater until she died:
With Job's own sister and Satan's aunt—good Lord! and the fiend's own wife—
But I'm free of them now, it is no matter how, and I'm in the prime of life.

My brothers have turned respectable, and are steady as men can be:
The youngest and worst is a leading light—and he aims at reforming me!
But I lend and help, and I'll fix them up, for I can't but see with a sigh,
That the youngest, who left us a handsome boy, is an older man than I.

But it's "Lord make us thankful" three times a day, before they eat their fill—
They can thank the Lord if they like, I say, but I reckon I pay the bill.
They feel independent, I'm glad to know, for if all I hear is true,
My brothers agree that I do no more than I have a right to do.

They'll work in the store while I see the world, and I'll let them share the till—

But I sail to-day, for a year away, to go wherever I will:
I sail with the woman who waited for me—old sweetheart; and brand new wife—
She is handsome and true, and she's thirty-two—and I'm in the prime of life.

For Capetown, and London, and Norraway, for Germany, Holland, and France,
For Switzerland, Italy—anywhere—for Greece, and for Egypt a glance,
For India, China, and "strange Japan", for the East with mystery rife—
I have made enough, and I have my love—and I'm in the prime of life!

Henry Lawson

The Professional Wanderer

When you've knocked about the country—been away from home for years;
When the past, by distance softened, nearly fills your eyes with tears—
You are haunted oft, wherever or however you may roam,
By a fancy that you ought to go and see the folks at home.
You forget the family quarrels—little things that used to jar—
And you think of how they'll worry—how they wonder where you are;
You will think you served them badly, and your own part you'll condemn,
And it strikes you that you'll surely be a novelty to them,
For your voice has somewhat altered, and your face has somewhat changed—
And your views of men and matters over wider fields have ranged.
Then it's time to save your money, or to watch it (how it goes!);
Then it's time to get a 'Gladstone' and a decent suit of clothes;
Then it's time to practise daily with a hair-brush and a comb,
Till you drop in unexpected on the folks and friends at home.
When you've been at home for some time, and the novelty's worn off,
And old chums no longer court you, and your friends begin to scoff;
When 'the girls' no longer kiss you, crying 'Jack! how you have changed!'
When you're stale to your relations, and their manner seems estranged ;
When the old domestic quarrels, round the table thrice a day,
Make it too much like the old times—make you wish you'd stayed away,
When, in short, you've spent your money in the fulness of your heart,
And your clothes are getting shabby . . . Then it's high time to depart.

Henry Lawson

The Rebel

Call me traitor to my country and a rebel to my God.
And the foe of "law and order", well deserving of the rod,
But I scorn the biased sentence from the temples of the creed
That was fouled and mutilated by the ministers of greed,
For the strength that I inherit is the strength of Truth and Right;
Lords of earth! I am immortal in the battles of the night!

My religion is the oldest; it was born upon the earth
When to curse mankind for ages pride and tyranny had birth.
'Tis the offspring of oppression, born to suffering and strife,
Born to hate, above all other hate, the things that gave it life;
And 'twill live through all the ages, while a son of man is blind,
In the everlasting rhythm of the story of mankind!

From the Maker's battered image, where the bloody helmet gleams,
From the graves of beaten armies rise the heroes of my dreams.
I am ever with the weaker in the battles for the right.
And I fight on vessels sinking 'neath the cruel blows of might;
But I hear of coming triumph in the tramp of flying feet
And the wild, despairing music of the army in retreat.

I am plunged in bitter sorrow at the sinking of a star,
For I mourn among the murdered where the broken lances are;
Souls of earth who rule with iron, raining death on farm and town,
Sacrificing lives uncounted, putting just rebellions down,
Ye shall answer for the murders of the slaves compelled to bleed
For the commonwealth of idlers and the common cause of greed.

I have come for common justice to the castles of the great,
And the people who have sent me crave assistance at the gate;
They obeyed the Maker's sentence—why have ploughed and tilled the soil.
Yet they go in rags and hunger in the harvest of their toil.
I demand the rights of Labour in the law of God defined;
Pause and weigh the pregnant answer!—where is peace or war behind.
Are we slaves beneath the power that our industry hath given?
Are we fuel to feed the engines of your artificial heaven?

I am come to warn the idlers at the castles of the great,
For the army that has sent me grows impatient at the gate:

They have gathered now in thousands from the alley and the den,
And the words of fire are breaking from the lips of quiet men!
Yield, and save the lives of thousands! for the rebels' eyes are bright,
And the god of revolution is abroad on earth to-night.

Henry Lawson

The Rhyme Of The Three Greybeards

He'd been for years in Sydney "a-acting of the goat",
His name was Joseph Swallow, "the Great Australian Pote",
In spite of all the stories and sketches that he wrote.

And so his friends held meetings (Oh, narrow souls were theirs!)
To advertise their little selves and Joseph's own affairs.
They got up a collection for Joseph unawares.

They looked up his connections and rivals by the score –
The wife who had divorced him some twenty years before,
And several politicians he'd made feel very sore.

They sent him down to Coolan, a long train ride from here,
Because of his grey hairs and "pomes" and painted blondes – and beer.
(I mean to say the painted blondes would always give him beer.)

(They loved him for his eyes were dark, and you must not condemn
The love for opposites that mark the everlasting fem.
Besides, he "made up" little bits of poetry for them.)

They sent him "for his own sake", but not for that alone –
A poet's sins are public; his sorrows are his own.
And poets' friends have skins like hides, and mostly hearts of stone.

They said "We'll send some money and you must use your pen.
"So long," they said. "Adoo!" they said. "And don't come back again.
Well, stay at least a twelve-month – we might be dead by then."

Two greybeards down at Coolan – familiar grins they had –
They took delivery of the goods, and also of the bad.
(Some bread and meat had come by train – Joe Swallow was the bad.)

They'd met him shearing west o' Bourke in some forgotten year.
They introduced him to the town and pints of Wagga beer.
(And Wagga pints are very good -- I wish I had some here.)

It was the Busy Bee Hotel where no one worked at all,
Except perhaps to cook the grub and clean the rooms and "hall".
The usual half-wit yardman worked at each one's beck and call.

'Twas "Drink it down!" and "Fillelup!" and "If the pub goes dry,
There's one just two-mile down the road, and more in Gundagai" –
Where married folk by accident get poison in the pie.

The train comes in at eight o'clock – or half-past, I forget,
And when the dinner table at the Busy Bee was set,
Upon the long verandah stool the beards were wagging yet.

They talked of where they hadn't been and what they hadn't won;
They talked of mostly everything that's known beneath the sun.
The things they didn't talk about were big things they had done.

They talked of what they called to mind, and couldn't call to mind;
They talked of men who saw too far and people who were "blind".
Tradition says that Joe's grey beard wagged not so far behind.

They got a horse and sulky and a riding horse as well,
And after three o'clock they left the Busy Bee Hotel –
In case two missuses should send from homes where they did dwell.

No barber bides in Coolan, no baker bakes the bread;
And every local industry, save rabbitin', is dead –
And choppin' wood. The women do all that, be it said.
(I'll add a line and mention that two-up goes ahead.)

The shadows from the sinking sun were long by hill and scrub;
The two-up school had just begun, in spite of beer and grub;
But three greybeards were wagging yet down at the Two-mile pub.

A full, round, placid summer moon was floating in the sky;
They took a demijohn of beer, in case they should go dry;
And three greybeards went wagging down the road to Gundagai.

At Gundagai next morning (which poets call "th' morn")
The greybeards sought a doctor – a friend of the forlorn –
Whose name is as an angel's who sometimes blows a horn.

And Doctor Gabriel fixed 'em up, but 'twas not in the bar.
It wasn't rum or whisky, nor yet was it Three Star.
'Twas mixed up in a chemist's shop, and swifter stuff by far.

They went out to the backyard (to make my meaning plain);
The doctor's stuff wrought mightily, but by no means in vain.
Then they could eat their breakfasts and drink their beer again.

They made a bond between the three, as rock against the wave,
That they'd go to the barber's shop and each have a clean shave,
To show the people how they looked when they were young and brave.

They had the shave and bought three suits (and startling suits in sooth),
And three white shirts and three red ties (to tell the awful truth),
To show the people how they looked in their hilarious youth.

They burnt their old clothes in the yard, and their old hats as well;
The publican kicked up a row because they made a smell.
They put on bran'-new "larstin'-sides" – and, oh, they looked a yell!

Next morning, or the next (or next), from demon-haunted beds,
And very far from feeling like what sporting men call "ped",
The three rode back without their beards, with "boxers" on their heads!

They tried to get Joe lodgings at the Busy Bee in vain;
They did not take him to their homes, they took him to the train;
They sent him back to Sydney till grey beards grew again.

They sent him back to Sydney to keep away a year;
Because of shaven beards and wives they thought him safer here.
And so he cut his friends and stuck to powdered blondes and beer.

Until the finish came at last, as 'twill to any "bloke";
But in Joe's case it chanced to be a paralytic stroke;
The soft heart of a powdered blonde was, as she put it, "broke".

She sought Joe in the hospital and took the choicest food;
She went there very modestly and in a chastened mood,
And timid and respectful-like – because she was no good.

She sat the death-watch out alone on the verandah dim;
And after all was past and gone she dried her eyes abrim,
And sought the head-nurse timidly, and asked "May I see him?"

And then she went back to her bar, where she'd not been for weeks,
To practise there her barmaid's smile and mend and patch the streaks

The only real tears for Joe had left upon her cheeks

Henry Lawson

The Roaring Days

The night too quickly passes
And we are growing old,
So let us fill our glasses
And toast the Days of Gold;
When finds of wondrous treasure
Set all the South ablaze,
And you and I were faithful mates
All through the roaring days!

Then stately ships came sailing
From every harbour's mouth,
And sought the land of promise
That beacons in the South;
Then southward streamed their streamers
And swelled their canvas full
To speed the wildest dreamers
E'er borne in vessel's hull.

Their shining Eldorado,
Beneath the southern skies,
Was day and night for ever
Before their eager eyes.
The brooding bush, awakened,
Was stirred in wild unrest,
And all the year a human stream
Went pouring to the West.

The rough bush roads re-echoed
The bar-room's noisy din,
When troops of stalwart horsemen
Dismounted at the inn.
And oft the hearty greetings
And hearty clasp of hands
Would tell of sudden meetings
Of friends from other lands;
When, puzzled long, the new-chum
Would recognise at last,
Behind a bronzed and bearded skin,

A comrade of the past.

And when the cheery camp-fire
Explored the bush with gleams,
The camping-grounds were crowded
With caravans of teams;
Then home the jests were driven,
And good old songs were sung,
And choruses were given
The strength of heart and lung.
Oh, they were lion-hearted
Who gave our country birth!
Oh, they were of the stoutest sons
From all the lands on earth!

Oft when the camps were dreaming,
And fires began to pale,
Through rugged ranges gleaming
Would come the Royal Mail.
Behind six foaming horses,
And lit by flashing lamps,
Old `Cobb and Co.'s', in royal state,
Went dashing past the camps.

Oh, who would paint a goldfield,
And limn the picture right,
As we have often seen it
In early morning's light;
The yellow mounds of mullock
With spots of red and white,
The scattered quartz that glistened
Like diamonds in light;
The azure line of ridges,
The bush of darkest green,
The little homes of calico
That dotted all the scene.

I hear the fall of timber
From distant flats and fells,
The pealing of the anvils
As clear as little bells,
The rattle of the cradle,

The clack of windlass-boles,
The flutter of the crimson flags
Above the golden holes.

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Ah, then our hearts were bolder,
And if Dame Fortune frowned
Our swags we'd lightly shoulder
And tramp to other ground.
But golden days are vanished,
And altered is the scene;
The diggings are deserted,
The camping-grounds are green;
The flaunting flag of progress
Is in the West unfurled,
The mighty bush with iron rails
Is tethered to the world.

Henry Lawson

The Rose

We love the land when the world goes round,
And deep, deep down in her thorny ground,
Where nobody comes, and nobody knows,
We love the Rose. Oh! we love the Rose.

And none to tell us, and none to teach
By the western hedge or the shelving beach,
But all of us know what everyone knows,
We love the Rose. Oh! we love the Rose.

We love the rose when our day is dead,
And they lay their roses upon our bed;
Too late! Too late! in our last repose!
But we love the Rose. Ah! we love the Rose.

Henry Lawson

The Route March

Did you hear the children singing, O my brothers?
Did you hear the children singing as our troops went marching past?
In the sunshine and the rain,
As they'll never sing again—
Hear the little school-girls singing as our troops went swinging past?
Did you hear the children singing, O my brothers?
Did you hear the children singing for the first man and the last?
As they marched away and vanished,
To a tune we thought was banished—
Did you hear the children singing for the future and the past?

Shall you hear the children singing, O my brothers?
Shall you hear the children singing in the sunshine or the rain?
There'll be sobs beneath the ringing
Of the cheers, and 'neath the singing
There'll be tears of orphan children when
Our Boys come back again!

Henry Lawson

The Rovers

Some born of homely parents
For ages settled down—
The steady generations
Of village, farm, and town:
And some of dusky fathers
Who wandered since the flood—
The fairest skin or darkest
Might hold the roving blood—
Some born of brutish peasants,
And some of dainty peers,
In poverty or plenty
They pass their early years;
But, born in pride of purple,
Or straw and squalid sin,
In all the far world corners
The wanderers are kin.

A rover or a rebel,
Conceived and born to roam,
As babies they will toddle
With faces turned from home;
They've fought beyond the vanguard
Wherever storm has raged,
And home is but a prison
They pace like lions caged.

They smile and are not happy;
They sing and are not gay;
They weary, yet they wander;
They love, and cannot stay;
They marry, and are single
Who watch the roving star,
For, by the family fireside,
Oh, lonely men they are!

They die of peace and quiet—
The deadly ease of life;
They die of home and comfort;
They live in storm and strife;

No poverty can tie them,
Nor wealth nor place restrain—
Girl, wife, or child might draw them,
But they'll be gone again!

Across the glowing desert;
Through naked trees and snow;
Across the rolling prairies
The skies have seen them go;
They fought to where the ocean
Receives the setting sun;—
But where shall fight the rovers
When all the lands are won?

They thirst on Greenland snowfields,
On Never-Never sands;
Where man is not to conquer
They conquer barren lands;
They feel that most are cowards,
That all depends on 'nerve,'
They lead who cannot follow,
They rule who cannot serve.

Across the plains and ranges,
Away across the seas,
On blue and green horizons
They camp by twos and threes;
They hold on stormy borders
Of states that trouble earth
The honour of the country
That only gave them birth.

Unlisted, uncommissioned,
Untaught of any school,
In far-away world corners
Unconquered tribes they rule;
The lone hand and revolver—
Sad eyes that never quail—
The lone hand and the rifle
That win where armies fail.

They slumber sound where murder

And treachery are bare—
The pluck of self-reliance,
The pluck of past despair;
Thin brown men in pyjamas—
The thin brown wiry men!—
The helmet and revolver
That lie beside the pen.

Through drought and desolation
They won the way Out Back;
The commonplace and selfish
Have followed on their track;
They conquer lands for others,
For others find the gold,
But where shall go the rovers
When all the lands are old?

A rover and a rebel—
And so the worlds commence!
Their hearts shall beat as wildly
Ten generations hence;
And when the world is crowded—
'Tis signed and sealed by Fate—
The roving blood will rise to make
The countries desolate.

Henry Lawson

The Rush To London

You're off away to London now,
Where no one dare ignore you,
With Southern laurels on your brow,
And all the world before you.
But if you should return again,
Forgotten and unknowing,
Then one shall wait in wind and rain,
Where forty cheered you going.

You're off away to London, proved,
Where fair girls shall adore you;
The poor, plain face of one that loved
May never rise before you.
But if you should return again,
When young blood ceases flowing,
Then one shall wait in wind and rain,
Where forty cheered you going.

It may be carelessly you spoke
Of never more returning,
But sometimes in the London smoke,
You'll smell the gum leaves burning;
And think of how the grassy plain
Beyond the fog is flowing,
And one that waits in shine or rain,
Where forty cheered you going.

Henry Lawson

The Scamps

Of home, name and wealth and ambition bereft—
We are children of fortune and luck:
They deny there's a shred of our characters left,
But they cannot deny us the pluck!
We are vagabond scamps, we are kings over all—
There is little on earth we desire—
We are devils who stand with our backs to the wall,
And who call on the cowards to fire!

There are some of us here who were noble and good,
And who learnt in ingratitude's schools—
They were born of the selfish and misunderstood,
They were soft, they were 'smoodgers' or fools.
With their hands in their pockets to help every friend
In a fix—and they never asked how:
Beware of them you who have money to lend,
For it's little you'd get from them now.

There are some of us here who were lovers of old—
In the days that were nearer to God;
The girl was more precious than honour or gold,
And they worshipped the ground where she trod;
But she trampled their hearts and they suffered and knew
How the soul of a woman to read—
They will never again to a woman be true;
Let the girls who may meet them take heed!

There are some of us here who were devils from birth,
Who would steal the eye out of a friend—
But we judge not or blame not the worst on the earth,
For it comes to the same in the end.
There are some of us here who were ruined by wrong—
To whom justice and love came too late—
And they threw them aside and go singing a song,
And they know that their mistress is fate.

We were some of us failures at suicide, too—
We are most of us back from the dead—
But we've all found the courage to battle it through,

Till the strength of our bodies is sped:
With a flag that is dyed with our hearts'-blood unfurled,
We are marching and marching afar—
We are comrades of all who are fighting the world,
For the world made us all what we are.

Henry Lawson

The Scots [a Dirge]

Black Scots and red Scots,
Red Scots and black;
I hae dealt wi' the red Scot,
An' dealt wi' the black.
The Red Scot is angry
Among the sons o' men—
He'll pay you a bawbee,
An' steal it back again.

Black Scots and red Scots,
Red Scots and black;
I hae dealt wi' the red Scot,
An' dealt wi' the black.

The Black Scot is frien'ly—
A brither an' a'—
He'll pay you a bawbee,
An' steal back twa.

The Ginger Scot o' a' Scots,
The warst shade o' Scot,
For he'll pay ye naething,
An' tak' a' you've got.

Black Scots and red Scots,
Short Scots an' lang,
Ginger Scots an' bald Scots—
I dealt wi' the gang.

Henry Lawson

The Sebolt's Volunteers

They towed the Sebolt down the stream,
And through the harbour's mouth;
She spread her wings and sailed away
To seek the sunny South.

But, ah! she met with storm on storm
Ere half her course had run;
And all her masts were torn away,
And all her boats save one.

The good old ship had settled far
Beneath her cargo line,
Her riven sides were drinking deep
The draughts of ocean brine.

There gathered round the only boat
The women pale with fear,
And trembling little ones, who clung
To those who held them dear.

Then spoke the captain, brave and true,
His voice rose o'er the roar;
"The boat will save us all but five,
She cannot float with more!"

And backward from the side he stepped—
(He had been born at sea)
"Now who will seek in ocean's depths
A sailor's grave with me?"

Then up there stepped a merchant stout,
His face was brown and tan:
"I'll volunteer to stay on board,
For I'm an Englishman!"

Then spoke a gallant gentleman,
A lover of romance:
"Remain I for the ladies' sake,
For I'm a son of France!"

And next there spoke a Highlander:
"Go search the wide world round,
You'll find no spot where on the earth
A Scotsman is not found!"

And then there spoke a lad to whom
Killarney's lakes were dear:
"It won't be said that Ireland found
No place of honour here!"

The boat pushed from the vessel's side
Amid the ringing cheers;
And now beneath Old Ocean sleep
The Seabolt's volunteers.

Henry Lawson

The Sebolt's Volunteers

They towed the Sebolt down the stream,
And through the harbour's mouth;
She spread her wings and sailed away
To seek the sunny South.

But, ah! she met with storm on storm
Ere half her course had run;
And all her masts were torn away,
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Henry Lawson

The Secret Whisky Cure

'Tis no tale of heroism, 'tis no tale of storm and strife,
But of ordinary boozing, and of dull domestic life—
Of the everlasting friction that most husbands must endure—
Tale of nagging and of drinking—and a secret whisky cure.
Name of Jones—perhaps you know him—small house-agent here in town—
(Friend of Smith, you know him also—likewise Robinson and Brown),
Just a hopeless little husband, whose deep sorrows were obscure,
And a bitter nagging Missis—and death seemed the only cure.

'Twas a common sordid marriage, and there's little new to tell—
Save the pub to him was Heaven and his own home was a hell:
With the office in between them—purgatory to be sure—
And, as far as Jones could make out—well, there wasn't any cure.

'Twas drink and nag—or nag and drink—whichever you prefer—
Till at last she couldn't stand him any more than he could her.
Friends and relatives assisted, telling her (with motives pure)
That a legal separation was the only earthly cure.

So she went and saw a lawyer, who, in accents soft and low,
Asked her firstly if her husband had a bank account or no;
But he hadn't and she hadn't, they in fact were very poor,
So he bowed her out suggesting she should try some liquor cure.

She saw a drink cure advertised in the Sydney Bulletin—
Cure for brandy, cure for whisky, cure for rum and beer and gin,
And it could be given secret, it was tasteless, swift and sure—
So she purchased half a gallon of that Secret Whisky Cure.

And she put some in his coffee, smiling sweetly all the while,
And he started for the office rather puzzled by the smile—
Smile or frown he'd have a whisky, and you'll say he was a boor—
But perhaps his wife had given him an overdose of Cure.

And he met a friend he hadn't seen for seven years or more—
It was just upon the threshold of a private bar-room door—
And they coalised and entered straight away, you may be sure—
But of course they hadn't reckoned with a Secret Whisky Cure.

Jones, he drank, turned pale, and, gasping, hurried out the back way quick,
Where, to his old chum's amazement, he was violently sick;
Then they interviewed the landlord, but he swore the drink was pure—
It was only the beginning of the Secret Whisky Cure.

For Jones couldn't stand the smell of even special whisky blends,
And shunned bar-rooms to the sorrow of his trusty drinking friends:
And they wondered, too, what evil genius had chanced to lure
Him from paths of booze and friendship—never dreaming of a Cure.

He had noticed, too, with terror that a something turned his feet,
When a pub was near, and swung him to the other side the street,
Till he thought the devils had him, and his person they'd immure
In a lunatic asylum where there wasn't any Cure.

He consulted several doctors who were puzzled by the case—
As they mostly are, but never tell the patient to his face—
Some advised him 'Try the Mountains for this malady obscure:'
But there wasn't one could diagnose a Secret Whisky Cure.

And his wife, when he was sober?—Well, she nagged him all the more!
And he couldn't drown his sorrow in the pewter as of yore:
So he shot himself at Manly and was sat upon by Woore,
And found rest amongst the spirits from the Secret Whisky Cure.

And the moral?—well, 'tis funny—or 'tis woman's way with men—
She's remarried to a publican who whacks her now and then,
And they get on fairly happy, he's a brute and he's a boor,
But she's never tried her second with a Secret Whisky Cure.

Henry Lawson

The Separated Women

THE Separated Women

Go lying through the land,
For they have plenty dresses,
And money, too, in hand;
They married brutes and drunkards
And blackguards "frightful low",
But why are they so eager
For all the world to know?

The shamed and ill-used woman
Who really longs to die,
She slaves at home in silence
And hides her poor black eye!
She lives a life of terror
Eased off at times in woe—
But why is she so frightened
That any one might know?

The Separated Woman
She rushes to the court,
Sad, shabby and pathetic,
Or flaunting or distraught;
The real wronged wife would rather
Lose both eyes and her hair—
She swears a lie to save him
When he is taken there.

The Separated Woman
She mostly goes the same,
Bag-woman, sham-nurse, "pretty",
Or on her husband's name;
The real loafed-on woman,
With courage almost grim,
"Goes out" and takes in washing
To keep the kids—and him.

The Separated Woman—
I knew her course so well:
"The Stage", then first-class barmaid,

Then third-class bar—and hell:
And “hell” means all things vicious
That prey upon the town
(She wishes her poor husband
Had sometimes knocked her down).

Masseur and manicurist,
Or anything by chance,
They vilify their husbands—
And draw the maintenance.
Sham artists, “music teachers”—
Oh! they are flinty nuts!
Their friends are man-shaped crawlers
And lower than the dust.

The separated “Monsters”
Are missing from the tale—
They seem to have cleared out—or,
Perhaps they are in gaol.
The separated husband
Is heard of here and there,
A mild and decent citizen
And mostly bowed with care.

The Separated Women,
When upset in the track,
Are often very eager
To take the “Monster” back.
They’ve moved all hell to crush him
And, startled, find too late
The Monster’s grown content with
The separated state.

Henry Lawson

The Separation

We knew too little of the world,
And you and I were good—
'Twas paltry things that wrecked our lives
As well I knew they would.
The people said our love was dead,
But how were they to know?
Ah! had we loved each other less
We'd not have quarrelled so.
We knew too little of the world,
And you and I were kind,
We listened to what others said
And both of us were blind.
The people said 'twas selfishness,
But how were they to know?
Ah! had we both more selfish been
We'd not have parted so.

But still when all seems lost on earth
Then heaven sets a sign—
Kneel down beside your lonely bed,
And I will kneel by mine,
And let us pray for happy days—
Like those of long ago.
Ah! had we knelt together then
We'd not have parted so.

Henry Lawson

The Shakedown On The Floor

Set me back for twenty summers—
For I'm tired of cities now—
Set my feet in red-soil furrows
And my hands upon the plough,
With the two 'Black Brothers' trudging
On the home stretch through the loam—
While, along the grassy siding,
Come the cattle grazing home.
And I finish ploughing early,
And I hurry home to tea—
There's my black suit on the stretcher,
And a clean white shirt for me.
There's a dance at Rocky Rises,
And, when all the fun is o'er,
For a certain favoured party
There's a shake-down on the floor.

You remember Mary Carey,
Bushmen's favourite at the Rise?
With her sweet small freckled features,
Red-gold hair, and kind grey eyes;
Sister, daughter, to her mother,
Mother, sister, to the rest—
And of all my friends and kindred,
Mary Carey loved me best.

Far too shy, because she loved me,
To be dancing oft with me;
What cared I, because she loved me,
If the world were there to see?
But we lingered by the slip rails
While the rest were riding home,
Ere the hour before the dawning,
Dimmed the great star-clustered dome.

Small brown hands that spread the mattress
While the old folk winked to see
How she'd find an extra pillow
And an extra sheet for me.

For a moment shyly smiling,
She would grant me one kiss more—
Slip away and leave me happy
By the shake-down on the floor.

Rock me hard in steerage cabins,
Rock me soft in wide saloons,
Lay me on the sand-hill lonely
Under waning western moons;
But wherever night may find me
Till I rest for evermore
I will dream that I am happy
On the shake-down on the floor.

Ah! she often watched at sunset—
For her people told me so—
Where I left her at the slip-rails
More than fifteen years ago.
And she faded like a flower,
And she died, as such girls do,
While, away in Northern Queensland,
Working hard, I never knew.

And we suffer for our sorrows,
And we suffer for our joys,
From the old bush days when mother
Spread the shake-down for the boys.
But to cool the living fever,
Comes a cold breath to my brow,
And I feel that Mary's spirit
Is beside me, even now.

Henry Lawson

The Shame Of Going Back

When you've come to make a fortune and you haven't made your salt,
And the reason of your failure isn't anybody's fault -
When you haven't got a billet, and the times are very slack,
There is nothing that can spur you like the shame of going back;
Crawling home with empty pockets,
Going back hard-up;
Oh! it's then you learn the meaning of humiliation's cup.

When the place and you are strangers and you struggle all alone,
And you have a mighty longing for the town where you are known;
When your clothes are very shabby and the future's very black,
There is nothing that can hurt you like the shame of going back.

When we've fought the battle bravely and are beaten to the wall,
'Tis the sneers of men, not conscience, that make cowards of us all;
And the while you are returning, oh! your brain is on the rack,
And your heart is in the shadow of the shame of going back.

When a beaten man's discovered with a bullet in his brain,
They POST-MORTEM him, and try him, and they say he was insane;
But it very often happens that he'd lately got the sack,
And his onward move was owing to the shame of going back.

Ah! my friend, you call it nonsense, and your upper lip is curled,
I can see that you have never worked your passage through the world;
But when fortune rounds upon you and the rain is on the track,
You will learn the bitter meaning of the shame of going back;
Going home with empty pockets,
Going home hard-up;
Oh, you'll taste the bitter poison in humiliation's cup.

Henry Lawson

The Shanty On The Rise

When the caravans of wool-teams climbed the ranges from the West,
On a spur among the mountains stood `The Bullock-drivers' Rest';
It was built of bark and saplings, and was rather rough inside,
But 'twas good enough for bushmen in the careless days that died --
Just a quiet little shanty kept by `Something-in-Disguise',
As the bushmen called the landlord of the Shanty on the Rise.

City swells who `do the Royal' would have called the Shanty low,
But 'twas better far and purer than some toney pubs I know;
For the patrons of the Shanty had the principles of men,
And the spieler, if he struck it, wasn't welcome there again.
You could smoke and drink in quiet, yarn, or else soliloquise,
With a decent lot of fellows in the Shanty on the Rise.

'Twas the bullock-driver's haven when his team was on the road,
And the waggon-wheels were groaning as they ploughed beneath the load;
And I mind how weary teamsters struggled on while it was light,
Just to camp within a cooey of the Shanty for the night;
And I think the very bullocks raised their heads and fixed their eyes
On the candle in the window of the Shanty on the Rise.

And the bullock-bells were clanking from the marshes on the flats
As we hurried to the Shanty, where we hung our dripping hats;
And we took a drop of something that was brought at our desire,
As we stood with steaming moleskins in the kitchen by the fire.
Oh! it roared upon a fireplace of the good, old-fashioned size,
When the rain came down the chimney of the Shanty on the Rise.

They got up a Christmas party in the Shanty long ago,
While I camped with Jimmy Nowlett on the riverbank below;
Poor old Jim was in his glory -- they'd elected him M.C.,
For there wasn't such another raving lunatic as he.
'Mr. Nowlett, Mr. Swaller!' shouted Something-in-Disguise,
As we walked into the parlour of the Shanty on the Rise.

There is little real pleasure in the city where I am --
There's a swarry round the corner with its mockery and sham;
But a fellow can be happy when around the room he whirls

In a party up the country with the jolly country girls.
Why, at times I almost fancied I was dancing on the skies,
When I danced with Mary Carey in the Shanty on the Rise.

Jimmy came to me and whispered, and I muttered, `Go along!'
But he shouted, `Mr. Swaller will oblige us with a song!'
And at first I said I wouldn't, and I shammed a little too,
Till the girls began to whisper, `Mr. Swallow, now, ah, DO!'
So I sang a song of something 'bout the love that never dies,
And the chorus shook the rafters of the Shanty on the Rise.

Jimmy burst his concertina, and the bullock-drivers went
For the corpse of Joe the Fiddler, who was sleeping in his tent;
Joe was tired and had lumbago, and he wouldn't come, he said,
But the case was very urgent, so they pulled him out of bed;
And they fetched him, for the bushmen knew that Something-in-Disguise
Had a cure for Joe's lumbago in the Shanty on the Rise.

Jim and I were rather quiet while escorting Mary home,
'Neath the stars that hung in clusters, near and distant, from the dome;
And we walked so very silent -- being lost in reverie --
That we heard the settlers'-matches rustle softly on the tree;
And I wondered who would win her when she said her sweet good-byes --
But she died at one-and-twenty, and was buried on the Rise.

I suppose the Shanty vanished from the ranges long ago,
And the girls are mostly married to the chaps I used to know;
My old chums are in the distance -- some have crossed the border-line,
But in fancy still their glasses chink against the rim of mine.
And, upon the very centre of the greenest spot that lies
In my fondest recollection, stands the Shanty on the Rise.

Henry Lawson

The Shearers

No church-bell rings them from the Track,
No pulpit lights their blindness--
'Tis hardship, drought, and homelessness
That teach those Bushmen kindness:
The mateship born, in barren lands,
Of toil and thirst and danger,
The camp-fare for the wanderer set,
The first place to the stranger.
They do the best they can to-day--
Take no thought of the morrow;
Their way is not the old-world way--
They live to lend and borrow.
When shearing's done and cheques gone wrong,
They call it "time to slither"--
They saddle up and say "So-long!"
And ride the Lord knows whither.

And though he may be brown or black,
Or wrong man there, or right man,
The mate that's steadfast to his mates
They call that man a "white man!"
They tramp in mateship side by side--
The Protestant and Roman--
They call no biped lord or sir,
And touch their hat to no man!

They carry in their swags perhaps,
A portrait and a letter--
And, maybe, deep down in their hearts,
The hope of "something better."
Where lonely miles are long to ride,
And long, hot days recurrent,
There's lots of time to think of men
They might have been--but weren't.

They turn their faces to the west
And leave the world behind them
(Their drought-dry graves are seldom set
Where even mates can find them).

They know too little of the world
To rise to wealth or greatness;
But in these lines I gladly pay
My tribute to their greatness.

Henry Lawson

The Shearers Dream

O I dreamt I shore in a shearing shed and it was a dream of joy
For every one of the rouseabouts was a girl dressed up as a boy
Dressed up like a page in a pantomime the prettiest ever seen
They had flaxen hair they had coal black hair and every shade between

There was short plump girls there was tall slim girls and the handsomest ever
seen
They was four foot five they was six foot high and every shade between

The shed was cooled by electric fans that was over every shoot
The pens was of polished mahogany and everything else to suit
The huts had springs to the mattresses and the tucker was simply grand
And every night by the billabong we danced to a German band

Our pay was the wool on the jumbucks' backs so we shore till all was blue
The sheep was washed afore they was shore and the rams were scented too
And we all of us cried when the shed cut out in spite of the long hot days
For every hour them girls waltzed in with whisky and beer on trays

There was three of them girls to every chap and as jealous as they could be
There was three of them girls to every chap and six of them picked on me
We was drafting them out for the homeward track and sharing them round like
steam
When I woke with my head in the blazing sun to find it a shearer's dream

Henry Lawson

The Ships That Won'T Go Down

We hear a great commotion
'Bout the ship that comes to grief,
That founders in mid-ocean,
Or is driven on a reef;
Because it's cheap and brittle
A score of sinners drown.
But we hear but mighty little
Of the ships that won't go down.

Here's honour to the builders –
The builders of the past;
Here's honour to the builders
That builded ships to last;
Here's honour to the captain,
And honour to the crew;
Here's double-column headlines
To the ships that battle through.

They make a great sensation
About famous men that fail,
That sink a world of chances
In the city morgue or gaol,
Who drink, or blow their brains out,
Because of "Fortune's frown".
But we hear far too little
Of the men who won't go down.

The world is full of trouble,
And the world is full of wrong,
But the heart of man is noble,
And the heart of man is strong!
They say the sea sings dirges,
But I would say to you
That the wild wave's song's a paean
For the men that battle through.

Henry Lawson

The Skyline Riders

Against the light of a dawning white
My Skyline Riders stand—
There is trouble ahead for a dark year dead
And the selfish wrongs of a land;
There are hurrying feet of fools to repeat
The follies of Nineteen Eight,
But darkly still on each distant hill
My riders watch and wait.
My Skyline Riders are down and gone
As far as the eye can see,
And the horses stand in the shades of dawn
Where a single man holds three.
We feel the flush and we feel the thrill
Of the coming of Nineteen Nine,
For my Skyline Riders are over the hill
And into the firing line.

The skyline lifts while a storm-cloud lowers—
What's that? A shot! All's well!
There is news out there for this land of ours
That the tattling rifles tell.
A "thud" and a "thud" and a flash like blood!
There is light on the land at last!
Australian guns on the nearer hills
Are talking about the past.

O, a lonely place in the days gone by
Was the long first firing line,
Where we fought as strangers, you and I,
For the land that was yours and mine.
There was time to dream in the firing line,
There was time to starve and die,
When the only things in that world of mine
Were my Native Land and I.

O, a lonely place was the firing line
When the gaps were wide between—
Hundreds of miles, in this land of mine
And never a soldier seen.

The dying must die and the dead were left
Unmarked by the deadly tired—
When struck to the heart in a firing line
Where never a shot was fired.

O, a lonely place was the firing line
In the days of the dearth of men,
But hundreds and hundreds of soldiers' sons
Have flocked to the line since then
We left it weak in the hour of pride,
When our rule seemed firmly set,
But danger threatened the firing line,
And there's deadly danger yet.

Proud of virtue, and proud of sin,
Or proud 'neath a cruel wrong;
Proud in failure or proud to win—
Oh, the pride of man is strong!
Proud of gold or of being without
Or proud of women and wine—
But get you down from your horse of pride
And into the firing line.

Pride in poverty—all the same—
There's work for all men to do,
With wrong to fight there is deathless fame
To win in a land so new.
Preacher and drunkard! and sportsman and bard!
In the dawning of Nineteen Nine—
Saints and sinners! ride hard! ride hard!
They are pressed in the Firing Line.

Henry Lawson

The Sleeping Beauty

"Call that a yarn!" said old Tom Pugh,
"What rot! I'll lay my hat
I'll sling you a yarn worth more nor two
Such pumped-up yarns as that."
And thereupon old Tommy "slew"
A yarn of Lambing Flat.

"When Lambing Flat broke out," he said,
"Mongst others there I knew
A lanky, orkard, Lunnon-bred
Young chap named Johnny Drew,
And nicknamed for his love of bed,
The 'Sleeping Beauty' too.

"He sunk a duffer on the Flat,
In comp'ny with three more,
And makin' room for this and that
They was a tidy four,
Save when the eldest, Dublin Pat,
Got drunk and raved for gore.

"This Jack at yarnin' licked a book,
And half the night he'd spout.
But when he once turned in, it took
Old Nick to get him out.
And that is how they came to cook
The joke I tell about.

"A duffer-rush broke out one day,
I quite forget where at
(It doesn't matter, anyway,
It didn't feed a cat)—
And Johnnie's party said they'd say
Good-bye to Lambing Flat.

"Next mom rose Johnnie's mates to pack
And make an early shunt,
But all they could get out of Jack
Was 'All right,' or a grunt,

By pourin' water down his back
And—when he turned—his front.

"The billy biled, the tea was made,
They sat and ate their fill,
But Jack upon his broad back laid,
Snored like a fog-horn still;
'We'll save some tea to scald him,' said
The peaceful Corney Bill.

"As they their beef and damper ate
And swilled their pints of tea
A bully notion all at worst
Dawned on that rowdy three.
And Dublin Pat, in frantic mirth,
Said, 'Now we'll have a spree!'

"Well, arter that, I'm safe to swear,
The beggars didn't lag,
But packed their togs with haste and care,
And each one made his swag
With Johnnie's moleskins, ev'ry pair,
Included in the bag.

"With nimble fingers from the pegs
They soon the strings unbent,
And off its frame as sure as eggs
They drew the blessed tent,
And rolled it up and stretched their legs,
And packed the lot—and went.

"And scarcely p'r'aps a thing to love,
The 'Beauty' slumbered sound,
With nought but Heaven's blue above
And Lambing Flat around,
Until in sight some diggers hove—
Some diggers out'ard bound.

"They sez as twelve o'clock was nigh—
We'll say for sure elev'n—
When Johnnie ope'd his right-hand eye
And looked straight up to Heav'n:

I reckon he got more surprise
Than struck the fabled Sev'n.

"Clean off his bunk he made a bound,
And when he rubbed his eyes
I'm safe to swear poor Johnnie found
His dander 'gin to rise.
For there were diggers standin' round—
Their missuses likewise.

"O Lor'! the joke—it wasn't lost,
Though it did well-nigh tear
The sides of them as came acrost
The flat to hear Jack swear,
They sez as how old Grimshaw tossed
His grey wig in the air.

"Some minutes on the ground Jack lay,
And bore their screamin' jeers,
And every bloke that passed that way
Contributed his sneers;
Jack cursed aloud, that cursed day
Seemed lengthened into years.

"Then in a fury up he sprung—
A pretty sight, you bet—
And laid about him with his tongue
Advising us 'to get',
And praying we might all be hung—
I think I hear him yet.

"Then on a sudden, down he bent,
And grabbed a chunk of rock,
And into Grimshaw's stomach sent
The fossil, with a shock,
And Grimshaw doubled up and went
To pieces with the knock.

"And in the sun that day Jack stood
Clad only in his shirt,
And fired with stones and bits of wood,
And with his tongue threw dirt;

He fought as long as e'er he could—
But very few were hurt.

“He stooped to tear a lump of schist
Out of the clinging soil,
By thunder, you should hear him jist,
And see the way he'd coil
Upon the ground, and hug his fist,
And scratch and dig and toil!

“Tis very plain he'd struck it fat,
The dufferin' Lunnon muff;
The scoff and butt of Lambing Flat,
Who always got it rough,
Could strike his fortune where he sat;
The joker held the stuff.

“Well, that's the yarn, it ain't so poor;
Them golden days is o'er,
And Dublin Pat was drowned, and sure
It quenched his thirst for gore;
Old Corney Bill and Dave the Cure
I never heard on more.

“The Sleepin' Beauty's wealthy, too,
And wears a shiny hat,
But often comes to old Tom Pugh
To have a quiet chat;
I lent him pants to get him through
His fix on Lambing Flat.”

Henry Lawson

The Sliprails And The Spur

The colours of the setting sun
Withdrew across the Western land --
He raised the sliprails, one by one,
And shot them home with trembling hand;
Her brown hands clung -- her face grew pale --
Ah! quivering chin and eyes that brim! --
One quick, fierce kiss across the rail,
And, `Good-bye, Mary!' `Good-bye, Jim!'
 Oh, he rides hard to race the pain
 Who rides from love, who rides from home;
 But he rides slowly home again,
 Whose heart has learnt to love and roam.

A hand upon the horse's mane,
And one foot in the stirrup set,
And, stooping back to kiss again,
With `Good-bye, Mary! don't you fret!
When I come back' -- he laughed for her --
`We do not know how soon 'twill be;
I'll whistle as I round the spur --
You let the sliprails down for me.'

She gasped for sudden loss of hope,
As, with a backward wave to her,
He cantered down the grassy slope
And swiftly round the dark'ning spur.
Black-pencilled panels standing high,
And darkness fading into stars,
And blurring fast against the sky,
A faint white form beside the bars.

And often at the set of sun,
In winter bleak and summer brown,
She'd steal across the little run,
And shyly let the sliprails down.
And listen there when darkness shut
The nearer spur in silence deep;
And when they called her from the hut

Steal home and cry herself to sleep.

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{Some editions have four more lines here.}

And he rides hard to dull the pain
Who rides from one that loves him best;
And he rides slowly back again,
Whose restless heart must rove for rest.

Henry Lawson

The Soldier Birds

I mind the river from Mount Frome
To Ballanshantie's Bridge,
The Mudgee Hills, and Buckaroo,
Lowe's Peak, and Granite Ridge.
The "tailers" in the creek beneath,
The rugged she-oak boles,
The river cod where shallows linked,
The willowed water-holes.
I mind the blacksoil river flats,
The red soil levels, too,
The sidings where below the scrub
The golden wattles grew;
The track that ran by Tierney's Gap,
The dusk and ghost alarms,
The glorious morning on the hills,
And all the German farms.

I mind the blue-grey gully bush,
The slab-and-shingle school,
The "soldier birds" that picked the crumbs
Beneath the infants' stool.
(Ah! did those little soldier birds,
That whispered, ever know
That one of us should rise so high
And sadly sink so low?)

I mind the lessons that we droned
In books from Irish schools,
The canings and the keepings-in
For breaking bounds and rules.
Ah! little did the teacher dream
That one of us, perchance,
Might write in London to be read
In Germany and France.

I mind the days we played at camp
With billy-can and swag,
I mind the notes sent home by girls
When someone "played the wag."

Ah! little did the master think
(Who'd lost the roving star)
What truants in their after years
Would play the wag so far.

I mind when first he gave to me
A pen and ink to write,
And, last, the "Fourth Class Forms" he made
I shared with Lucy White.
The other boys were other boys,
With cricket ball and bat,
They had a fine contempt for girls,
But they got over that.

The "rounders" where the girls came in—
The Tomboy and the rest—
The earnest game of Pris'ners' Base—
The game that I liked best.
The kangarooing on the ridge,
And in the brown moonlight,
The "possuming" across the flats,
With dogs and gun at night.

The "specking" in old diggers' heaps
For "colours" after rain,
The horse-shoes saved against the time
The circus came again,
And sold to Jimmy Siver-right—
The blacksmith on the flat;
The five-corners, the swimming hole—
Oh! I remember that!

I mind the holland "dinner bags"—
A book bag of green baize—
The bread and dripping, bread and meat,
And bread and treacle days.
The bread and butter swopped for meat,
The crumb we swopped for crust—
We've married—and divorced—since then,
And most old homes are dust.

It was the time, it was the place—

Australia's hardest page—
When boys were cast for farming work
At fourteen years of age.
It was the time, it was the place,
The latter "Early Day,"
When boys ride home from old bark schools
And to the world away.

I've drifted through Port Said since then,
Naples and Leicester Square,
And Collins and Macquarie Streets—
I know the secrets there.
Ah me! The country boy and girl,
The country lass and lad,
As innocent as soldier birds,
Though we thought we were bad!

But, spite of all their daring truth,
And some work that shall last,
The bitter years of my brave youth
Are better in the past.
This does not call for bitterness,
Nor does it call for tears,
The purest little thing perhaps
I've printed here for years.

The railway runs by Mudgee Hills,
Old farms are lost or lone,
And children's children sadly go
To schools of brick and stone.
Yet are the same. The Mudgee Hills
And Mudgee skies as fair—
And the little grey-clad soldier birds
Are just as busy there.

Henry Lawson

The Song And The Sigh

The creek went down with a broken song,
 'Neath the sheoaks high;
The waters carried the song along,
 And the oaks a sigh.

The song and the sigh went winding by,
 Went winding down;
Circling the foot of the mountain high,
 And the hillside brown.

They were hushed in the swamp of the Dead Man's Crime,
 Where the curlews cried;
But they reached the river the self-same time,
 And there they died.

And the creek of life goes winding on,
 Wandering by;
And bears for ever, its course upon,
 A song and a sigh.

Henry Lawson

The Song Of A Prison

Now this is the song of a prison—a song of a gaol or jug—
A ballad of quod or of chokey, the ultimate home of the mug.
The yard where the Foolish are drafted; Hell's school where the harmless are
taught;
For the big beast never is captured and the great thief never is caught.
A song of the trollop's victim, and the dealer in doubtful eggs,
And a song of the man who was ruined by the lie with a thousand legs.
A song of suspected persons and rouge-and-vagabond pals,
And of persons beyond suspicion—the habitual criminals.

'Tis a song of the weary warders, whom prisoners call "the screws"—
A class of men who I fancy would cleave to the "Evening News."
They look after their treasures sadly. By the screw of their keys they are known,
And they screw them many times daily before they draw their own.

It is written on paper pilfered from the prison printery,
With a stolen stump of a pencil that a felon smuggled for me.
And he'd have got twenty-four hours in the cells if he had been caught,
With bread to eat and water to drink and plenty of food for thought.

And I paid in chews of tobacco from one who is in for life;
But he is a decent fellow—he only murdered his wife.
(He is cherub-like, jolly, good-natured, and frank as the skies above,
And his Christian name is Joseph, and his other, ye gods! is Love!)

The Governor knows, and the Deputy, and all of the warders know,
Once a week, and on Sunday, we sit in a sinful row,
And bargain for chews of tobacco under the cover of prayer—
And the harmless Anglican chaplain is the only innocent there.

Staircase and doors of iron, no sign of a plank or brick,
Ceilings and floors of sandstone, and the cell walls two feet thick;
Cell like a large-sized coffin, or a small-sized tomb, and white,
And it strikes a chill to the backbone on the warmest summer night.

For fifteen hours they leave you to brood in the gloom and cold
On the cheats that you should have cheated, and the lies that you should have
told;
On the money that would release you, you lent to many a friend,

And the many a generous action you suffered for in the end.

Grey daylight follows softly the heartless electric light
That printed the bars of the window on the wall of the cell all night
The darkness has vanished "hushing" when there is nothing to hush—
And I think of the old grey daylight on the teamster's camp in the bush.

I think of the low bark homestead, the yard and the sinister bail,
And the shed in a hole in the gully—a pigsty compared with gaol;
The drought and the rows and the nagging; the hill where a flat grave is—
The gaol of my boyhood as dreadful and barren and grey as this.

We rise at six when the bell rings, and roll up our blankets neat,
Then we pace the cell till seven, brain-dulled, and with leaden feet.
Bolts clank, and the iron doors open, light floods from an iron-barred arch—
And we start with a start galvanic at the passionless, "Left—Quick march!"

Down the crooked and winding staircase in the great wrong-angular well,
Like the crooked stairs that of late years we have stumbled down to Hell;
We empty the tubs and muster, with the prison slouch and tread,
And we take to the cells our breakfast of hominy and of bread.

The church in its squat round tower, with Christ in His thorny wreath—
The reception house is below it, so the gates of Hell are beneath,
Where sinners are clad and numbered, when hope for a while has
And above us the gilded rooster that crowed when Peter lied.

What avail is the prayer of the abbess? Or the raving of Cock-eyed Liz?
The holy hermit in his cell, or the Holy Terror in his?
Brothers and sisters of Heaven, seen through the bars in a wall,
As we see the uncaught sinners—and God have mercy on all.

Henry Lawson

The Song Of Australia

The centuries found me to nations unknown –
My people have crowned me and made me a throne;
My royal regalia is love, truth, and light –
A girl called Australia – I've come to my right.

Though no fields of conquest grew red at my birth,
My dead were the noblest and bravest on earth;
Their strong sons are worthy to stand with the best –
My brave Overlanders ride west of the west.

My cities are seeking the clean and the right;
My Statesmen are speaking in London to-night;
The voice of my Bushmen is heard oversea;
My army and navy are coming to me.

By all my grim headlands my flag is unfurled,
My artists and singers are charming the world;
The White world shall know its young outpost with pride;
The fame of my poets goes ever more wide.

By old tow'r and steeple of nation grown grey
The name of my people is spreading to-day;
Through all the old nations my learners go forth;
My youthful inventors are startling the north.

In spite of all Asia, and safe from her yet,
Through wide Australasia my standards I'll set;
A grand world and bright world to rise in an hour –
The Wings of the White world, the Balance of Power.

Through storm, or serenely – whate'er I go through –
God grant I be queenly! God grant I be true!
To suffer in silence, and strike at a sign,
Till all the fair islands of these seas are mine.

Henry Lawson

The Song Of Old Joe Swallow

When I was up the country in the rough and early days,
I used to work along ov Jimmy Nowlett's bullick-drays;
Then the reelroad wasn't heered on, an' the bush was wild an' strange,
An' we useter draw the timber from the saw-pits in the range --
Load provisions for the stations, an' we'd travel far and slow
Through the plains an' 'cross the ranges in the days of long ago.

Then it's yoke up the bullicks and tramp beside 'em slow,
An' saddle up yer horses an' a-ridin' we will go,
To the bullick-drivin', cattle-drovin',
Nigger, digger, roarin', rovin'
Days o' long ago.

Once me and Jimmy Nowlett loaded timber for the town,
But we hadn't gone a dozen mile before the rain come down,
An' me an' Jimmy Nowlett an' the bullicks an' the dray
Was cut off on some risin' ground while floods around us lay;
An' we soon run short of tucker an' terbacca, which was bad,
An' pertaters dipped in honey was the only tuck we had.

An' half our bullicks perished when the drought was on the land,
An' the burnin' heat that dazzles as it dances on the sand;
When the sun-baked clay an' gravel paves for miles the burnin' creeks,
An' at ev'ry step yer travel there a rottin' carcasse reeks --
But we pulled ourselves together, for we never used ter know
What a feather bed was good for in those days o' long ago.

But in spite ov barren ridges an' in spite ov mud an' heat,
An' dust that browned the bushes when it rose from bullicks' feet,
An' in spite ov cold and chilblains when the bush was white with frost,
An' in spite of muddy water where the burnin' plain was crossed,
An' in spite of modern progress, and in spite of all their blow,
'Twas a better land to live in, in the days o' long ago.

When the frosty moon was shinin' o'er the ranges like a lamp,
An' a lot of bullick-drivers was a-campin' on the camp,
When the fire was blazin' cheery an' the pipes was drawin' well,
Then our songs we useter chorus an' our yarns we useter tell;

An' we'd talk ov lands we come from, and ov chaps we useter know,
For there always was behind us OTHER days o' long ago.

Ah, them early days was ended when the reelroad crossed the plain,
But in dreams I often tramp beside the bullick-team again:
Still we pauses at the shanty just to have a drop er cheer,
Still I feels a kind ov pleasure when the campin'-ground is near;
Still I smells the old tarpaulin me an' Jimmy useter throw
O'er the timber-truck for shelter in the days ov long ago.

I have been a-driftin' back'ards with the changes ov the land,
An' if I spoke ter bullicks now they wouldn't understand,
But when Mary wakes me sudden in the night I'll often say:
'Come here, Spot, an' stan' up, Bally, blank an' blank an' come-eer-way.'
An' she says that, when I'm sleepin', oft my elerquince 'ill flow
In the bullick-drivin' language ov the days o' long ago.

Well, the pub will soon be closin', so I'll give the thing a rest;
But if you should drop on Nowlett in the far an' distant west --
An' if Jimmy uses doubleyou instead of ar an' vee,
An' if he drops his aitches, then you're sure to know it's he.
An' yer won't forgit to arsk him if he still remembers Joe
As knowed him up the country in the days o' long ago.

Then it's yoke up the bullicks and tramp beside 'em slow,
An' saddle up yer horses an' a-ridin' we will go,
To the bullick-drivin', cattle-drovin',
Nigger, digger, roarin', rovin'
Days o' long ago.

Henry Lawson

The Song Of The Darling River

The skies are brass and the plains are bare,
Death and ruin are everywhere --
And all that is left of the last year's flood
Is a sickly stream on the grey-black mud;
The salt-springs bubble and the quagmires quiver,
And -- this is the dirge of the Darling River:

` I rise in the drought from the Queensland rain,
` I fill my branches again and again;
` I hold my billabongs back in vain,
` For my life and my peoples the South Seas drain;
` And the land grows old and the people never
` Will see the worth of the Darling River.

` I drown dry gullies and lave bare hills,
` I turn drought-ruts into rippling rills --
` I form fair island and glades all green
` Till every bend is a sylvan scene.
` I have watered the barren land ten leagues wide!
` But in vain I have tried, ah! in vain I have tried
` To show the sign of the Great All Giver,
` The Word to a people: O! lock your river.

` I want no blistering barge aground,
` But racing steamers the seasons round;
` I want fair homes on my lonely ways,
` A people's love and a people's praise --
` And rosy children to dive and swim --
` And fair girls' feet in my rippling brim;
` And cool, green forests and gardens ever' --
Oh, this is the hymn of the Darling River.

<i>The sky is brass and the scrub-lands glare,
Death and ruin are everywhere;
Thrown high to bleach, or deep in the mud
The bones lie buried by last year's flood,
And the Demons dance from the Never Never
To laugh at the rise of the Darling River.</i>

Henry Lawson

The Song Of The Waste-Paper Basket

O BARD of fortune, you deem me nought
But a mark for your careless scorn.
For I am the echo-less grave of thought
That is strangled before it's born.
You think perchance that I am a doom
Which only a dunce should dread—
Nor dream I've been the dishonoured tomb
Of the noblest and brightest dead.

The brightest fancies that e'er can fly
From the labouring minds of men
Are often written in lines awry,
And marred by a blundering pen;
And thus it comes that I gain a part
Of what to the world is loss—
Of genius lost for the want of art,
Of pearls that are set in dross.

And though I am of a lowly birth
My fame has been cheaply bought,
A power am I, for I rob the earth
Of the brightest gems of thought;
The Press gains much of my lawful share,
I am wronged without redress—
But I have revenge, for I think it fair
That I should plunder the Press.

You'd pause in wonder to read behind
The lines of some songs I see;
The soul of the singer I often find
In songs that are thrown to me.
But the song of the singer I bury deep
With the scrawl of the dunce and clown,
And both from the eyes of the world I keep,
And the hopes of both I drown.

Henry Lawson

The Sorrows Of A Simple Bard

WHEN I tell a tale of virtue and of injured innocence,
Then my publishers and lawyers are the densest of the dense:
With the blank face of an image and the nod of keep-it-dark
And a wink of mighty meaning at their confidential clerk.

(When, Oh! tell me when shall poets cease to be misunderstood?
When, Oh! When? shall people reckon rhymers can be any good?
Do their work and pay their debts and drink their pint of beer, and then,
Look in woman's eyes and leave them, just like ordinary men?)

"Is there literary friendship 'twix the sexes? don't you think?"
And they wink their idiotic and exasperating wink.
"Can't we kiss a clever woman without wanting any more?"
And their clock-work nod is only more decided than before.

But if I should hint that there's a little woman somewhere, say,
Then the public and the law are interested straight away,
The impassive confidential gets a bright and cheerful glance—
Things are straightway on a footing that may lead to an advance.

Both are married and respected and they both are rising higher:
One's church warden, one's a deacon in a fashionable choir.
And the clerks have both unblemished private characters to show—
What do they know about woman? That's what I should like to know.

(Flash of dark eyes in the moonlight, in the scrub or far afield,
Blouse-sleeves back from white arms clinging—clinging while she will not yield,
Or the fair head on your shoulder and the grey eyes moist and mild—
Weary of the strife with passion, yielding like a tired child.)

There's my aunt; the dear old lady hints about "experience"
When I go to her for comfort with my injured innocence.
She screws up a wise expression, while she listens, for my pains—
Isn't it an awful pity women haven't any brains?

Now I'm serious and angry, for it isn't any joke—
Poets have been damned for ages by such evil-minded folk.
Must we all be public blackguards? Can't a rhymers be a man,
Spite of Byron's silly mistress—Burns's gawky Mary Ann?

As tame bards they will not have us, and I don't know what they want,
There's my publisher and lawyer, my admirers and my aunt.
Do they want a rake and a spendthrift? Look out! Tradesman trusting me!
Look out! Husbands! Fathers! Brothers! I'll be wicked as can be!
There now.

Henry Lawson

The Soul Of A Poet

I HAVE written, long years I have written
For the sake of my people and right,
I was true when the iron had bitten
Deep into my soul in the night;
And I wrote not for praise nor for money,
I craved but the soul and the pen,
And I felt not the sting in the honey
Of praising the kindness of men.

You read and you saw without seeing,
My work seemed a trifle apart,
While the truth of things thrilled through my being,
And the wrong of things murdered my heart!
Cast out and despised and neglected,
And weak, and in fear, and in debt,
My songs, mutilated, rejected,
Shall ring through the Commonwealth yet!

And you, too, the pure and the guileless,
In the peace of your comfort and pride,
You have mocked at my bodily vileness,
You have tempted and cast me aside.
But wronged, and cast out, drink-sodden,
But shunned, and insane and unclean,
I have dared where few others have trodden,
I have seen what few others have seen.

I have seen your souls bare for a season,
I have heard as a deaf man can hear,
I have seen you deprived of your reason
And stricken with deadliest fear.
And when beautiful night hid the shocking
Black shame of the day that was past,
I felt the great universe rocking
With the truth that was coming at last!

Henry Lawson

The Southerly Buster

There's a wind that blows out of the South in the drought,
And we pray for the touch of his breath
When siroccos come forth from the North-West and North,
Or in dead calms of fever and death.
With eyes glad and dim we should sing him a hymn,
For depression and death are his foes,
And he gives us new life for the bread-winning strife—
When the glorious Old Southerly blows.
Old Southerly Buster! your forces you muster
Where seldom a wind bloweth twice,
And your 'white-caps' have hint of the snow caps, and glint of
The far-away barriers of ice.
No wind the wide sea on can sing such a poean
Or do the great work that you do;
Our own wind and only, from seas wild and lonely—
Old Southerly Buster!—To you!

Oh, the city is baked, and its thirst is unslaked,
Though it swallows iced drinks by the score,
And the blurred sky is low and the air seems aglow
As if breezes would cool it no more.
We are watching all hands where the Post Office stands—
We are watching out hopefully too—
For a red light shall glower from the Post Office tower
When the Southerly Buster is due.

The yachts run away at the end of the day
From the breakers commencing to comb,
For a few he may swamp in the health-giving romp
With the friendly Old Southerly home.
But he never drowns one, for the drowning is done
By the fools, or the reckless in sport;
And the alleys and slums shall be cooled when he comes
With the weary wind-jammers to port.

Oh softly he plays through the city's hot ways
To the beds where they're calling 'Come quick!'
He is gentle and mild round the feverish child,
And he cools the hot brow of the sick.

Clearing drought-hazy skies, up the North Coast he hies
Till the mouths of our rivers are fair—
And along the sea, too, he has good work to do,
For he takes the old timber-tubs there.

'Tis a glorious mission, Old Sydney's Physician!
Broom, Bucket, and Cloth of the East,
'Tis a breeze and a sprayer that answers our prayer,
And it's free to the greatest and least.
The red-lamp's a warning to drought and its scorning—
A sign to the city at large—
Hence! Headache and Worry! Despondency hurry!
Old Southerly Buster's in charge

Old Southerly Buster! your forces you muster
Where seldom a wind bloweth twice,
And your 'white-caps' have hint of the snow caps, and glint of
The far-away barriers of ice.
No wind the wide sea on can sing such a poean
Or do the great work that you do;
Our own wind and only, from seas wild and lonely—
Old Southerly Buster!—To you!

Henry Lawson

The Spirits For Good

We come with peace and reason,
We come with love and light,
To banish black self-treason
And everlasting night.

We know no god nor devil,
We neither drive nor lead—
We come to banish evil
In thought as well as deed.

And this our grandest mission,
And this our purest worth;
To banish superstition,
The blackest curse on earth.

We come to pass no sentence,
For ours is not the power—
The coward's vain repentance
But wastes the waiting hour.

'Tis not for us to lengthen
The years of wasted lives;
We come to help and strengthen
The goodness that survives.

We promise nought hereafter,
We cannot conquer pain,
But work, and rest, and laughter,
Will soothe the tortured brain.

That which is lost, we cannot
Restore to any one—
But Truth and Right must triumph,
And Justice must be done!

We come in many guises;
But every one is plain
To each pure thought that rises
Again and yet again.

We are ourselves and human,
And ours our destiny;
The souls of Man and Woman
Divorced by Vanity.

Henry Lawson

The Spirits Of Our Fathers

THE SPIRITS of our fathers rise not from every wave,
They left the sea behind them long ago;
It was many years of "slogging," where strong men must be brave,
For the sake of unborn children, and, maybe, a soul to save,
And the end a tidy homestead, and four panels round a grave,
And—the bones of poor old Someone down below.

Some left happy homes in old lands when they heard the New Land call
(Some were gentlemen and some were social wrecks)
Some left squalor and starvation—they were soldiers one and all,
And their weapons were the cross-cut and the wedges and the maul.
(How we used to run as children when we heard the big trees fall!
While they paused to wipe their faces and their necks.)

They were buried by our uncles where the ground was hard to dig
(It was little need for churchmen that they had),
And they sobbed like grown-up children, for their hearts were soft and big.
And the myrtle and the ivy, and the vine-tree and the fig—
And the heather—and the shamrock, where th' mother kept the pig,
Waited vainly for the Grand Australian Dad.

The spirits of our fathers have belts and bowyangs on
(Oh, Father! do you live again and know?)
Strapped riding pants and leggings parched and perished in the sun,
And love-belts "worked" by sweethearts ere the digging days were done,
And the cabbage-tree that went out with the muzzle-loading gun
That was carried round the cattle out beyond the furthest run
Where the brave exploring drovers used to go.

The spirits of our fathers, they rise from every grave
(Each side the line that Burke and Leichhardt crossed),
And where still in "settled districts" ghastly Bush-lost madmen rave
(While the grim search parties, haggard, struggle hopelessly to save)
Till the spirit timber beacons and the spirit waters lave,
And no spirit of a father has been lost.

The spirits of our fathers, they rise from level sand
(Like an ocean where an ocean used to be),
Out where Heaven's grandest 'lectrics light the Never Never Land

With the glorious hope and promise that the Bushmen understand
When the rain and grass are coming till the desert-plain is grand,
And the drought-divorced Australian meets his soul.

Listen! There's the word that's spoken when no other soul seems near,
And the one who hears is sober, calm and sane,
And the name called, amongst many, when the called alone can hear—
Words by lone huts and in prison, speaking comfort, hope and cheer—
And the Warning, not admitted to each other, calm and clear—
Then the fathers of a nation speak again.

There are spirits of our fathers in the theatres to-night
(And the places where rich sons of settlers go),
And a half-dressed daughter shivers, and a tailored son turns white,
For the heritage world-squandered, and the Land put out of sight,
And that awful thirst for Nothing that they bought with their birthright
And a haggard mother's spirit bending low.

There are spirits of our fathers by the pleasant South Coast roads
Where motor cars of sons of stockmen go,
In the wealth robbed from Up Country, oh, the shame of it is black!
And the laugh and giggle ceases and the car swerves and turns back,
'Tis the old dad, smiling grimly, with arms folded by the track,
And the shades of horse and swagmen that they know.

There's the flagship of the First Fleet rising grimly on the tide
(Out by Watson where the motor, launches go),
And the features known to many of our families of pride—
But the launches veer like seabirds, veer and turn and circle wide
From the shadow of a free ship where the waiting liners ride
And pale faces of brave emigrants look sadly o'er the side—
Boys and girls who were our parents long ago.

There the word said in the Senate by the patriot unafraid
(Senate where the comic fatmen never mind)
And the tissue starts and wakens, summons "Haw-haws!" to its aid,
But the honest men sit upright who were wearied of tirade.
And a nation's aims are furthered! and a nation's law is made—
For the spirit of a father stands behind.

Henry Lawson

The Squatter, Three Cornstalks, And The Well

There was a Squatter in the land—
So runs the truthful tale I tell—
There also were three cornstalks, and
There also was the Squatter's Well.

Singing (slowly): "Sin and sorrer, sin and sor-rer, sin and sor-r-r-rer."

The Squatter he was full of pluck,
The Cornstalks they were full of sin,
The well it was half full of muck
That many rains had drifted in.

Singing (with increased feeling): "Sin, &c."

The Squatter hired the Cornstalks Three
To cleanse the well of mud and clay;
And so they started willing-lee
At five-and-twenty bob a day.

Singing (apprehensively): "Sin, &c."

At five-and-twenty bob the lot—
That's eight-and-four the day would bring
To each; and so they thought they'd got
A rather soft and easy thing.

Singing (sadly): "Sin, &c."

The Cornstalks cleaned the well within
A day or two, or thereabout—
And then they worked an awful sin—
A scheme to make the job last out.

Singing (reproachfully): "Sin and sorrer, &c."

For when the well was cleaned out quite
Of all its logs and muck and clay
They tipped a drayload down at night
And worked to haul it up next day.

Singing (dismally): "Sin, &c."

But first the eldest, christened Hodge,
He greased the dray-wheel axles, so
The super wouldn't smell the dodge
And couldn't let the Squatter know.

Singing (hopelessly): "Sin and sorrer, &c."

The stuff they surfaced out each day
With some surprise the Squatter saw.
He never dreamt the sand and clay
Was three miles off the night before.

Singing (mournfully): "Sin and sorrer, &c."

But he got something in his eye;
It wasn't green, that's very plain.
He said the well was rather dry,
And they could fill it up again.

Singing (mournfully and dismally): "Sin and sorrer, &c."

The Cornstalks went to work next day
In hope, of course, of extra tin—
The Squatter watched, and, sad to say,
The mullock wouldn't all go in.

Singing (with great pathos): "Sin and sorrer, &c."

And though the Cornstalks twigged the ruse
Whereby the boss had done 'em brown,
They argued that the clay was loose,
And wanted time to settle down.

Singing (hopelessly): "Sin and sorrer, &c."

The boss began to rave and tear,
And yelled with a most awful frown,
"I will not settle up, I swear,
Till that there clay is settled down!"

Singing (hopefully): "Sin, &c."

"Before my cheques yer'Il pocket, boys,
Yer'Il put a mountain in a well"—
The Cornstalks didn't make a noise,
They only murmured sadly—!

Singing (triumphantly): "Sin and sorrer, &c."

MORAL:

There is a moral to my rhyme—
A moral to the dirge I sing—
That when you do go in for crime
You mustn't overdoo the thing.

Singing (more dismally than ever): "Sin and sorrer, s-i-n and sor-r-r-r-rer!"

Henry Lawson

The Squatter's Daughter

OUT in the west, where runs are wide,
And days than ours are hotter,
Not very far from Lachlan Side
There dwelt a wealthy squatter.

Of old opinions he was full—
An Englishman, his sire,
Was hated long where peasants pull
Their forelocks to the squire.

He loved the good old British laws,
And Royalty's regalia,
And oft was heard to growl because
They wouldn't fit Australia.

This squatter had a lovely child—
An angel bright we thought her;
And all the stockmen rude and wild
Adored the squatter's daughter.

But on a bright eventful morn,
A swell of northern nation—
A lordling—brought his languid yawn
And eyeglass to the station.

He coveted the squatter's wealth;
He saw the squatter's daughter:
And, what is more than heart or health,
His empty title bought her.

And "Yes", the father made her say
In spite of tears and kissing;
But early on the wedding day
The station found her missing.

And madder still the squatter grew,
And madder still the lover;
When by-and-by a-missing too,
A stockman they discover.

Then on the squatter's brow the frown
Went blacker still and blacker;
He sent a man to bring from town
A trooper and a tracker.

The dusty rascal saw the trail;
He never saw it plainer;
The reason why he came to fail
Will take a shrewd explainer.

A day and night the party lose;
The track the tracker parried;
And then a stockman brought the news—
"The runaways were married!"

The squatter swore that he'd forgive,
Perhaps, when he forgot her;
But he'd disown her while he'd live,
And while they called him squatter.

But as the empty months went o'er,
To ease his heart's vexation
He brought his bold young son-in-law
To manage stock and station.

And glad was he that he forgave,
Because a something had he
To keep his gray hairs from the grave,
And call him "Dear Grand Daddy".

To Democratic victories
In after years he'd listen;
And, strange to say, to things like these
His aged eyes would glisten.

The lordling took another girl
Not quite of his desire,
And went to where the farmers twirl
Their forelocks to the squire.

Now often to the station comes

An old and wrinkled tracker:
They cheer his heart with plenty rum,
And "plenty pheller bacca".

Henry Lawson

The Star Of Australasia

We boast no more of our bloodless flag, that rose from a nation's slime;
Better a shred of a deep-dyed rag from the storms of the olden time.
From grander clouds in our `peaceful skies' than ever were there before
I tell you the Star of the South shall rise -- in the lurid clouds of war.
It ever must be while blood is warm and the sons of men increase;
For ever the nations rose in storm, to rot in a deadly peace.
There comes a point that we will not yield, no matter if right or wrong,
And man will fight on the battle-field
while passion and pride are strong --
So long as he will not kiss the rod, and his stubborn spirit sours,
And the scorn of Nature and curse of God are heavy on peace like ours.

.

There are boys out there by the western creeks, who hurry away from school
To climb the sides of the breezy peaks or dive in the shaded pool,
Who'll stick to their guns when the mountains quake
to the tread of a mighty war,
And fight for Right or a Grand Mistake as men never fought before;
When the peaks are scarred and the sea-walls crack
till the furthest hills vibrate,
And the world for a while goes rolling back in a storm of love and hate.

.

There are boys to-day in the city slum and the home of wealth and pride
Who'll have one home when the storm is come, and fight for it side by side,
Who'll hold the cliffs 'gainst the armoured hells
that batter a coastal town,
Or grimly die in a hail of shells when the walls come crashing down.
And many a pink-white baby girl, the queen of her home to-day,
Shall see the wings of the tempest whirl the mist of our dawn away --
Shall live to shudder and stop her ears to the thud of the distant gun,
And know the sorrow that has no tears when a battle is lost and won, --
As a mother or wife in the years to come, will kneel, wild-eyed and white,
And pray to God in her darkened home for the `men in the fort to-night'.

.

But, oh! if the cavalry charge again as they did when the world was wide,
'Twill be grand in the ranks of a thousand men
in that glorious race to ride
And strike for all that is true and strong,
for all that is grand and brave,
And all that ever shall be, so long as man has a soul to save.
He must lift the saddle, and close his `wings', and shut his angels out,
And steel his heart for the end of things,
who'd ride with a stockman scout,
When the race they ride on the battle track, and the waning distance hums,
And the shelled sky shrieks or the rifles crack
like stockwhip amongst the gums --
And the `straight' is reached and the field is `gapped'
and the hoof-torn sward grows red
With the blood of those who are handicapped with iron and steel and lead;
And the gaps are filled, though unseen by eyes,
with the spirit and with the shades
Of the world-wide rebel dead who'll rise and rush with the Bush Brigades.

.

All creeds and trades will have soldiers there --
give every class its due --
And there'll be many a clerk to spare for the pride of the jackeroo.
They'll fight for honour and fight for love, and a few will fight for gold,
For the devil below and for God above, as our fathers fought of old;
And some half-blind with exultant tears, and some stiff-lipped, stern-eyed,
For the pride of a thousand after-years and the old eternal pride;
The soul of the world they will feel and see
in the chase and the grim retreat --
They'll know the glory of victory -- and the grandeur of defeat.

The South will wake to a mighty change ere a hundred years are done
With arsenals west of the mountain range and every spur its gun.
And many a rickety son of a gun, on the tides of the future tossed,
Will tell how battles were really won that History says were lost,
Will trace the field with his pipe, and shirk
the facts that are hard to explain,
As grey old mates of the diggings work the old ground over again --
How `this was our centre, and this a redoubt,
and that was a scrub in the rear,

And this was the point where the guards held out,
and the enemy's lines were here.'

.

They'll tell the tales of the nights before
and the tales of the ship and fort
Till the sons of Australia take to war as their fathers took to sport,
Their breath come deep and their eyes grow bright
at the tales of our chivalry,
And every boy will want to fight, no matter what cause it be --
When the children run to the doors and cry:
'Oh, mother, the troops are come!'
And every heart in the town leaps high at the first loud thud of the drum.
They'll know, apart from its mystic charm, what music is at last,
When, proud as a boy with a broken arm, the regiment marches past.
And the veriest wreck in the drink-fiend's clutch,
no matter how low or mean,
Will feel, when he hears the march, a touch
of the man that he might have been.
And fools, when the fiends of war are out and the city skies aflame,
Will have something better to talk about than an absent woman's shame,
Will have something nobler to do by far than jest at a friend's expense,
Or blacken a name in a public bar or over a backyard fence.
And this you learn from the libelled past,
though its methods were somewhat rude --
A nation's born where the shells fall fast, or its lease of life renewed.
We in part atone for the ghoulish strife,
and the crimes of the peace we boast,
And the better part of a people's life in the storm comes uppermost.

The self-same spirit that drives the man to the depths of drink and crime
Will do the deeds in the heroes' van that live till the end of time.
The living death in the lonely bush, the greed of the selfish town,
And even the creed of the outlawed push is chivalry -- upside down.
'Twill be while ever our blood is hot, while ever the world goes wrong,
The nations rise in a war, to rot in a peace that lasts too long.
And southern nation and southern state, aroused from their dream of ease,
Must sign in the Book of Eternal Fate their stormy histories.

Henry Lawson

The Statue Of Our Queen

PRIDE, selfishness in every line,
And on its face a frown,
It stands, a sceptre in its hand,
And points forever down.
And who will kneel? The unemployed!
Small homage pay, I ween,
The only men who gather 'neath
The Statue of our Queen.

I'd scarcely wonder if the sun,
That rises with good grace,
Should sink and leave the day undone
At sight of such a face.
But no! The day will still have birth
In all its golden sheen,
When antiquarians unearth
The Statue of our Queen.

Then if you'd have us loyal bide
As we have loyal been,
Great Parkes! for love of England, hide
The Statue of our Queen.

Henry Lawson

The Stranded Ship: (The "vincennes")

'Twas the glowing log of a picnic fire where a red light should not be,
Or the curtained glow of a sick room light in a window that faced the sea.
But the Manly lights seemed the Sydney lights, and the bluffs as the "Heads"
were seen;
And the Manly beach was the channel then—and the captain steered between.

The croakers said with a shoulder shrug, and a careless, know-all glance:
"You might pull out her stem, or pull out her stern—but she'll sail no more for
France!"
Her stem was dry when the tide was out, and behind her banked the sand,
Where strong gales come from the Hurricane east and the sun sets on the land.

When the tide was high and the rollers struck she shuddered as if in pain,
She had no hope for the open sea and the fair full breeze again.
She turned her side to the pounding seas and the foam glared over the rails,
It seemed her fate to be sold and stripped, and broken by winter gales.

But they sent strong gear, and they sent the gangs, and they sent her a man
who knew,
And the tugs came nosing round from the Heads to see what a tug could do;
The four-ton anchors they laid to sea in the waves and the wind and rain,
And the great steel hawser they hove aboard made fast to her cable chain.

And then, while the gaping townsfolk stared from the shining beach in doubt,
The crew and the shore-gangs lowered her yards and they hove the ballast out.
(To lie like a strange sea-grave upheaved on the smooth sand by her side)
And they made all ready and clear for the tugs to come on the rising tide.

And so, in the night when the tide was in and a black sky hid the stars,
The shoremen worked at the jumping winch and the crew at the capstan bars.
To seaward the two tugs rose and fell in their own wild stormy glare
And her head came round for a fathom's length! for a mighty heave was there.

So, tide by tide, and yard by yard, they hove her off the shore
To fit, and load for her ports of call, and to sail for France once more.
Till at last she came with the wild blind rush of a frightened thing set free,
And they towed her round to the Sydney Heads and in from the stormy sea.

And the croakers say, when a man is down, with a shrug and a know-all glance,

Oh, he'll never get out of the gutter again, he has done with every chance;
But we'll "haul and heave on the block and sheave", wave-beaten and black-rock
hemmed,
And we'll sail with cargoes that they shall buy, when their ships are all
condemned.

Henry Lawson

The Stranger's Friend

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

I met him in Bourke in the Union days—with which we have nought to do
(Their creed was narrow, their methods crude, but they stuck to 'the cause' like
glue).

He came into town from the Lost Soul Run for his grim half-yearly 'bend,'
And because of a curious hobby he had, he was known as 'The Stranger's Friend.'

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

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

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

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

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

When the Devil got hold of a hard-up bloke in the shape of the Stranger's Friend.

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

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

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

Henry Lawson

The Stringy-Bark Tree

There's the whitebox and pine on the ridges afar,
Where the iron-bark, blue-gum, and peppermint are;
There is many another, but dearest to me,
And the king of them all was the stringy-bark tree.
Then of stringy-bark slabs were the walls of the hut,
And from stringy-bark saplings the rafters were cut;
And the roof that long sheltered my brothers and me
Was of broad sheets of bark from the stringy-bark tree.

And when sawn-timber homes were built out in the West,
Then for walls and for ceilings its wood was the best;
And for shingles and palings to last while men be,
There was nothing on earth like the stringy-bark tree.

Far up the long gullies the timber-trucks went,
Over tracks that seemed hopeless, by bark hut and tent;
And the gaunt timber-finder, who rode at his ease,
Led them on to a gully of stringy-bark trees.

Now still from the ridges, by ways that are dark,
Come the shingles and palings they call stringy-bark;
Though you ride through long gullies a twelve months you'll see
But the old whitened stumps of the stringy-bark tree.

Henry Lawson

The Swagman And His Mate

FROM north to south throughout the year
The shearing seasons run,
The Queensland stations start to shear
When Maoriland has done;
But labour's cheap and runs are wide,
And some the track must tread
From New Year's Day till Christmastide
And never get a shed!
North, west, and south—south, west and north—
They lead and follow Fate—
The stoutest hearts that venture forth—
The swagman and his mate.

A restless, homeless class they are
Who tramp in Borderland.
They take their rest 'neath moon and star—
Their bed the desert sand,
On sunset tracks they ride and tramp,
Till speech has almost died,
And still they drift from camp to camp
In silence side by side.
They think and dream, as all men do;
Perchance their dreams are great—
Each other's thoughts are sacred to
The swagman and his mate.

With scrubs beneath the stifling skies
Unstirred by heaven's breath;
Beyond the Darling Timber lies
The land of living death!
A land that wrong-born poets brave
Till dulled minds cease to grope—
A land where all things perish, save
The memories of Hope.
When daylight's fingers point out back
(And seem to hesitate)
The far faint dust cloud marks their track—
The swagman and his mate.

And one who followed through the scrub
And out across the plain,
And only in a bitter mood
Would seek those tracks again,
Can only write what he has seen—
Can only give his hand—
And greet those mates in words that mean
"I know", "I understand."

I hope they'll find the squatter "white",
The cook and shearers "straight",
When they have reached the shed to-night—
The swagman and his mate.

Henry Lawson

The Teams

A cloud of dust on the long white road,
And the teams go creeping on
Inch by inch with the weary load;
And by the power of the green-hide goad
The distant goal is won.

With eyes half-shut to the blinding dust,
And necks to the yokes bent low,
The beasts are pulling as bullocks must;
And the shining tires might almost rust
While the spokes are turning slow.

With face half-hid 'neath a broad-brimmed hat
That shades from the heat's white waves,
And shouldered whip with its green-hide plait,
The driver plods with a gait like that
Of his weary, patient slaves.

He wipes his brow, for the day is hot,
And spits to the left with spite;
He shouts at `Bally', and flicks at `Scot',
And raises dust from the back of `Spot',
And spits to the dusty right.

He'll sometimes pause as a thing of form
In front of a settler's door,
And ask for a drink, and remark `It's warm,
Or say `There's signs of a thunder-storm';
But he seldom utters more.

But the rains are heavy on roads like these;
And, fronting his lonely home,
For weeks together the settler sees
The teams bogged down to the axletrees,
Or ploughing the sodden loam.

And then when the roads are at their worst,
The bushman's children hear

The cruel blows of the whips reversed
While bullocks pull as their hearts would burst,
And bellow with pain and fear.

And thus with little of joy or rest
Are the long, long journeys done;
And thus -- 'tis a cruel war at the best --
Is distance fought in the mighty West,
And the lonely battles won.

Henry Lawson

The Things We Dare Not Tell

The fields are fair in autumn yet, and the sun's still shining there,
But we bow our heads and we brood and fret, because of the masks we wear;
Or we nod and smile the social while, and we say we're doing well,
But we break our hearts, oh, we break our hearts! for the things we must not tell.

There's the old love wronged ere the new was won, there's the light of long ago;
There's the cruel lie that we suffer for, and the public must not know.
So we go through life with a ghastly mask, and we're doing fairly well,
While they break our hearts, oh, they kill our hearts! do the things we must not tell.

We see but pride in a selfish breast, while a heart is breaking there;
Oh, the world would be such a kindly world if all men's hearts lay bare!
We live and share the living lie, we are doing very well,
While they eat our hearts as the years go by, do the things we dare not tell.

We bow us down to a dusty shrine, or a temple in the East,
Or we stand and drink to the world-old creed, with the coffins at the feast;
We fight it down, and we live it down, or we bear it bravely well,
But the best men die of a broken heart for the things they cannot tell.

Henry Lawson

The Three Kings [1]

The East is dead and the West is done, and again our course lies thus
South-east by Fate and the Rising Sun where the Three Kings wait for us.
When our hearts are young and the world is wide, and the heights seem grand to
climb—

We are off and away to the Sydney-side; but the Three Kings bide their time.
'I've been to the West,' the digger said: he was bearded, bronzed and old;
Ah, the smothering curse of the East is wool, and the curse of the West is gold.
I went to the West in the golden boom, with Hope and a life-long mate,
'They sleep in the sand by the Boulder Soak, and long may the Three Kings wait.'

'I've had my fling on the Sydney-side,' said a blacksheep to the sea,
Let the young fool learn when he can't be taught: I've learnt what's good for me.'
And he gazed ahead on the sea-line dim—grown dim in his softened eyes—
With a pain in his heart that was good for him—as he saw the Three Kings rise.

A pale girl sits on the foc'sle head—she is back, Three Kings! so soon;
But it seems to her like a life-time dead since she fled with him 'saloon.'
There is refuge still in the old folks' arms for the child that loved too well;
They will hide her shame on the Southern farm—and the Three Kings will not tell.

'Twas a restless heart on the tide of life, and a false star in the skies
That led me on to the deadly strife where the Southern London lies;
But I dream in peace of a home for me, by a glorious southern sound,
As the sunset fades from a moonlit sea, and the Three Kings show us round.

Our hearts are young and the old hearts old, and life, on the farms is slow,
And away in the world there is fame and gold—and the Three Kings watch us go.
Our heads seem wise and the world seems wide, and its heights are ours to
climb,
So it's off and away in our youthful pride—but the Three Kings bide our time.

Henry Lawson

The Three Quiet Gentlemen

There is a quiet gentleman a-motoring in France
(Oh, don't you hear the honking of a British motor-car?)—
Like any quiet gentleman that you may meet by chance,
Who doesn't wear a uniform, and doesn't sport a star.
Another quiet gentleman is sitting by his side
(Oh, do you hear the "shuffling feet" tonight in Gay Paree?)—
The honking of their motor-car, when they go for a ride,
Is louder than the biggest gun that's made in Germany.
Another quiet gentleman, who's very like the first
(Oh, don't you hear the tinkle of the sleigh-bells on the snow?)
Is riding out in Russia now to watch the best and worst.
Oh, hear the bells of Petrograd a-ringing soft and low—
The Christmas bells of Petrograd, that hail the birth of Christ;
The sleigh-bells from the opera that hail the birth of Sin—
While eyes of men are dried in Hell and hearts of men are iced—
Are louder than the loudest blare that's blaring in Berlin.

Henry Lawson

The Tracks That Lie By India

Now this is not a dismal song, like some I've sung of late,
When I've been brooding all day long about my muddled fate;
For though I've had a rocky time I'll never quite forget,
And though I never was so deep in trouble and in debt,
And though I never was so poor nor in a fix so tight—
The tracks that run by India are shining in my sight.
The roads that run by India, and all the ports of call—
I'm going back to London first to raise the wherewithal.
I'll call at Suez and Port Said as I am going past
(I was too worried to take notes when I was that way last),
At Naples and at Genoa, and, if I get the chance,
Who knows but I might run across the pleasant land of France.

The track that runs by India goes up the hot Red Sea—
The other side of Africa is far too dull for me.
(I fear that I have missed a chance I'll never get again
To see the land of chivalry and bide awhile in Spain.)
I'll graft a year in London, and if fortune smiles on me
I'll take the track to India by France and Italy.

'Tis sweet to court some foreign girl with eyes of lustrous glow,
Who does not know my language and whose language I don't know;
To loll on gently-rolling decks beneath the softening skies,
While she sits knitting opposite, and make love with our eyes—
The glance that says far more than words, the old half-mystic smile—
The track that runs by India will wait for me awhile.

The tracks that run by India to China and Japan,
The tracks where all the rovers go—the tracks that call a Man!
I'm wearied of the formal lands of parson and of priest,
Of dollars and of fashions, and I'm drifting towards the East;
I'm tired of cant and cackle, and of sordid jobbery—
The mystery of the East hath cast its glamour over me.

Henry Lawson

The Tragedy

Oh, I never felt so wretched, and things never looked so blue
Since the days I gulped the physic that my Granny used to brew;
For a friend in whom I trusted, entering my room last night,
Stole a bottleful of Heenzo from the desk whereon I write.

I am certain sure he did it (though he never would let on),
For all last week he had a cold and to-day his cough is gone;
Now I'm sick and sore and sorry, and I'm sad for friendship's sake
(It was better than the cough-cure that our Granny used to make).

Oh, he might have pinched my whisky, and he might have pinched my beer,
Or all the fame or money that I make while writing here –
Oh, he might have shook the blankets and I'd not have made a row,
If he'd only left my Heenzo till the morning, anyhow.

So I've lost my faith in Mateship, which was all I had to lose
Since I lost my faith in Russia and myself and got the blues;
And so trust turns to suspicion, and so friendship turns to hate,
Even Kaiser Bill would never pinch his Heenzo from a mate.

Henry Lawson

The Triumph Of The People

LO, the gods of Vice and Mammon from their pinnacles are hurled
By the workers' new religion, which is oldest in the world;
And the earth will feel her children treading firmly on the sod,
For the triumph of the People is the victory of God.

Not the victory of Churches, nor of Punishment and Wrath,
Not the triumph of the sceptic, throwing shadows on the path,
But of Christ and love and mercy o'er the Monarch and the Rod,
For the harvest of the Saviour is the aftermath of God.

O the Light of Revelation, since the reign of Care began,
Has been shining through the ages on the darkened eyes of man.
And the willing slave of Error—he is senseless as a clod—
For the simple Book of Nature is the written scroll of God.

Who will dare to say the sunlight on the pregnant Earth was shed
That the few might rest and fatten, while the many fight for bread?
Lo, there springs a common garden, where the foot of Greed hath trod,
For the victory of Labour was the prophecy of God.

Mother Earth, in coming seasons, shall fulfil her motherhood;
Then the children of her bosom never more shall want for food,
And oppression shall no longer grind the people iron-shod;
For the lifted hand of Labour is the upraised hand of God.

Henry Lawson

The Two Poets

Two poets were born where the skies were fair,
To live in the land thereafter;
And one was a singer of sorrow and care,
And one was a bard of laughter.

With simple measure and simple word,
The feelings of mankind voicing –
And light hearts listened and sad hearts heard,
And they went on their way rejoicing.

The glad rejoiced that the world was gay –
Who took no thought of the morrow-
And it ever has lightened the sad hearts' way
To hear of another's' sorrow.

The poets died when none were aware,
(For no one could see the token)
That light of heart was the bard of care,
But the heart of the other was broken.

Henry Lawson

The Two Samaritans And The Tramp

A TRAMP was trampin' on the road—
The afternoon was warm an' muggy—
And by-and-by he chanced to meet
A parsin ridin' in a buggy.
Said he: "As follerers ov the Loard,
To do good offices we oughter!"
An' from a water-bag he poured,
An' guv the tramp, a drink er water.

The parsin he went rattlin' 'ome
To ware his fam-i-lee was thrivin',
The tramp went on until he met
A bullick-driver, bullick drivin'—
"It's bilin' 'ot," the driver sed
As soon's the dirty tramp drawed nearer,
And from a little keg he poured,
And giv the tramp a pint of beer—"ah!"

(P.S.—The "ah" is meant to stand for the tramp a-drinking ov it.)

I ain't agin the temperance cause,
Nor yet no advocate ov drinkin'—
I only tells the yarn because—
Well, at the time it somehow seemed
Ter kind ov set me thinkin'.

Henry Lawson

The Uncultured Rhymer To His Cultured Critics

Fight through ignorance, want, and care —
Through the griefs that crush the spirit;
Push your way to a fortune fair,
And the smiles of the world you'll merit.
Long, as a boy, for the chance to learn —
For the chance that Fate denies you;
Win degrees where the Life-lights burn,
And scores will teach and advise you.
My cultured friends! you have come too late
With your bypath nicely graded;
I've fought thus far on my track of Fate,
And I'll follow the rest unaided.
Must I be stopped by a college gate
On the track of Life encroaching?
Be dumb to Love, and be dumb to Hate,
For the lack of a college coaching?

You grope for Truth in a language dead —
In the dust 'neath tower and steeple!
What know you of the tracks we tread?
And what know you of our people?
'I must read this, and that, and the rest,'
And write as the cult expects me? —
I'll read the book that may please me best,
And write as my heart directs me!

You were quick to pick on a faulty line
That I strove to put my soul in:
Your eyes were keen for a 'dash' of mine
In the place of a semi-colon —
And blind to the rest. And is it for such
As you I must brook restriction?
'I was taught too little?' I learnt too much
To care for a pedant's diction!

Must I turn aside from my destined way
For a task your Joss would find me?
I come with strength of the living day,
And with half the world behind me;

I leave you alone in your cultured halls
To drivel and croak and cavil:
Till your voice goes further than college walls,
Keep out of the tracks we travel!

Henry Lawson

The Unknown God

The President to Kingdoms,
As in the Days of Old;
The King to the Republic,
As it had been foretold.
They could not read the spelling,
They would not hear the call;
They would not brook the telling
Of Writing on the Wall.
I buy my Peace with Slaughter,
With Peace I fashion War;
I drown the land with water,
With land I build the shore.
I walk with Son and Daughter
Where Ocean rolled before.
I build a town where sea was
A tower where tempests roar.

From bays in distant islands,
And rocks in lonely seas,
With unseen Death in silence
I smite mine enemies!
The great Cathedral crashes
Where once a city stood;
I build again on ashes
And breed on clotted blood!

I link the seas together,
And at my sign and will
The train runs on the ocean bed,
The great ship climbs the hill!
For pastime I flood deserts
With water from the rill;
And in my tireless leisure hours
I empty lakes, and fill.

I plumb the seas beneath us
And fathom skies above,
Yet I make Peace for hatred
And I make War for love.

I race beneath the ranges
And sit where Mystery dwells—
Yet mankind sees no changes,
They ask for "miracles!"

I own the world and span its
Lone lands from Pole to Pole;
I live in other planets,
Yet do not know my soul—
The soul that none may fathom,
Whose secrets none may tell,
The soul that none may humble,
The Soul Unconquerable!

I am the God of Ages!
I am the Unknown God!
My life is written pages
Wherever man hath trod.
From bounds of Polar regions,
To where the Desert reigns,
I've left my myriad legions
On countless vanished plains.

And I shall reign for ever
On earth while oceans roll,
In shape of man, or woman,
Through my immortal soul;
Yet I can love and suffer,
Be angry, or be mild,
And I can bow me down and weep
Just like a mortal child.

I conquer Death and Living,
And Fiends in shape of men,
For I rejoice in giving
Not to receive again.
For I am Man!—and Mortal!
And Mammon's Towers must fall,
Though Greed draws all his pencils through
The Writing on the Wall!

Henry Lawson

The Vagabond

White handkerchiefs wave from the short black pier
As we glide to the grand old sea --
But the song of my heart is for none to hear
If one of them waves for me.
A roving, roaming life is mine,
Ever by field or flood --
For not far back in my father's line
Was a dash of the Gipsy blood.

Flax and tussock and fern,
Gum and mulga and sand,
Reef and palm -- but my fancies turn
Ever away from land;
Strange wild cities in ancient state,
Range and river and tree,
Snow and ice. But my star of fate
Is ever across the sea.

A god-like ride on a thundering sea,
When all but the stars are blind --
A desperate race from Eternity
With a gale-and-a-half behind.
A jovial spree in the cabin at night,
A song on the rolling deck,
A lark ashore with the ships in sight,
Till -- a wreck goes down with a wreck.

A smoke and a yarn on the deck by day,
When life is a waking dream,
And care and trouble so far away
That out of your life they seem.
A roving spirit in sympathy,
Who has travelled the whole world o'er --
My heart forgets, in a week at sea,
The trouble of years on shore.

A rolling stone! -- 'tis a saw for slaves --
Philosophy false as old --

Wear out or break 'neath the feet of knaves,
Or rot in your bed of mould!
But I'D rather trust to the darkest skies
And the wildest seas that roar,
Or die, where the stars of Nations rise,
In the stormy clouds of war.

Cleave to your country, home, and friends,
Die in a sordid strife --
You can count your friends on your finger ends
In the critical hours of life.
Sacrifice all for the family's sake,
Bow to their selfish rule!
Slave till your big soft heart they break --
The heart of the family fool.

Domestic quarrels, and family spite,
And your Native Land may be
Controlled by custom, but, come what might,
The rest of the world for me.
I'd sail with money, or sail without! --
If your love be forced from home,
And you dare enough, and your heart be stout,
The world is your own to roam.

I've never a love that can sting my pride,
Nor a friend to prove untrue;
For I leave my love ere the turning tide,
And my friends are all too new.
The curse of the Powers on a peace like ours,
With its greed and its treachery --
A stranger's hand, and a stranger land,
And the rest of the world for me!

But why be bitter? The world is cold
To one with a frozen heart;
New friends are often so like the old,
They seem of the past a part --
As a better part of the past appears,
When enemies, parted long,
Are come together in kinder years,
With their better nature strong.

I had a friend, ere my first ship sailed,
A friend that I never deserved --
For the selfish strain in my blood prevailed
As soon as my turn was served.
And the memory haunts my heart with shame --
Or, rather, the pride that's there;
In different guises, but soul the same,
I meet him everywhere.

I had a chum. When the times were tight
We starved in Australian scrubs;
We froze together in parks at night,
And laughed together in pubs.
And I often hear a laugh like his
From a sense of humour keen,
And catch a glimpse in a passing phiz
Of his broad, good-humoured grin.

And I had a love -- 'twas a love to prize --
But I never went back again . . .
I have seen the light of her kind brown eyes
In many a face since then.

.

The sailors say 'twill be rough to-night,
As they fasten the hatches down,
The south is black, and the bar is white,
And the drifting smoke is brown.
The gold has gone from the western haze,
The sea-birds circle and swarm --
But we shall have plenty of sunny days,
And little enough of storm.

The hill is hiding the short black pier,
As the last white signal's seen;
The points run in, and the houses veer,
And the great bluff stands between.
So darkness swallows each far white speck
On many a wharf and quay.
The night comes down on a restless deck, --

Grim cliffs -- and -- The Open Sea!

Henry Lawson

The Vanguard [1]

While the crippled cruisers stagger where the blind horizon dips,
And the ocean ooze is rising round the sunken battle-ships,
While the battered wrecks, unnoticed, with their mangled crews drift past—
Let me fire one gun for Russia, though that gun should be the last.
'Tis a struggle of the Ages, and the White Man's star is dim,
There is little jubilation, for the game has got too grim;
But though Russia's hope seems shattered, and the Russian star seems set,
It may mean the Dawn for Russia—and my hope's in IVAN yet!

Let the Jingo in his blindness cant and cackle as he will;
But across the path from Asia run the Russian trenches still!
And the sahib in his rickshaw may loll back and smoke at ease,
While the haggard, ragged heroes man the battered batteries.

'Tis the first round of the struggle of the East against the West,
Of the fearful war of races—for the White Man could not rest.
Hold them, IVAN! staggering bravely underneath your gloomy sky;
Hold them, IVAN! we shall want you pretty badly by-and-bye!

Fighting for the Indian empire, when the British pay their debt;
Never Britain watched for BLUCHER as he'll watch for IVAN yet!
It means all to young Australia—it means life or death to us,
For the vanguard of the White Man is the vanguard of the Russ!

Henry Lawson

The Vanguard [11]

They say, in all kindness, I'm out of the hunt—
Too old and too deaf to be sent to the Front.
A scribbler of stories, a maker of songs,
To the fireside and armchair my valour belongs!
Yet in campaigns all hopeless, in bitterest strife,
I have been at the Front all the days of my life.
Oh, your girl feels a princess, your people are proud,
As you march down the street, 'midst the cheers of the crowd;
And the Nation's behind you and cloudless your sky,
And you come back to Honour, or gloriously die;
While for each thing that brightens, and each thing that cheers,
I have starved in the trenches these forty long years.

The cities were silent, the people were glum,
No sound of a bugle, no tap of a drum;
Our enemies mighty and Parliaments sour,
Our Land's lovers few, and no Man of the Hour.
The Girl turned her nose up (maybe 'twas before),
And they voted us Cracked when we marched to the war.

Our army was small and 'twas scattered afar,
And our headquarters down where the Poor People are.
But I knew the great hearts of the Jims and the Bills,
And we signalled by wireless as old as the hills.
There were songs that could reach to our furthestmost wing,
And Sorrow and Poverty taught me to sing.

Our War Hymn the war hymn that ever prevails—
Oh, we sang it of old when we marched from Marseilles!
And our army traditions are cherished with pride
In streets and in woods where we triumphed, or died;
Where, rebel or loyal, by farmhouse and town,
The chorus waxed faint as they volleyed us down.

No V.C. comes to us, no rest nor release,
Though hardest of all is this fighting in peace.
Small honour to wife or to daughter or son,
Though noblest of all are the deeds that are done.
But we never are conquered, we never can die,

For we live through the ages, my army and I!

Henry Lawson

The Voice From Over Yonder

"Did she care as much as I did
When our paths of Fate divided?
Was the love, then, all onesided—
Did she understand or care?"
Slowly fall the moments leaden,
And the silence seems to deaden—
And a voice from over yonder answers sadly: "I've been there."

"Have you tramped the streets of cities
Poor? And do you know what it is—
While no mortal cares or pities—
To have drifted past ambition;
To have sunk below despair?
Doomed to slave and stint and borrow;
Ever haunted in your sorrow
By the spectre of To-morrow?"
And the voice from over yonder answers sadly: "I've been there."

"Surely in the wide Hereafter
There's a land of love and laughter?
Say: Is this life all we live for—
Say it! think it, if you dare!
Have you ever thought or wondered
Why the Man and God were sundered?
Do you think the Maker blundered?"
And the voice, in mocking accents, answered only: "I've been there."

Henry Lawson

The Vote Of Thanks Debate

The Other Night I got the blues and tried to smile in vain.
I couldn't chuck a chuckle at the foolery of Twain;
When Ward and Billings failed to bring a twinkle to my eye,
I turned my eyes to Hansard of the fifteenth of July.
I laughed and roared until I thought that I was growing fat,
And all the boarders came to see what I was laughing at:
It rose the risibility of some, I grieve to state—
That foolish speech of Brentnall's in the Vote of Thanks debate.

O Brentnall, of the olden school and cold sarcastic style!
You'll take another WORKER now and stick it on your file;
"We're very fond of poetry,"—we hope that this is quite
As entertaining as the lines you read the other night.
We know that you are honest, but 'twas foolish to confess
You read and file the WORKER; we expected something less.
We think an older member would have told the people, so—
"My attention was directed to a certain print" (—you know).

The other night in Parliament you quoted something true,
Where truth is very seldom heard except from one or two.
You know that when the people rise the other side must fall,
And you are on the other side, and that explains it all.
You hate the Cause by instinct, the instinct of your class,
And fear the reformation that shall surely come to pass;
Your nest is feathered by the "laws" which you of course defend,
Your daily bread is buttered on the upper crust, my friend.

"We aim at broader interests," you say, and so we do;
We aim at "vested interests" (the gun is loaded too).
We hate the wrongs we write against. We've felt the curse of Greed.
There's little nonsense in the school where Labour earns its creed.
But you know little of the Cause that you are running down.
You would deny there's misery and hardship in the town;
Yet I could take you through the hells where Poverty holds sway,
And show you things you'd not forget until your dying day.

O Brentnall! Have you ever tramped the city streets within?
And felt the pavement wearing through the leather, sock, and skin;
And looked for work, and asked for work, and begged for work in vain,

Until you cared not though you ne'er might touch your tools again.
O Brentnall! Have you ever felt the summer sun and dirt?
And wore the stiffened socks for weeks, for weeks the single shirt?
And shunned your friends like small-pox—passing on the other side—
And crept away in shadows with your misery and pride?

Another solemn member rose encouraged by the cheers,
And talked of serving medals to our gallant volunteers,
And extra uniforms, that they might hand the old ones on
"As heirlooms in the family" when they are dead and gone.
But since the state of future times is very much in doubt,
They'd better wear their uniforms, they'd better wear them out;
They may some day be sorry for the front that they have shown,
And, e'er the nap is worn away, they mightn't like it known.

The children of a future time shall read, with awe profound,
How goslings did the goose-step while a gander led 'em round.
O Brentnall! Speak your periods into a phonograph,
That generations yet to rise may lay them down and laugh.
I wouldn't trust the future much; Posterity might own
That sense of the ridiculous that you have never shown;
And not the smiles of Mammon, nor the pride of place and pelf,
Can soothe the thought that one has made a jackass of one's self.

We're low, but we would teach you if you're willing to be taught,
That in the wilderness of print are tartars still uncaught;
And if you hunt in such a way—believe we do not jest—
Your chance to catch one is as good, and better than the best.
Be very sure about the mark before you cast the stone,
And, well, perhaps 'twould be as well to leave the muse alone.
You'll call it egotism? Yes: but still I think that I
Might hit a little harder if I only liked to try.

Henry Lawson

The Wander-Light

And they heard the tent-poles clatter,
And the fly in twain was torn –
'Tis the soiled rag of a tatter
Of the tent where I was born.
And what matters it, I wonder?
Brick or stone or calico? –
Or a bush you were born under,
When it happened long ago?

And my beds were camp beds and tramp beds and damp beds,
And my beds were dry beds on drought-stricken ground,
Hard beds and soft beds, and wide beds and narrow –
For my beds were strange beds the wide world round.

And the old hag seemed to ponder
('Twas my mother told me so),
And she said that I would wander
Where but few would think to go.
"He will fly the haunts of tailors,
He will cross the ocean wide,
For his fathers, they were sailors
All on his good father's side."

Behind me, before me, Oh! my roads are stormy
The thunder of skies and the sea's sullen sound,
The coaster or liner, the English or foreign,
The state-room or steerage the wide world round.

And the old hag she seemed troubled
As she bent above the bed,
"He will dream things and he'll see things
To come true when he is dead.
He will see things all too plainly,
And his fellows will deride,
For his mothers they were gipsies
All on his good mother's side."

And my dreams are strange dreams, are day dreams, are grey dreams,
And my dreams are wild dreams, and old dreams and new;

They haunt me and daunt me with fears of the morrow –
My brothers they doubt me – but my dreams come true.

And so I was born of fathers
From where ice-bound harbours are
Men whose strong limbs never rested
And whose blue eyes saw afar.
Till, for gold, one left the ocean,
Seeking over plain and hill;
And so I was born of mothers
Whose deep minds were never still.

I rest not, 'tis best not, the world is a wide one
And, caged for an hour, I pace to and fro;
I see things and dree things and plan while I'm sleeping,
I wander for ever and dream as I go.

I have stood by Table Mountain
On the Lion at Capetown,
And I watched the sunset fading
From the roads that I marked down,
And I looked out with my brothers
From the heights behind Bombay,
Gazing north and west and eastward,
Over roads I'll tread some day.

For my ways are strange ways and new ways and old ways,
And deep ways and steep ways and high ways and low;
I'm at home and at ease on a track that I know not,
And restless and lost on a road that I know.

Henry Lawson

The Wantaritencant

It watched me in the cradle laid, and from my boyhood's home
It glared above my shoulder-blade when I wrote my first "pome";
It's sidled by me ever since, with greeny eyes aslant—
It is the thing (O, Priest and Prince!) that wants to write, but can't.

It yells and slobbers, mows and whines, It follows everywhere;
'Tis gloating on these very lines with red and baleful glare.
It murders friendship, love and truth (It makes the "reader" pant),
It ruins editorial youth, the Wantaritencant.

Its slime is ever on my work, and ever on my name;
No toil nor trouble does It shirk—for It will write, all the same!
It tantalized when great thoughts burned, in trouble and in want;
It makes it hell for all concerned, the Wantaritencant.

And now that I would gladly die, or rest my weary mind,
I cannot rest to think that I must leave the Thing behind.
Its green rot damns the dead, for sure—that greatest curse extant,
'Twill kill Australian literature, the Wantaritencant!

You cannot kill or keep It still, or ease It off a bit;
It talks about Itself until the world believes in It.
It is a Scare, a Fright, a Ghast, a Gibber, and a Rant,
A future Horror and a Past, the Wantaritencant!

Henry Lawson

The Watch On The Kerb

Night-Lights are falling;
Girl of the street,
Go to your calling
If you would eat.
Lamplight and starlight
And moonlight superb,
Bright hope is a farlight,
So watch on the kerb.
Watch on the kerb,
Watch on the kerb;
Hope is a farlight;
Then watch on the kerb.

Comes a man: call him —
Gone! he is vext;
Curses befall him,
Wait for the next!
Fair world and bright world,
Life still is sweet —
Girl of the night-world,
Watch on the street.

Dreary the watch is:
Moon sinks from sight,
Gas only blotches
Darkness with light;
Never, Oh, never
Let courage go down;
Keep from the river,
Oh, Girl of the Town!

Henry Lawson

The Water

Let others make the songs of love
For our young struggling nation;
But I will sing while e'er I live
The Songs of Irrigation;
For while the white man shall beget
The white man's son and daughter,
The two most precious things for us
Shall still be wheat and water.

We've been drought-ruined in the West—
And ever in my dreaming
I see wide miles of waving crops
And sheets of water gleaming,
On plains where fortune died of thirst
When my brave father sought her,
I see the painted barges pass
Along the winding water.

And now the glorious scheme's afoot,
Our country to deliver
From drought and death on blazing waste,
By long neglected river.
You'll see the boodlers of the world
Rush in from every quarter:
They want the land,—the gold-reefed sand,
And now they'll want the water.

Bright intellects will plan the dykes—
With little gold to gild them—
Bright intellects will plan the dykes,
The people pay to build them;
And when we've made our long canals,
And lakes in every quarter,
Then ours would be the "guarantee"—
The Trust would own the water.

They'd hold the bores and aqueducts,
The water-ways and barges,
And we would live, or we would starve

According to their charges;
From all the Edens in the West
They'd bar our sons and daughters—
They'd hold the land, ten leagues or so,
Each side the rippling waters.

But those who fight to hold their own,
The Lord and time delivers;
As we have held our railway lines,
So we shall hold our rivers.
We'll find the money, as was found
The money spent in slaughter,
To build our dykes and build our dams,
And we shall own the water.

Henry Lawson

The Water Lily

A lonely young wife
In her dreaming discerns
A lily-decked pool
With a border of ferns,
And a beautiful child,
With butterfly wings,
Trips down to the edge of the water and sings:
'Come, mamma! come!
'Quick! follow me—
'Step out on the leaves of the water-lily!'
And the lonely young wife,
Her heart beating wild,
Cries, 'Wait till I come,
'Till I reach you, my child!'
But the beautiful child
With butterfly wings
Steps out on the leaves of the lily and sings:
'Come, mamma! come!
'Quick! follow me!
'And step on the leaves of the water-lily!

And the wife in her dreaming
Steps out on the stream,
But the lily leaves sink
And she wakes from her dream.
Ah, the waking is sad,
For the tears that it brings,
And she knows 'tis her dead baby's spirit that sings:
'Come, mamma! come!
'Quick! follow me!
'Step out on the leaves of the water-lily!'

Henry Lawson

The Wattle

I saw it in the days gone by,
When the dead girl lay at rest,
And the wattle and the native rose
We placed upon her breast.

I saw it in the long ago
(And I've seen strong men die),
And who, to wear the wattle,
Hath better right than I?

I've fought it through the world since then,
And seen the best and worst,
But always in the lands of men
I held Australia first.

I wrote for her, I fought for her,
And when at last I lie,
Then who, to wear the wattle, has
A better right than I?

Henry Lawson

The Waving Of The Red

It is a sad and cruel fate the country's coming to,
And there's no use in striking, 'so what are we to do?'
"I know what we could do, but then, there might be traitors near,
And things are running in my head that only mates should hear!"
The world cannot go on like this, in spite of all that's said,
And millions now are waiting for – the Waving of the Red.

"Last night as I lay slipping out a vision came to me;
A girl with face as fair and grand as ever man might see –
Her form was like the statues raised to Liberty in France,
And in her hand a blood-red flag was wrapped around a lance.
She shook the grand old colour loose, she smiled at me and said;
"Go bid your brothers gather for the Waving of the Red."

Henry Lawson

The Way I Treated Father [a Bush Song]

I WORKED with father in the bush
At splitting rails and palings.
He never was unkind to me,
Although he "had his failings:"
And now his grave is old and green,
And now at times I'm rather
Inclined to think 'twas very mean
The way I treated father.

The mother had for years been dead,
And Dad and I and Stumpy
Were living in a little shed—
What bushmen call a humpy;
And now I think when day began,
And it was cold and chilly,
'Twas mean to see a grey old man
Get up and boil the billy.

And though my lazy limbs were stiff;
And though 'twas winter weather.
And though my eyes were shut as if
The lids were glued together,
I think 'twas mean to lie in bed;
I think that I was silly,
Because I growled if father said,
"Git up and bile the billy!"

I didn't help the cooking much
For I was always "tired"—
'Twas strange that I could eat with such
An appetite as I had;
But now I mind I never growled
When father shouted, "Willie!
It's gittin' on for dinnertime;
Go home and bile the hilly."

His grave is growing old and green
And things have altered rather;
But still I think 'twas mighty mean

The way I treated father.
He left a tidy sum to me,
But I'd give all the money
To hear him say, "Will you get up
And bile the billy, Sonny?"

Henry Lawson

The Way Of The World

When fairer faces turn from me,
And gayer friends grow cold,
And I have lost through poverty
The friendship bought with gold;
When I have served the selfish turn
Of some all-worldly few,
And Folly's lamps have ceased to burn,
Then I'll come back to you.
When my admirers find I'm not
The rising star they thought,
And praise or blame is all forgot
My early promise brought;
When brighter rivals lead a host
Where once I led a few,
And kinder times reward their boast,
Then I'll come back to you.

You loved me, not for what I had
Or what I might have been,
You saw the good, but not the bad,
Was kind, for that between.
I know that you'll forgive again—
That you will judge me true;
I'll be too tired to explain
When I come back to you.

Henry Lawson

The Western Stars

On my blankets I was lyin'
Too tired to lift my head,
An' the long hot day was dyin'
An' I wished that I was dead.

From the West the gold was driven.
I watched the death of day,
An' the distant stars of Heaven
Seemed to draw my heart away.

Henry Lawson

The Women Of The Town

It is up from out the alleys, from the alleys dark and vile—
It is up from out the alleys I have struggled for a while—
Just to breathe the breath of Heaven ere my devil drags me down,
And to sing a song of pity for the women of the town.

Johnnies in the private bar room, weak and silly, vain and blind—
Even they would shrink and shudder if they knew the hell behind,
And the meanest wouldn't grumble when he's bilked of half-a-crown
If he knew as much as I do of the women of the town.

For I see the end too plainly of the golden-headed star
Who is smiling like an angel in the gilded private bar—
Drifting to the third-rate houses, drifting, sinking lower down
Till she raves in some foul parlour with the women of the town.

To the dingy beer-stained parlour all day long the outcasts come—
Draggled, dirty, bleared, repulsive, shameless, aye, and rotten some—
They have sold their bodies and would sell their souls for drink to drown
Memories of wrong that haunt them—haunt the women of the town.

I have seen the haunting terror of the 'horrors' in their eyes,
Heard them cry to Christ to help them as the mansoul never cries,
While the smirking landlord listened with a grin or with a frown.
Oh, they suffer hell in drinking, do the women of the town.

I have known too well, God help me! to what depths a man can sink,
Sacrificing wife and children, fame and honour, all for drink.
Deeper, deeper sink the women, for the veriest drunken clown
Has his feet upon the shoulders of the women of the town.

There's a heavy cloud that's lying on my spirit like a pall—
'Tis the horror and injustice and the hopelessness of all—
There's the love of one for ever that no sea of sin can drown,
And she loves a brute, God help her! does the woman of the town.

O my sisters, O my sisters, I am powerless to aid;
'Tis a world of prostitution, it is business, it is trade,
And they profit from the brewer and the smirking landlord down
To the bully and the bludger, on the women of the town.

Oh, the heart of one great poet* called to heaven in a line—
Crying, 'Mary, pity women!'—You have whiter souls than mine.
And if in the grand Hereafter there is one shall wear a crown—
For the hell that men made for her—'tis the Woman of the Town.

Henry Lawson

The World Is Full Of Kindness

The World is full of kindness—
And not the poor alone;
We Christians in our blindness
Bow down to hearts of stone;
The clever, bitter cynic,
Whose poisoned "soul" is dead,
And, like the rotten clinic,
Raves, helpless, on his bed.

The world is full of kindness—
But not the White alone;
The heathen in his blindness
Bows down to wood and stone;
But all men are his brothers,
In spite of all the "Powers,"
And the things he does for others
Shew whiter souls than ours.

The world is full of kindness—
But not the Lean alone;
The Fat man in his blindness
Bows down, and not to stone;
But when a friend's in trouble,
And an honest friend at that,
Then I'd turn to the Fat man
In spite of all his fat.

The world is full of kindness
If it is let alone,
And men's hearts in their blindness
Are neither ice nor stone.
In spite of all pretences,
We get it from Above;
In spite of all defences—
Red blood, kind hearts, and love.

Henry Lawson

The Wreck Of The 'derry Castle'

Day of ending for beginnings!
Ocean hath another innings,
 Ocean hath another score;
And the surges sing his winnings,
And the surges shout his winnings,
And the surges shriek his winnings,
 All along the sullen shore.

Sing another dirge in wailing,
For another vessel sailing
 With the shadow-ships at sea;
Shadow-ships for ever sinking --
Shadow-ships whose pumps are clinking,
And whose thirsty holds are drinking
 Pledges to Eternity.

Pray for souls of ghastly, sodden
Corpses, floating round untrodden
 Cliffs, where nought but sea-drift strays;
Souls of dead men, in whose faces
Of humanity no trace is --
Not a mark to show their races --
 Floating round for days and days.

.

Ocean's salty tongues are licking
Round the faces of the drowned,
And a cruel blade seems sticking
Through my heart and turning round.

Heaven! shall HIS ghastly, sodden
Corpse float round for days and days?
Shall it dash 'neath cliffs untrodden,
Rocks where nought but sea-drift strays?

God in heaven! hide the floating,
Falling, rising, face from me;

God in heaven! stay the gloating,
Mocking singing of the sea!

Henry Lawson

The Writer's Dream

A writer wrote of the hearts of men, and he followed their tracks afar;
For his was a spirit that forced his pen to write of the things that are.
His heart grew tired of the truths he told, for his life was hard and grim;
His land seemed barren, its people cold—yet the world was dear to him;—
So he sailed away from the Streets of Strife, he travelled by land and sea,
In search of a people who lived a life as life in the world should be.
And he reached a spot where the scene was fair, with forest and field and wood,
And all things came with the seasons there, and each of its kind was good;
There were mountain-rivers and peaks of snow, there were lights of green and gold,
And echoing caves in the cliffs below, where a world-wide ocean rolled.
The lives of men from the wear of Change and the strife of the world were free—
For Steam was barred by the mountain-range and the rocks of the Open Sea.

And the last that were born of a noble race—when the page of the South was fair—
The last of the conquered dwelt in peace with the last of the victors there.
He saw their hearts with the author's eyes who had written their ancient lore,
And he saw their lives as he'd dreamed of such—ah! many a year before.
And 'I'll write a book of these simple folk ere I to the world return,
'And the cold who read shall be kind for these—and the wise who read shall learn.

'Never again in a song of mine shall a jarring note be heard:
'Never again shall a page or line be marred by a bitter word;
'But love and laughter and kindly hours will the book I'll write recall,
'With chastening tears for the loss of one, and sighs for their sorrows all.
'Old eyes will light with a kindly smile, and the young eyes dance with glee—
'And the heart of the cynic will rest awhile for my simple folk and me.'

The lines ran on as he dipped his pen—ran true to his heart and ear—
Like the brighter pages of memory when every line is clear.
The pictures came and the pictures passed, like days of love and light—
He saw his chapters from first to last, and he thought it grand to write.
And the writer kissed his girlish wife, and he kissed her twice for pride:
'Tis a book of love, though a book of life! and a book you'll read!' he cried.

He was blind at first to each senseless slight (for shabby and poor he came)
From local 'Fashion' and mortgaged pride that scarce could sign its name.

What dreamer would dream of such paltry pride in a scene so fresh and fair?
But the local spirit intensified—with its pitiful shams—was there;
There were cliques wherever two houses stood (no rest for a family ghost!)
They hated each other as women could—but they hated the stranger most.

The writer wrote by day and night and he cried in the face of Fate—
'I'll cleave to my dream of life in spite of the cynical ghosts that wait.
'Tis the shyness born of their simple lives,' he said to the paltry pride—
(The homely tongues of the simple wives ne'er erred on the generous side)—
'They'll prove me true and they'll prove me kind ere the year of grace be passed,'
But the ignorant whisper of 'axe to grind!' went home to his heart at last.

The writer sat by his drift-wood fire three nights of the South-east gale,
His pen lay idle on pages vain, for his book was a fairy tale.
The world-wise lines of an elder age were plain on his aching brow,
As he sadly thought of each brighter page that would never be written now.
'I'll write no more!' But he bowed his head, for his heart was in Dreamland yet—
'The pages written I'll burn,' he said, 'and the pages thought forget.'

But he heard the hymn of the Open Sea, and the old fierce anger burned,
And he wrenched his heart from its dreamland free as the fire of his youth
returned:—
'The weak man's madness, the strong man's scorn—the rebellious hate of youth
'From a deeper love of the world are born! And the cynical ghost is Truth!'
And the writer rose with a strength anew wherein Doubt could have no part;
'I'll write my book and it shall be true—the truth of a writer's heart.

'Ay! cover the wrong with a fairy tale—who never knew want or care—
'A bright green scum on a stagnant pool that will reek the longer there.
'You may starve the writer and buy the pen—you may drive it with want and
fear—
'But the lines run false in the hearts of men—and false to the writer's ear.
'The bard's a rebel and strife his part, and he'll burst from his bonds anew,
'Till all pens write from a single heart! And so may the dream come true.

'Tis ever the same in the paths of men where money and dress are all,
'The crawler will bully whene'er he can, and the bully who can't will crawl.
'And this is the creed in the local hole, where the souls of the selfish rule;
'Borrow and cheat while the stranger's green, then sneer at the simple fool.
'Spit your spite at the men whom Fate has placed in the head-race first,
'And hate till death, with a senseless hate, the man you have injured worst!
'There are generous hearts in the grinding street, but the Hearts of the World go

west;

'For the men who toil in the dust and heat of the barren lands are best!

'The stranger's hand to the stranger, yet—for a roving folk are mine—

'The stranger's store for the stranger set—and the camp-fire glow the sign!

'The generous hearts of the world, we find, thrive best on the barren sod,

'And the selfish thrive where Nature's kind (they'd bully or crawl to God!)

'I was born to write of the things that are! and the strength was given to me.

'I was born to strike at the things that mar the world as the world should be!

'By the dumb heart-hunger and dreams of youth, by the hungry tracks I've trod—

'I'll fight as a man for the sake of truth, nor pose as a martyred god.

'By the heart of "Bill" and the heart of "Jim," and the men that their hearts deem "white,"

'By the handgrips fierce, and the hard eyes dim with forbidden tears!—I'll write!

'I'll write untroubled by cultured fools, or the dense that fume and fret—

'For against the wisdom of all their schools I would stake mine instinct yet!

'For the cynical strain in the writer's song is the world, not he, to blame,

'And I'll write as I think, in the knowledge strong that thousands think the same;

'And the men who fight in the Dry Country grim battles by day, by night,

'Will believe in me, and will stand by me, and will say to the world, "He's right!"'

Henry Lawson

They Can Only Drag You Down

Leader, poet, singer, artist, who have struggled long and won,
Though the climbing is behind you, now the battle has begun,
Shut your ears unto the empty parrot phrases of the town,
Shun the hand-grips of your rivals, they can only drag you down.

See the bush or quiet chamber, work – for you have work to do,
Though the city shall be lighted and the table spread for you –
Work through ease and pleasure call you, work when you have care to drown,
Shun the wine-cup like a serpent, it can only drag you down.

And the star eyes and the red lips, luring ever to a wreck,
And the beauty of the white arms clinging closely round your neck!
Golden head thrown back and white arms clinging closer when you frown,
Tear them from your neck if need be – they can only drag you down.

Henry Lawson

Those Foreign Engineers

Old Ivan McIvanovitch, with knitted brow of care,
Has climbed up from the engine-room to get a breath of air;
He slowly wipes the grease and sweat from hairy face and neck.
And from beneath his bushy brows he glowers around the deck.

The weirdest Russian in the fleet, whose words are strange to hear,
He seems to run the battleship, though but an engineer.
He is not great, he has no rank, and he is far from rich—
'Tis strange the admiral salutes old McIvanovitch.

He gives the order 'Whusky!' ere he goes below once more—
And 'Whusky' is a Russian word I never heard before;
Perhaps some Tartar dialect, because, you know, you'll meet
Some very various Muscovites aboard the Baltic fleet.

And on another battleship that sailed out from Japan
The boss of all the engineers, you'll find another man
With flaming hair and eyes like steel, and he is six-foot three—
His name is Jock McNogo, and a fearsome Jap is he.

He wears a beard upon his chest, his face you won't forget,
His like was never found amongst the heathen idols yet;
His words are awesome words to hear, his lightest smile is grim,
And daily in the engine-room the heathen bow to him.

Now, if the fleets meet in the North and settle matters there,
Say, how will McIvanovitch and Jock McNogo fare?
But if you ken that Russian and that Jap, you needn't fret,
They'll hae a drap, or maybe twa, some nicht in Glesca yet.

Those foreigners will ship again aboard some foreign boat,
And do their best to drive her through and keep the tub afloat.
They'll stir the foreign greasers up and prove from whence they came—
And all to win the bawbees for the wife and bairns at home.

Henry Lawson

Till All The Bad Things Came Untrue

BY blacksoil plains burned grey with drought
Where desert shrubs and grasses grow,
Along the Land of Furthest Out
That only Overlanders know.
I dreamed I camped on river grass
In bends where river timber grew—
I dreamed, I dreamed the days to pass
Till all the bad things came untrue.

I dreamed that I was young again,
But was not young as I had been,
My path through life seemed fair and plain,
My sight and hearing clear and keen.
No longer bent nor lined and grey,
I met and loved and worshipped you—
I dreamed, I dreamed the days away
Till all the sad things came untrue.

I dreamed a home of freestone stood
With toned tiled roofs as roofs should be,
By cliff and fall and beach and wood
With wide verandahs to the sea.
I dreamed a hale gudeman and wife,
With sons and daughters well-to-do,
Lived there the glorious old home life
And all the mad things were untrue.

From blacksoil plains burned bare with drought
Where years are sown that never grow—
From dead grey creeks of dreams and drought,
Through black-ridged wastes of weirdest woe,
I tramped and camped with fearsome fare
Until the sea-scape came in view,
And lo! the home lay smiling there
And all the bad things were untrue.

Henry Lawson

To "doc" Wylie

THOUGH doctors may your name discard
And say you physicked vilely,
I would I were as good a bard
As you a doctor, Wylie!

How often, when your skill subdued
The fever ranging highly,
You won a bushman's gratitude,
Though little more, Doc Wylie!

How oft across the regions wide
Where scrub for many a mile lay
The bushman rode, as bushmen ride,
To seek your aid, Doc Wylie!

But now, when bushman's wife or child
Lies ill and suffering direly,
He'll need to ride a weary while
Before he finds Doc Wylie.

I hope where they have made your bed,
And where these verses I lay,
They'll raise a board above your head—
And write your name—Doc Wylie!

Henry Lawson

To A Pair Of Blucher Boots

OLD acquaintance unforgotten,
Though you may be "ugly brutes"—
Though your leather's cracked and rotten,
Worn-out pair of Blucher boots.

'Tis the richer man before you,
Dearer leathers grace his feet;
'Twas the better man that wore you
In the tramps through dust and heat!

Oft rebuffed by "super's" snarling,
When I asked him for a "show",
On that long tramp to the Darling
In the days of long ago;

Tell me, if you know it, whether,
As I sadly tramped away,
Bore I heavy on your leather,
Worn-out pair of Bluchers, say?

Though your leather's cracked and rotten,
Though you may be ugly brutes,
I'll preserve you unforgotten,
Worn-out pair of Blucher boots!

Henry Lawson

To An Old Mate

Old Mate! In the gusty old weather,
When our hopes and our troubles were new,
In the years spent in wearing out leather,
I found you unselfish and true --
I have gathered these verses together
For the sake of our friendship and you.

You may think for awhile, and with reason,
Though still with a kindly regret,
That I've left it full late in the season
To prove I remember you yet;
But you'll never judge me by their treason
Who profit by friends -- and forget.

I remember, Old Man, I remember --
The tracks that we followed are clear --
The jovial last nights of December,
The solemn first days of the year,
Long tramps through the clearings and timber,
Short partings on platform and pier.

I can still feel the spirit that bore us,
And often the old stars will shine --
I remember the last spree in chorus
For the sake of that other Lang Syne,
When the tracks lay divided before us,
Your path through the future and mine.

Through the frost-wind that cut like whip-lashes,
Through the ever-blind haze of the drought --
And in fancy at times by the flashes
Of light in the darkness of doubt --
I have followed the tent poles and ashes
Of camps that we moved further out.

You will find in these pages a trace of
That side of our past which was bright,
And recognise sometimes the face of

A friend who has dropped out of sight --
I send them along in the place of
The letters I promised to write.

Henry Lawson

To Be Amused

You ask me to be gay and glad
While lurid clouds of danger loom,
And vain and bad and gambling mad,
Australia races to her doom.
You bid me sing the light and fair,
The dance, the glance on pleasure's wings –
While you have wives who will not bear,
And beer to drown the fear of things.

A war with reason you would wage
To be amused for your short span,
Until your children's heritage
Is claimed for China by Japan.
The football match, the cricket score,
The "scraps", the tote, the mad'ning Cup –
You drunken fools that evermore
"To-morrow morning" sober up!

I see again with haggard eyes,
The thirsty land, the wasted flood;
Unpeopled plains beyond the skies,
And precious streams that run to mud;
The ruined health, the wasted wealth,
In our mad cities by the seas,
The black race suicide by stealth,
The starved and murdered industries!

You bid me make a farce of day,
And make a mockery of death;
While not five thousand miles away
The yellow millions pant for breath!
But heed me now, nor ask me this –
Lest you too late should wake to find
That hopeless patriotism is
The strongest passion in mankind!

You'd think the seer sees, perhaps,
While staring on from days like these,
Politeness in the conquering Japs,

Or mercy in the banned Chinese!
I mind the days when parents stood,
And spake no word, while children ran
From Christian lanes and deemed it good
To stone a helpless Chinaman.

I see the stricken city fall,
The fathers murdered at their doors,
The sack, the massacre of all
Save healthy slaves and paramours –
The wounded hero at the stake,
The pure girl to the leper's kiss –
God, give us faith, for Christ's own sake
To kill our womankind ere this.

I see the Bushman from Out Back,
From mountain range and rolling downs,
And carts race on each rough bush track
With food and rifles from the towns;
I see my Bushmen fight and die
Amongst the torn blood-spattered trees,
And hear all night the wounded cry
For men! More men and batteries!

I see the brown and yellow rule
The southern lands and southern waves,
White children in the heathen school,
And black and white together slaves;
I see the colour-line so drawn
(I see it plain and speak I must),
That our brown masters of the dawn
Might, aye, have fair girls for their lusts!

With land and life and race at stake –
No matter which race wronged, or how –
Let all and one Australia make
A superhuman effort now.
Clear out the blasting parasites,
The paid-for-one-thing manifold,
And curb the goggled "social-lights"
That "scorch" to nowhere with our gold.

Store guns and ammunition first,
Build forts and warlike factories,
Sink bores and tanks where drought is worst,
Give over time to industries.
The outpost of the white man's race,
Where next his flag shall be unfurled,
Make clean the place! Make strong the place!
Call white men in from all the world!

Henry Lawson

To Hannah

Spirit girl to whom 'twas given
To revisit scenes of pain,
From the hell I thought was Heaven
You have lifted me again;
Through the world that I inherit,
Where I loved her ere she died,
I am walking with the spirit
Of a dead girl by my side.

Through my old possessions only
For a very little while,
And they say that I am lonely,
And they pity, but I smile:
For the brighter side has won me
By the calmness that it brings,
And the peace that is upon me
Does not come of earthly things.

Spirit girl, the good is in me,
But the flesh you know is weak,
And with no pure soul to win me
I might miss the path I seek;
Lead me by the love you bore me
When you trod the earth with me,
Till the light is clear before me
And my spirit too is free.

Henry Lawson

To Jack

SO, I've battled it through on my own, Jack,
I have done with all dreaming and doubt.
Though "stoney" to-night and alone, Jack,
I am watching the Old Year out.
I have finished with brooding and fears,
Jack, And the spirit is rising in me,
For the sake of the old New Years, Jack,
And the bright New Years to be.

I have fallen in worldly disgrace, Jack,
And I know very well that you heard;
They have blackened my name in this place, Jack,
And I answered them never a word.
But why should I bluster or grieve,
Jack? So narrow and paltry they be—
I knew you would never believe, Jack,
The lies that were said against me.

That is done which shall never be undone,
And I blame not, I blame not my land,
But I'm hearing the Calling of London,
And I long for the roar of the Strand.
It was always the same with our race,
Jack; You know how a vagabond feels—
We can fight a straight man face to face, Jack.
But we can't keep the curs from our heels.

You know I loved women and drink, Jack,
And that's how the trouble began;
But you know that I never would shrink,
Jack, From a deed that was worthy a man!
I never was paltry or mean, Jack.
And cruel I never could be,
I will give you a hand which is clean,
Jack, When we meet again over the sea.

I will bring a few wrinkles of care,
Jack; I have altered a lot, I am told;
The steel-filings show in my hair, Jack;

But my heart is as young as of old.
I have faith still in women, and men, Jack,
Though selfish and blind they may be.
I still have my soul and my pen, Jack,
And my country seems dearer to me.

I will sail when your summer sets in, Jack,
And good-bye to my own native land;
Oh, I long for a glimpse of your grin, Jack,
And I long for the grip of your hand.
We both suffered sorrow and pain, Jack,
And sinned in the days that are done;
But we'll fight the old battle again, Jack,
Where the battle is worth being won.

Henry Lawson

To Jim

I gaze upon my son once more,
With eyes and heart that tire,
As solemnly he stands before
The screen drawn round the fire;
With hands behind clasped hand in hand,
Now loosely and now fast—
Just as his fathers used to stand
For generations past.
A fair and slight and childish form,
And big brown thoughtful eyes—
God help him! for a life of storm
And stress before him lies:
A wanderer and a gipsy wild,
I've learnt the world and know,
For I was such another child—
Ah, many years ago!

But in those dreamy eyes of him
There is no hint of doubt—
I wish that you could tell me, Jim,
The things you dream about.
Dream on, my son, that all is true
And things not what they seem—
'Twill be a bitter day for you
When wakened from your dream.

You are a child of field and flood,
But with the gipsy strains
A strong Norwegian sailor's blood
Is running through your veins.
Be true, and slander never stings,
Be straight, and all may frown—
You'll have the strength to grapple things
That dragged your father down.

These lines I write with bitter tears
And failing heart and hand,
But you will read in after years,
And you will understand:

You'll hear the slander of the crowd,
They'll whisper tales of shame,
But days will come when you'll be proud
To bear your father's name.

But oh! beware of bitterness
When you are wronged, my lad—
I wish I had the faith in men
And women that I had!
'Tis better far (for I have felt
The sadness in my song)
To trust all men and still be wronged
Than to trust none and wrong.

Be generous and still do good
And banish while you live
The spectre of ingratitude
That haunts the ones who give.
But if the crisis comes at length
That your future might be marred,
Strike hard, my son, with all your strength!
For your own self's sake, strike hard!

Henry Lawson

To My Friends

These are songs of the Friends I neglected—
And the Foes, too, in part;
These are songs that were mostly rejected—
And songs from my heart.
Yours truly.

Henry Lawson

To Roumania

Rifles of the Rear Guard,
Rattling through the rain,
Falling back and falling back
To make a stand again –
Rifles of the Rear Guard,
Shall you die in vain?

Rifles of the Rear Guard.
In the cold and wet;
Rifles of the Rear Guard,
We're coming – do not fret!
The rifles of the Rear Guard
Shall be the Vanguard yet.

Henry Lawson

To Show What A Man Can Do

There has been many a grander deed since man had life to give,
And thousands have gone to certain death, eyes open, that men might live;
And many have gone for their country's sake, when their numbers were all too
few,
And bravely died that their mates may die—to show what a man can do.

Now this is the song of La Bella wreck at the harbour of Warnambool,
And this is the song of a brave, brave man of the grand old simple school:
We all know the forces of circumstance, and we blame not the lifeboat crew—
But this is the song of a fisherman who showed what a man can do.

With a single scull in his strong young hands, and his brave young eyes aglow,
He shot his skill o'er the raging hell, where the lifeboat dared not go!
It was twice and thrice that he went again, and the lives they were only two—
But this is the song of The Man Who Knows, and can show what a man can do.

And we need such deeds in this world of ours, lest the hearts of men might fail—
Oh we need such deeds in this world of ours, and a man to tell the tale!
When the eloquent gestures come from the wreck, and never a word comes
through—
Oh, we need such deeds in our land to-day to show what a man can do!

And this is the moral of all that is,
And it's only known to two
Put out in your dinghy with confidence,
To show what a man can do.

Henry Lawson

To The Irish Delegates

Farewell! The gold we send shall be a token
Of that which in our hearts is growing strong;
You asked our sympathy, and we have spoken—
“They wrong us who our brothers rob and wrong.”

Tell Ireland—tell her in her desolation,
That hearts within the South for her have bled—
That scalding tears of helpless indignation
By eyes that read her cruel wrongs are shed.

Helpless no more! but strong to act hereafter,
For silenced are the “loyal subjects” sneers—
Too long have Ireland’s wrongs been words of laughter—
Arch-mockery to tickle British ears.

Tell Ireland that they lie of us—they slander,
Who say we care not for another’s wrong;
For we are not the men to kneel and pander
To tyranny, because the tyrant’s strong.

Take back across the waves Australia’s message,
And say our hearts are big, and strong our hands,
Tell Ireland that for her is surest presage
Of fate as fair as of these Southern lands.

Henry Lawson

To Tom Bracken

O had you tracked where Kendall* trod
I think you would be kneelin'
Three times a week and thankin' God
That you are of New Zealan'!
For this I'll say, to make it short,
An' keep my tongue from clacken—
The people are a kinder sort
You're singin' for, Tom Bracken.

Henry Lawson

To Victor Daley

I thought that silence would be best,
But I a call have heard,
And, Victor, after all the rest,
I well might say a word:
The day and work is nearly done,
And ours the victory,
And we are resting, one by one,
In graveyards by the sea.

But then you talked of other nights,
When, gay from dusk to dawn,
You wasted hours with other lights
That went where you have gone.
You spoke not of the fair and "fast",
But of the pure and true—
"Sweet ugly women of the past"
Who stood so well by you.

You made a jest on that last night,
I met it with a laugh:
You wondered which of us should write
The other's epitaph.
We filled the glasses to the brim—
"The land's own wine" you know—
And solemnly we drank to him
Who should be first to go.

No ribald jest; we were but two—
The royst'ring days were past—
And in our heart of hearts we knew,
That one was going fast.
We both knew who should win the race—
Were rest or fame the prize—
As with a quaint smile on your face
You looked into my eyes.

You talked about old struggles brave,
But in a saddened tone—
The swindles editors forgave

For laughter's sake alone.
You talked of humorous distress,
And bailiffs that you knew,
But with a touch of bitterness
I'd never seen in you.

No need for tears or quick-caught breath—
You sleep not in the sand—
No need for ranting song of death,
With the death drink in our hand.
No need for vain invective hurled
At "cruel destiny",
Though you seem dead to all the world
You are not dead to me.

I see you walk into the room—
We aye remember how—
And, looking back into the gloom,
You'll smile about it now.
'Twas Victor's entry, solemn style—
With verse or paragraph:
Though we so often saw your smile
How many heard you laugh?

They dare to write about the man
That they have never seen:
The blustering false Bohemian
That you have never been;
Some with the false note in their voice,
And with the false tear shed,
Who in their secret heart rejoice
For one more rival—dead.

They miss the poems, real and true,
Where your heart's blood was shed.
And rave of reckless things that you
Threw out for bitter bread.
They "weep" and "worship" while you "rest",
They drivel and they dote—
But, Victor, we remember best
The things we never wrote.

The things that lie between us two,
The things I'll never tell.
A fool, I stripped my soul, but you—
You wore your mask too well
(How strangely human all men be,
Though each one plays a part).
You only dropped it once for me,
But then I saw your heart.

A souls'-match, such as one might strike
With or without intent
(How strangely all men are alike—
With masks so different).
No need to drop the mask again,
On that last night, I know—
It chanced when we were sober men,
Some seven years ago.

They slander you, fresh in the sand,
They slander me alive;
But, when their foul souls flee the land,
Our spirits shall arrive.
In slime and envy let them rave,
And let the worst be said:
"A drunkard at a drunkard's grave,"
"A brilliant drunkard dead."

Because we would not crawl to them,
Their hands we would not shake,
Because their greed we would condemn,
Their bribes we would not take:
Because unto the fair and true
Our hearts and songs we gave—
But I forgot them when I threw
My white flower on your grave.

So let us turn, and with a smile
Let those poor creatures pass
While we, the few who wait awhile,
Drink to an empty glass.
We'll live as in the days gone by,
To no god shall we bow—

Though, Victor, there are times when I
Feel jealous of you now.

But I'll have done with solemn songs,
Save for my country's sake;
It is not meet, for all the wrongs,
That any heart should break.
So many need to weep and smile,
Though all the rest should frown,
That I'd take your burden up awhile
Where you have laid it down.

Henry Lawson

To-Morrow

When you're suffering hard for your sins, old man,
When you wake to trouble and sleep ill—
Oh, this is the clack of the middle class,
'Win back the respect of the people!'
You are weak, you're a fool, or a drunken brute
When you're deep in trouble and sorrow;
But walk down the street in a decent suit,
And their hats will be off to-morrow! Old Chap—
And their hats will be off to-morrow!
They cant and they cackle—'Redeem the Past!'
Who never had past worth redeeming:
Your soul seems dead, but you'll find at last
That somewhere your soul lay dreaming.
You may stagger down-hill in a beer-stained coat,
You may loaf, you may cadge and borrow—
But walk down the street with a ten-pound note
And their hats will be off to-morrow! Old Man—
Yes, their hats will be off to-morrow!

But stick to it, man! for your old self's sake,
Though to brood on the past is human;
Hold up for the sake of the mate who was true,
And the sake of the Other Woman.
And as for the rest, you may take off your hat
And banish all signs of sorrow;
You may take their hands, but in spite of that,
Can they win your respect to-morrow? Old Man—
Can they win your respect to-morrow?

Henry Lawson

Trooper Campbell

One day old Trooper Campbell
Rode out to Blackman's Run,
His cap-peak and his sabre
Were glancing in the sun.
'Twas New Year's Eve, and slowly
Across the ridges low
The sad Old Year was drifting
To where the old years go.

The trooper's mind was reading
The love-page of his life --
His love for Mary Wylie
Ere she was Blackman's wife;
He sorrowed for the sorrows
Of the heart a rival won,
For he knew that there was trouble
Out there on Blackman's Run.

The sapling shades had lengthened,
The summer day was late,
When Blackman met the trooper
Beyond the homestead gate.
And if the hand of trouble
Can leave a lasting trace,
The lines of care had come to stay
On poor old Blackman's face.

` Not good day, Trooper Campbell,
It's a bad, bad day for me --
You are of all the men on earth
The one I wished to see.
The great black clouds of trouble
Above our homestead hang;
That wild and reckless boy of mine
Has joined M'Durmer's gang.

` Oh! save him, save him, Campbell!
I beg in friendship's name!

For if they take and hang him,
The wife would die of shame.
Could Mary or her sisters
Hold up their heads again,
And face a woman's malice
Or claim the love of men?

`And if he does a murder
'Twere better we were dead.
Don't take him, Trooper Campbell,
If a price be on his head;
But shoot him! shoot him, Campbell,
When you meet him face to face,
And save him from the gallows,
And us from that disgrace.'

`Now, Tom,' cried Trooper Campbell,
`You know your words are wild.
Though he is wild and reckless,
Yet still he is your child;
So bear up in your trouble,
And meet it like a man,
And tell the wife and daughters
I'll save him if I can.'

.

The sad Australian sunset
Had faded from the west;
But night brings darker shadows
To hearts that cannot rest;
And Blackman's wife sat rocking
And moaning in her chair.
`I cannot bear disgrace,' she moaned;
`Disgrace I cannot bear.

`In hardship and in trouble
I struggled year by year
To make my children better
Than other children here.
And if my son's a felon
How can I show my face?

I cannot bear disgrace; my God,
I cannot bear disgrace!

` Ah, God in Heaven pardon!
I'm selfish in my woe --
My boy is better-hearted
Than many that I know.
And I will face the world's disgrace,
And, till his mother's dead,
My foolish child shall find a place
To lay his outlawed head.'

.

With a sad heart Trooper Campbell
Rode back from Blackman's Run,
Nor noticed aught about him
Till thirteen miles were done;
When, close beside a cutting,
He heard the click of locks,
And saw the rifle muzzles
Were on him from the rocks.

But suddenly a youth rode out,
And, close by Campbell's side:
` Don't fire! don't fire, in heaven's name!
It's Campbell, boys!' he cried.
Then one by one in silence
The levelled rifles fell,
For who'd shoot Trooper Campbell
Of those who knew him well?

Oh, bravely sat old Campbell,
No sign of fear showed he.
He slowly drew his carbine;
It rested by his knee.
The outlaws' guns were lifted,
But none the silence broke,
Till steadfastly and firmly
Old Trooper Campbell spoke.

` That boy that you would ruin

Goes home with me, my men;
Or some of us shall never
Ride through the Gap again.
You know old Trooper Campbell,
And have you ever heard
That bluff or lead could turn him,
That e'er he broke his word?

`That reckless lad is playing
A heartless villain's part;
He knows that he is breaking
His poor old mother's heart.
He'll bring a curse upon himself;
But 'tis not that alone,
He'll bring dishonour to a name
That I'D be proud to own.

`I speak to you, M'Durmer, --
If your heart's not hardened quite,
And if you'd seen the trouble
At Blackman's home this night,
You'd help me now, M'Durmer --
I speak as man to man --
I swore to save that foolish lad,
And I'll save him if I can.'

`Oh, take him!' said M'Durmer,
`He's got a horse to ride.'
The youngster thought a moment,
Then rode to Campbell's side --
`Good-bye!' the outlaws shouted,
As up the range they sped.
`A Merry New Year, Campbell,'
Was all M'Durmer said.

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Then fast along the ridges
Two bushmen rode a race,
And the moonlight lent a glory
To Trooper Campbell's face.
And ere the new year's dawning

They reached the home at last;
And this is but a story
Of trouble that is past!

Henry Lawson

Trouble On The Selection

You lazy boy, you're here at last,
You must be wooden-legged;
Now, are you sure the gate is fast
And all the sliprails pegged
And all the milkers at the yard,
The calves all in the pen?
We don't want Poley's calf to suck
His mother dry again.
And did you mend the broken rail
And make it firm and neat?
I s'pose you want that brindle steer
All night among the wheat.
And if he finds the lucerne patch,
He'll stuff his belly full;
He'll eat till he gets 'blown' on that
And busts like Ryan's bull.

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

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

Henry Lawson

Uncle Harry

Oh, never let on to your own true love
That ever you drank a drop;
That ever you played in a two-up school
Or slept in a sly-grog shop;
That ever a bad girl nursed you round –
That ever you sank so low.
But she pulled you through, and it's only you
And your old mate Harry know.

"Billy the Link" they called you then,
And it makes me sad to think
Of the strenuous days when it took three cops
And a pimp to couple the Link.
"Mister Linkhurst" they call you now,
And your kitchen garden grows;
And no one knows in your family,
But your Uncle Harry knows.

Oh, never let on to your fair young bride
How a "straight" girl stabbed your heart
With a devilish wire to the Western side
Where we were a world apart.
With pick and shovel you fought it out
Where the red sirocco blows;
And no one knew in the gang save you –
But your old mate Harry knows.

Oh, never let on to your own good wife,
For a tender heart has she,
Of the girl that loved and the girl that lies
In the graveyard there by the sea!
'Twas not for his "manners" she loved the cad,
'Twas not for his verse or prose,
But the pity she felt for the country lad –
And your Uncle Harry knows.

The bad girl went where the bad girls go
And I see her dark eyes yet;
The good girl left me her broken heart,

But I trow that their souls have met.
The cry of the heart we send not forth
On every wind that blows;
You are hiding a sorrow from someone now –
But your Uncle Harry knows.

Henry Lawson

Untitled

When his heart is growing bitter and his hair is growing grey,
And he hears the debt-collector knocking several times a day,
And the shrill voice of the Missus, blame, reiterate, accuse—
Then the poet who was famous feels inclined to damn the muse—

When he hears a sudden rapping—rapping at his chamber door,
Then he knows it's no good trying to write poems any more,
Then he bursts from out his chamber and he grabs his battered hat,
And he cadges Two Bob somewhere and gets beered up on his pat.

Henry Lawson

Unwritten Books

It always seems the same old story –
No matter what grand heights are won –
We die with out best work unwritten,
We die with out best work undone.

Unwritten books, unpainted pictures
In millions are, beneath the sun.
We die, with our great thoughts unpublished,
We die with our best work undone.

Henry Lawson

Up The Country

I am back from up the country -- very sorry that I went --
Seeking for the Southern poets' land whereon to pitch my tent;
I have lost a lot of idols, which were broken on the track,
Burnt a lot of fancy verses, and I'm glad that I am back.
Further out may be the pleasant scenes of which our poets boast,
But I think the country's rather more inviting round the coast.
Anyway, I'll stay at present at a boarding-house in town,
Drinking beer and lemon-squashes, taking baths and cooling down.

` Sunny plains'! Great Scott! -- those burning
wastes of barren soil and sand
With their everlasting fences stretching out across the land!
Desolation where the crow is! Desert where the eagle flies,
Paddocks where the lunny bullock starts and stares with reddened eyes;
Where, in clouds of dust enveloped, roasted bullock-drivers creep
Slowly past the sun-dried shepherd dragged behind his crawling sheep.
Stunted peak of granite gleaming, glaring like a molten mass
Turned from some infernal furnace on a plain devoid of grass.

Miles and miles of thirsty gutters -- strings of muddy water-holes
In the place of `shining rivers' -- `walled by cliffs and forest boles.'
Barren ridges, gullies, ridges! where the ever-madd'ning flies --
Fiercer than the plagues of Egypt -- swarm about your blighted eyes!
Bush! where there is no horizon! where the buried bushman sees
Nothing -- Nothing! but the sameness of the ragged, stunted trees!
Lonely hut where drought's eternal, suffocating atmosphere
Where the God-forgotten hatter dreams of city life and beer.

Treacherous tracks that trap the stranger,
endless roads that gleam and glare,
Dark and evil-looking gullies, hiding secrets here and there!
Dull dumb flats and stony rises, where the toiling bullocks bake,
And the sinister `gohanna', and the lizard, and the snake.
Land of day and night -- no morning freshness, and no afternoon,
When the great white sun in rising bringeth summer heat in June.
Dismal country for the exile, when the shades begin to fall
From the sad heart-breaking sunset, to the new-chum worst of all.

Dreary land in rainy weather, with the endless clouds that drift
O'er the bushman like a blanket that the Lord will never lift --
Dismal land when it is raining -- growl of floods, and, oh! the woosh
Of the rain and wind together on the dark bed of the bush --
Ghastly fires in lonely humpies where the granite rocks are piled
In the rain-swept wildernesses that are wildest of the wild.

Land where gaunt and haggard women live alone and work like men,
Till their husbands, gone a-droving, will return to them again:
Homes of men! if home had ever such a God-forgotten place,
Where the wild selector's children fly before a stranger's face.
Home of tragedy applauded by the dingoes' dismal yell,
Heaven of the shanty-keeper -- fitting fiend for such a hell --
And the wallaroos and wombats, and, of course, the curlew's call --
And the lone sundowner tramping ever onward through it all!

I am back from up the country, up the country where I went
Seeking for the Southern poets' land whereon to pitch my tent;
I have shattered many idols out along the dusty track,
Burnt a lot of fancy verses -- and I'm glad that I am back.
I believe the Southern poets' dream will not be realised
Till the plains are irrigated and the land is humanised.
I intend to stay at present, as I said before, in town
Drinking beer and lemon-squashes, taking baths and cooling down.

Henry Lawson

Victor

And his death came in December,
When our summer was aglow—
Like a song that we remember,
Like a child's dream long ago,
And it brought Australia to him,
Her sweetest singer dead,
While in silence friends who knew him
Bowed their heads beside his bed.

Angel Death comes softly stealing
When the watchers' eyes are dim,
And, when all has failed in healing
Wounded heart or helpless limb—
With a whisper we may hear not
'Till with "Adsum" we respond,
And a vision we shall fear not
Of the Peaceful Land beyond.

While Australians in their blindness
Fail to realize their loss,
Place the wreath of loving kindness
And raise the simple cross.
For he taught us to be brothers
And he taught us to be brave—
And we'll banish pride and envy
With a hand-clasp by his grave.

Henry Lawson

Victory

The schools marched in procession in happiness and pride,
The city bands before them, the soldiers marched beside;
Oh, starched white frocks and sashes and suits that high schools wear,
The boy scout and the boy lout and all the rest were there,
And all flags save Australia's flag waved high in sun and air!

The Girls' High School, and Grammar School and colleges of stone
Flew all flags from their walls and towers – all flags except our own!
And down here in the alleys where Premiers never come,
Nor candidate, nor delegate, nor sound of fife and drum,
They packed them on the lorries, seared children of the slum.

Each face seemed soiled and faded, though scrubbed with household soap,
And older than a mother-face, but with less sign of hope:
The knowledge of things evil, of drunken wreck and hag,
Of sordid sounds and voices, the everlasting "nag" –
Oh, men without a battle-song! Oh, men without a flag!

They breed a nation's strength behind each shabby little door,
Where rent-collectors knock for aye, and Christ shall knock no more;
The sounds that hurt the mother's heart affright the children there –
Alarm-clocks on an empty tin, the tin tray on a chair;
For weary folk are hard to wake in hot and heavy air.

They sang in Pride's Procession that Mammon might endure –
Oh, wistful singing faces, the children of the poor!
Oh, hideous fiends of commerce! Oh, ghouls of business strife!
I wait the coming of the things to wake the land to life;
The flag without a cross or bar, the drum without a fife!

Henry Lawson

Waratah And Wattle

Though poor and in trouble I wander alone,
With rebel cockade in my hat,
Though friends may desert me, and kindred disown,
My country will never do that!
You may sing of the Shamrock, the Thistle, the rose,
Or the three in a bunch, if you will;
But I know of a country that gathered all those,
And I love the great land where the Waratah grows.
And the Wattle-bough blooms on the hill.

Australia! Australia! so fair to behold-
While the blue sky is arching above;
The stranger should never have need to be told,
That the Wattle-bloom means that her heart is of gold.
And the Waratah's red with her love.

Australia! Australia! most beautiful name,
Most kindly and bountiful land;
I would die every death that might save her from shame,
If a black cloud should rise on the stand;
But whatever the quarrel, whoever her foes,
Let them come! Let them come when they will!
Though the struggle be grim, 'tis Australia that knows
That her children shall fight while the Waratah grows,
And the Wattle blooms out on the hill.

Henry Lawson

Watching The Crows

A bushman got lost in a scrub in the North,
And all the long morning the searchers went forth.
They swore at the rain that had washed out the tracks
And left not a trace for the eyes of the blacks;
But, trusting the signs that the blackfellow knows,
A quiet old darkey stood watching the crows.

The solemn old blackman stood silently by;
He stood like a statue, his face to the sky.
Black Billy was out of the bearings—we thought—
If he looked above for the bushman we sought;
For we rather suspected the spirit would go
In—well, quite another direction, you know.

Most bushmen on solemn occasions will joke,
And unto Black Bill 'twas the super who spoke.
He asked, as he cocked his red nose in the air—
“You think it old Harrison sit down up there?”
“I’m watching the crows. Where the white man lies dead
The crows will fly over,” the blackfellow said.

The blackfellow died, and long years have gone round
Since the day when old Harrison’s body was found;
But still do I see, in my vision at night,
A faint figure come like a shadow in sight,
And nearer and nearer it comes till it grows
Like the form of that blackfellow—“watching the crows”.

Henry Lawson

What Have We All Forgotten?

WHAT have we all forgotten, at the break of the seventh year?
With a nation born to the ages and a Bad Time borne on its bier!
Public robbing, and lying that death cannot erase—
“Private” strife and deception—Cover the bad dead face!
Drinking, gambling and madness—Cover and bear it away—
But what have we all forgotten at the dawn of the seventh day?

These are the years of plenty—years when the “tanks” are full—
Stacked by the lonely sidings mountains of wheat and wool.
Country crowds to the city, healthy, shaven and dressed,
Clothes to wear with the gayest, money to spend with the best.
Grand are the lights of the cities, carnival kings in power—
But what have we all forgotten, in this, the eleventh hour?

“We” have brought the states together, a land to the lands new born.
We have worked in the glorious weather, we have garnered and reaped and
shorn.
We have come from the grass-waves flowing under Heaven’s electric lamps
(Making of sordid cities, boyish and jovial camps).
“We” have cleansed the cities and townships: we rest and frolic and gain,
But what have we all forgotten? Did we send the peace and the rain?

What have we all forgotten, here in our glorious home?
(I the greater the sinner because I was greater than some.)
What have we all forgotten so widely from east to west?
(I—and the most ungrateful because I was doubly blessed.)
Sinners to self and to country! and saviours though misunderstood!
Let us all kneel for one moment and thank the Great Spirits for Good.

Henry Lawson

When Hopes Ran High

When hopes ran high the world was young,
We thought that we would never die,
And glorious were the songs we sung
In those grand days when hopes ran high.

When hopes ran high the world was true
We thought that friends could never lie—
There have been bitter truths for you
And me, since days when hopes ran high.

Henry Lawson

When I Was King

The second time I lived on earth
Was several hundred years ago;
And—royal by my second birth—
I know as much as most men know.
I was a king who held the reins
As never modern monarch can;
I was a king, and I had brains,
And, what was more, I was a man!
Called to the throne in stormy times,
When things were at their very worst,
I had to fight—and not with rhymes—
My own self and my kindred first;
And after that my friends and foes,
And great abuses born of greed;
And when I'd fairly conquered those,
I ruled the land a king indeed.

I found a deal of rottenness,
Such as in modern towns we find;
I camped my poor in palaces
And tents upon the plain behind.
I marked the hovels, dens and drums
In that fair city by the sea.
And burnt the miles of wretched slums
And built the homes as they should be.

I stripped the baubles from the State,
And on the land I spent the spoil;
I hunted off the sullen great,
And to the farmers gave the soil.
My people were their own police;
My courts were free to everyone.
My priests were to preach love and peace;
My Judges to see justice done.

I'd studied men and studied kings,
No crawling cant would I allow;
I hated mean and paltry things,
As I can hate them even now.

A land of men I meant to see,
A strong and clean and noble race—
No subject dared kneel down to me,
But looked his king straight in the face

Had I not been a king in fact,
A king in council-hall and tent,
I might have let them crawl and act
The courtier to their heart's content;
But when I called on other kings,
And saw men kneel, I felt inclined
To gently tip the abject things
And kick them very hard behind.

My subjects were not slaves, I guess,
But though the women in one thing—
A question 'twas of healthy dress—
Would dare to argue with their king
(I had to give in there, I own,
Though none denied that I was strong),
Yet they would hear my telephone
If anything went very wrong.

I also had some poets bright—
Their songs were grand, I will allow—
They were, if I remember right,
About as bad as bards are now.
I had to give them best at last,
And let them booze and let them sing;
As it is now, so in the past,
They'd small respect for gods or king.

I loved to wander through the streets—
I carried neither sword nor dirk—
And watch the building of my fleets,
And watch my artisans at work.
At times I would take off my coat
And show them how to do a thing—
Till someone, clucking in his throat,
Would stare and gasp, 'It is the king!'

And I would say, 'Shut up, you fools!

Is it for this my towns I burn?
You don't know how to handle tools,
And by my faith you'll have to learn!
I was a king, but what of that?
A king may warble in the spring
And carry eggs home in his hat,
Provided that he is a king.

I loved to stroll about the town
With chums at night, and talk of things,
And, though I chanced to wear the crown,
My friends, by intellect, were kings.
When I was doubtful, then I might
Discuss a matter quietly,
But when I felt that I was right
No power on earth could alter me!

And now and then it was no sin
Nor folly to relax a bit—
I'd take my friends into an inn
And call for wine and pay for it.
And then of many things we'd clack
With loosened tongues and visions clear—
I often heard behind my back
The whispered 'Peace, the king is here!'

The women harped about a queen,
I knew they longed to have a court
And flaunt their feathers on the scene,
But hitherto I'd held the fort.
My subjects wanted me, no doubt,
To give the throne a son and heir—
(There were some little kings about,
But that was neither here nor there).

I'd no occasion for a wife—
A queen as yet was not my plan;
I'd seen a lot of married life—
My sire had been a married man.
'A son and heir be hanged!' I said—
'How dare you ask for such a thing,
'You fight it out when I am dead

'And let the best man be the king!'

'Your Majesty, we love you well!'
A candid friend would say to me—
'But there be tales that people tell
'Unfitted to thy dignity'—
'My dignity be damned!' I'd say,
'Bring me no women's chattering!
'I'll be a man while yet I may—
'When trouble comes I'll be a king!

I'd kept my kingdom clean and strong
While other kingdoms were like ours—
I had no need to brook a wrong,
I feared not all the rotten Powers
I did not eat my heart out then,
Nor feebly fight in verse or prose
I'd take five hundred thousand men
To argue matters with my foes!

It thrilled me through, the mighty tramp
Of armèd men, the thundering cheer—
The pregnant whisper through the camp
At dead of night: 'The King is here!'
And though we paid for victory
On some fields that were hard to hold,
The faith my soldiers had in me
Oft strengthened mine a hundredfold.

I'd chat with soldiers by the fires
On rocky heights and river banks,
I'd seek the brains that war requires,
And take my captains from the ranks.
And so, until the storm was by,
And came the peace just war can bring,
I bore me so that men might cry
With all their hearts, 'God Save the King.'

When I was king the world was wide,
And I was strong and I was free.
I knew no hatred, knew no pride,
No envy and no treachery.

I feared no lies. I feared no truth,
Nor any storm that time might bring.
I had my love, I had my youth,
The world was mine when I was king.

Peace came at last—and strange is Fate—
The women begged just once alone
To see me robed in royal state
And seated on my father's throne.
I thought, 'Shall I this boon deny?'
And said—and 'twas a paltry thing:
'I'll show the fools just once that I
'Can look, as well as be, a king.'

They dusted out the castle old,
And from the closet and the chest
They dug the jewels set in gold—
The crown and robes and all the rest.
They came with eyes like stars of night,
With diamonds set in raven hair,
They came with arms and bosoms white—
And, Oh my God! but one was fair!

They dressed me as the kings had been,
The ancient royal purple spread,
And one that was to be my queen,
She placed the circlet on my head.
They pressed their hearts and bowed to me,
They knelt with arms uplifted all.
I felt the rush of vanity—
The pride that goes before the fall.

And then the banquet and the wine
With Satan's music and the glance
Of siren eyes. Those captains mine
Were reeling in the maddening dance:
A finger writing on the wall,
While girls sang as the angels sing—
A drunken boaster in the hall,
The fool that used to be a king.
I rose again—no matter how—

A woman, and a deeper fall—
I move amongst my people now
The most degraded of them all.
But, if in centuries to come,
I live once more and claim my own,
I'll see my subjects blind and dumb
Before they set me on a throne

Henry Lawson

When The `army' Prays For Watty

When the kindly hours of darkness, save for light of moon and star,
Hide the picture on the signboard over Doughty's Horse Bazaar;
When the last rose-tint is fading on the distant mulga scrub,
Then the Army prays for Watty at the entrance of his pub.

Now, I often sit at Watty's when the night is very near,
With a head that's full of jingles and the fumes of bottled beer,
For I always have a fancy that, if I am over there
When the Army prays for Watty, I'm included in the prayer.

Watty lounges in his arm-chair, in its old accustomed place,
With a fatherly expression on his round and passive face;
And his arms are clasped before him in a calm, contented way,
And he nods his head and dozes when he hears the Army pray.

And I wonder does he ponder on the distant years and dim,
Or his chances over yonder, when the Army prays for him?
Has he not a fear connected with the warm place down below,
Where, according to good Christians, all the publicans should go?

But his features give no token of a feeling in his breast,
Save of peace that is unbroken and a conscience well at rest;
And we guzzle as we guzzled long before the Army came,
And the loafers wait for `shouters' and -- they get there just the same.

It would take a lot of praying -- lots of thumping on the drum --
To prepare our sinful, straying, erring souls for Kingdom Come;
But I love my fellow-sinners, and I hope, upon the whole,
That the Army gets a hearing when it prays for Watty's soul.

Henry Lawson

When The Bear Comes Back Again

Oh, the scene is wide an' dreary an' the sun is settin' red,
An' the grey-black sky of winter's comin' closer overhead.
Oh, the sun is settin' bloody with a blood-line on the snow,
An' across it to the westward you can see old Bruin go;
You can see old Shaggy go,
You can see the brown Bear go,
An' he's draggin' one leg arter, an' he's travellin' pretty slow.
We can send a long shot arter, but he doesn't seem to know—
There's a thin red line behind him where it's dripped across the snow;
He is weary an' he's wounded, with his own blood he's half-blind,
He is licked an' he's defeated, an' he's left some cubs behind;
Yes, he's left some cubs behind;
Oh, he's left some cubs behind;
To the tune of sixty thousand he has left some cubs behind.

Oh, they've pulled him by the nose-ring and they've baited him in pits,
An' they bluffed him, an' they bruised him, an' they mostly gave him fits;
But he hugged 'em badly one time when they tried him in his den—
An' he'll make it warm for someone when he comes back East again;
When the Bear comes back again,
When he's lopin' round again,
There'll be lively times for Jacko when the Bear comes back again.

Oh, we chased him out of Turkey—I don't know for what idea,
It took two dogs an' a lion for to beat him in Crimea;
He's goin' home to lick his wounds, he's goin' to his den,
But he'll make it warm for someone when he comes South-East again,
When the Bear comes back again,
When old Bruin comes again,
He will make some dead to die on when he comes back from his den.

Keep a sharp look-out behind you, every way you turn, my lad,
It don't matter who you might be, for you bet the Bear is mad;
Keep a sharp look-out to Nor'ard, to the South an' West an' East,
For he mostly always finds you where you most expect him least;
Where you most expect him leastest,
Where you most expect him least,
Oh, you'll catch him grabbin' for yer where you most expect him least.

Henry Lawson

When The Bush Begins To Speak

They know us not in England yet, their pens are overbold;
We're seen in fancy pictures that are fifty years too old.
They think we are a careless race - a childish race, and weak;
They'll know us yet in England, when the bush begins to speak;
When the bush begins to speak,
When the bush begins to speak,
When the west by Greed's invaded, and the bush begins to speak.

'The leaders that will be', the men of southern destiny,
Are not all found in cities that are builded by the sea;
They learn to love Australia by many a western creek,
They'll know them yet in England, when the bush begins to speak;
When the bush begins to speak,
When the bush begins to speak,
When the west by Greed's invaded, and the bush begins to speak.

All ready for the struggle, and waiting for the change,
The army of our future lies encamped beyond the range;
Australia, for her patriots, will not have far to seek;
They'll know her yet in England when the bush begins to speak;
When the bush begins to speak,
When the bush begins to speak,
When the west by Greed's invaded, and the bush begins to speak.

We'll find the peace and comfort that our fathers could not find,
Or some shall strike the good old blow that leaves a mark behind.
We'll find the Truth and Liberty our fathers came to seek,
Or let them know in England when the bush begins to speak;
When the bush begins to speak,
When the bush begins to speak,
When the west by Greed's invaded, and the bush begins to speak.

Henry Lawson

When The Children Come Home

On a lonely selection far out in the West
An old woman works all the day without rest,
And she croons, as she toils 'neath the sky's glassy dome,
' Sure I'll keep the ould place till the childer come home.'

She mends all the fences, she grubs, and she ploughs,
She drives the old horse and she milks all the cows,
And she sings to herself as she thatches the stack,
' Sure I'll keep the ould place till the childer come back.'

It is five weary years since her old husband died;
And oft as he lay on his deathbed he sighed
' Sure one man can bring up ten children, he can,
An' it's strange that ten sons cannot keep one old man.'

Whenever the scowling old sundowners come,
And cunningly ask if the master's at home,
' Be off,' she replies, ' with your blarney and cant,
Or I'll call my son Andy; he's workin' beyant.'

' Git out,' she replies, though she trembles with fear,
For she lives all alone and no neighbours are near;
But she says to herself, when she's like to despond,
That the boys are at work in the paddock beyond.

Ah, none of her children need follow the plough,
And some have grown rich in the city ere now;
Yet she says: ' They might come when the shearing is done,
And I'll keep the ould place if it's only for one.'

Henry Lawson

When The Duke Of Clarence Died

Let us sing in tear-choked numbers how the Duke of Clarence went,
Just to make a royal sorrow rather more pre-eminent.
Ladies sighed and sobbed and drivelled—toadies spoke with bated breath,
And the banners floating half-mast made a mockery of death,
And they said Australia sorrowed for the Prince's death—they lied!
She had done with kings and princes ere the Duke of Clarence died.

What's a death in lofty places? What's a noble birth?—say I—
To the poor who die in hundreds, as a man should never die?
Can they shed a tear, or sorrow for a royal dunce's fate?
No! for royalty has taught them how to sing the songs of hate;
O'er the sounds of grief in Europe, and the lands across the tide
Rose the growl of revolution, when the Duke of Clarence died.

We—it matters not how lonely our o'er-burdened lives are spent—
Claim in common with a Clarence, straight from Adam our descent!
Even the man they call a "bastard" has a lineage to himself,
Though he traces not his fathers through the sordid line of Guelph,
And, perhaps in some foul garret in his misery and pride,
One of Nature's Kings was dying when the Duke of Clarence died.

Ah! the workgirl's bloodless fingers, in the plundered human hive,
Sew the banners of rebellion, while the kings and princes thrive;
In the cold of northern winter—in the south in dust and heat—
Weary workmen preach sedition at the corners of the street.

They pre-eminent in sorrow! 'tis pre-eminence in cheek;
We shall hear what care and pain is when the slums begin to speak;
Hundreds starved to pay the shadow of a crown upon his head!
Yellow gold (at last impotent) fought with death beside his bed.
And, perhaps, a Prince of Nature sat despairing by the side
Of a noble mother STARVING when the Duke of Clarence died.

Ignoble living—splendid dead! behold the pomp of royal woe!
Lo, the funeral! battle-hero never yet was buried so.
Who and what was he? What has he done to benefit mankind?
Has he nought to show Saint Peter save a royal race behind?
Who is worthy? Who is noble? God! shall gold alone decide?
Better men like dogs were buried ere the Duke of Clarence died.

Thrones of earth and earthly rulers soon shall all be swept aside,
And 'twere better for his comfort that the Duke of Clarence died.

Henry Lawson

When The Irish Flag Went By

'Twas Eight-Hour Day, and proudly
Old Labour led the way;
The drums were bearing loudly,
The crowded streets were gay;
But something touched my heart like pain,
I could not check the sigh
That rose within my bosom when
The Irish Flag went by.

Bright flags were raised about it
And one of them my own:
And patriots trod beneath it—
But it seemed all alone.
I thought of ruined Ireland
While crystals from the sky
Fell soft like tears by angels shed,
As the Irish Flag went by.

I love the dark green standard
As Irish patriots do;
It waves above the rebels,
And I'm a rebel too,
I thought of Ireland's darkest years,
Her griefs that follow fast;
For drooping as 'twere drenched with tears
The Irish Flag went past.

And though 'twas not in Erin
That my forefathers trod;
And though my wandering footsteps
Ne'er pressed the "dear old sod",
I felt the wrongs the Irish feel
Beneath the northern sky.
And felt the rebel in my heart
When the Irish Flag went by.

I tell you, men of England,
Who rule the land by might;
I tell you, Irish traitors

Who sell the sons of light,
The tyranny shall fail at last,
That changeful days are nigh;
And you shall dip your red flag yet,
When the Irish Flag goes by.

Henry Lawson

When The Ladies Come To The Shearing Shed

'The ladies are coming,' the super says
To the shearers sweltering there,
And 'the ladies' means in the shearing shed:
'Don't cut 'em too bad. Don't swear.'
The ghost of a pause in the shed's rough heart,
And lower is bowed each head;
And nothing is heard, save a whispered word,
And the roar of the shearing-shed.

The tall, shy rouser has lost his wits,
And his limbs are all astray;
He leaves a fleece on the shearing-board,
And his broom in the shearer's way.
There's a curse in store for that jackaroo
As down by the wall he slants—
And the ringer bends with his legs askew
And wishes he'd 'patched them pants.'

They are girls from the city. (Our hearts rebel
As we squint at their dainty feet.)
And they gush and say in a girly way
That 'the dear little lambs' are 'sweet.'
And Bill, the ringer, who'd scorn the use
Of a childish word like 'damn,'
Would give a pound that his tongue were loose
As he tackles a lively lamb.

Swift thoughts of homes in the coastal towns—
Or rivers and waving grass—
And a weight on our hearts that we cannot define
That comes as the ladies pass.
But the rouser ventures a nervous dig
In the ribs of the next to him;
And Barcoo says to his pen-mate: 'Twig
'The style of the last un, Jim.'

Jim Moonlight gives her a careless glance—
Then he catches his breath with pain—
His strong hand shakes and the sunlights dance

As he bends to his work again.
But he's well disguised in a bristling beard,
Bronzed skin, and his shearer's dress;
And whatever Jim Moonlight hoped or feared
Were hard for his mates to guess.

Jim Moonlight, wiping his broad, white brow,
Explains, with a doleful smile:
'A stitch in the side,' and 'he's all right now'—
But he leans on the beam awhile,
And gazes out in the blazing noon
On the clearing, brown and bare—
She has come and gone, like a breath of June,
In December's heat and glare.

The bushmen are big rough boys at the best,
With hearts of a larger growth;
But they hide those hearts with a brutal jest,
And the pain with a reckless oath.
Though the Bills and Jims of the bush-bard sing
Of their life loves, lost or dead,
The love of a girl is a sacred thing
Not voiced in a shearing-shed.

Henry Lawson

When You're Bad In Your Inside

I remarked that man is saddest, and his heart is filled with woe,
When he hasn't any money, and his pants begin to go;
But I think I was mistaken, and there are many times I find
When you do not care a candle if your pants are gone behind;
For a fellow mostly loses all ambition, hope, and pride,
When—to put the matter mildly—he is bad in his inside.

Bobby Burns was down on toothache, and it troubled him no doubt;
But you know a man can always have a molar taken out,
And be all right then, excepting for the duller pain that comes
To the hollow that is lying like a gully in the gums.
But you can't extract your innards—they must stay within your hide,
And you've got to moan and cuss it—when you're bad in your inside.

You dunno what to take for it—you dunno what to do:
You are puzzled to remember what has disagreed with you,
You lie in all positions—there is none will give you ease;
And you think an aching stomach is the king of agonies.
You feel as though your innards in a double knot are tied,
While the devil ties it tighter—when you're bad in your inside.

Then you send that boy—that Harry—and you tell him to be quick,
For a shilling's worth of brandy, "for a person who is sick".
You make him swear to hurry, and he goes off like a shot;
But you wait an hour and suffer, and the brandy cometh not;
Then you look out through the window, and you swear to bust his hide,
For the wretch is playing football, while you're bad in your inside.

Then there's mostly some old woman, with your aunt or mother, too,
And it's really quite indecent how she cross-examines you.
She insists on giving physic, and will hear of no excuse;
And dilates upon your bowels till you wish her to the deuce.
You wish she'd go and leave you—let you be and let it slide,
And go about her business, when you're bad in your inside.

But she's come to see you through it, and she bustles in and out;
And she talks of private matters that she oughtn't talk about.
She proceeds to pill and dose you, and she vows that you'll be ill
Till you've swallowed every nostrum—castor oil, and draught and pill,

And you wish, good Lord! that she would pass across the Stygian tide,
And nurse the gory Devil, when he's bad in his inside.

But the hag is interested, and she bustles out and in;
And in various disguises give you nauseous medicine.
Till she's shifted all obstructions, and has soothed your keenest pain
(Though her remedies may leave you a much sicker man again);
But she's done her best to help you, for her sympathy is wide,
And you'll bless that same old woman when you're right in your inside.

Henry Lawson

When Your Pants Begin To Go

When you wear a cloudy collar and a shirt that isn't white,
And you cannot sleep for thinking how you'll reach to-morrow night,
You may be a man of sorrows, and on speaking terms with Care,
And as yet be unacquainted with the Demon of Despair;
For I rather think that nothing heaps the trouble on your mind
Like the knowledge that your trousers badly need a patch behind.

I have noticed when misfortune strikes the hero of the play,
That his clothes are worn and tattered in a most unlikely way;
And the gods applaud and cheer him while he whines and loafs around,
And they never seem to notice that his pants are mostly sound;
But, of course, he cannot help it, for our mirth would mock his care,
If the ceiling of his trousers showed the patches of repair.

You are none the less a hero if you elevate your chin
When you feel the pavement wearing through the leather, sock, and skin;
You are rather more heroic than are ordinary folk
If you scorn to fish for pity under cover of a joke;
You will face the doubtful glances of the people that you know;
But -- of course, you're bound to face them when your pants begin to go.

If, when flush, you took your pleasures -- failed to make a god of Pelf,
Some will say that for your troubles you can only thank yourself --
Some will swear you'll die a beggar, but you only laugh at that,
While your garments hand together and you wear a decent hat;
You may laugh at their predictions while your soles are wearing low,
But -- a man's an awful coward when his pants begin to go.

Though the present and the future may be anything but bright,
It is best to tell the fellows that you're getting on all right,
And a man prefers to say it -- 'tis a manly lie to tell,
For the folks may be persuaded that you're doing very well;
But it's hard to be a hero, and it's hard to wear a grin,
When your most important garment is in places very thin.

Get some sympathy and comfort from the chum who knows you best,
That your sorrows won't run over in the presence of the rest;
There's a chum that you can go to when you feel inclined to whine,
He'll declare your coat is tidy, and he'll say: `Just look at mine!'

Though you may be patched all over he will say it doesn't show,
And he'll swear it can't be noticed when your pants begin to go.

Brother mine, and of misfortune! times are hard, but do not fret,
Keep your courage up and struggle, and we'll laugh at these things yet,
Though there is no corn in Egypt, surely Africa has some --
Keep your smile in working order for the better days to come!
We shall often laugh together at the hard times that we know,
And get measured by the tailor when our pants begin to go.

.....

Now the lady of refinement, in the lap of comfort rocked,
Chancing on these rugged verses, will pretend that she is shocked.
Leave her to her smelling-bottle; 'tis the wealthy who decide
That the world should hide its patches 'neath the cruel look of pride;
And I think there's something noble, and I swear there's nothing low,
In the pride of Human Nature when its pants begin to go.

Henry Lawson

When Your Sins Come Home To Roost

When you fear the barber's mirror when you go to get a crop,
Or in sorrow every morning comb your hair across the top:
When you titivate and do the little things you never used—
It is close upon the season when your sins come home to roost.

Many were the sins of others and you never were to blame,
Some were sins you shared in common—you must suffer all the same;
Some were sins of wasted hours with the wine cup or a mate,
But you cannot share the burden—and they come in duplicate.

Oh! you'll find the fowls are heavy and their claws are sharp and deep—
They will bow your head in working, they will jerk you from your sleep,
And so many hands are eager just to give your back a boost
On the road to wreck and ruin when your sins come home to roost.

But you don't let on they're roosting and you take some only way,
And you never whine or guzzle and you neither curse nor pray;
You will never for an instant let your lower lip be loosed—
But you stand up like a soldier when your sins come home to roost!

And you'll find them growing lighter till you find room for a few
Of the sins of other mortals who have weaker souls than you:
Then you'll smile, and not too sadly, at old sins reintroduced—
And you'll be a man in many when your sins come home to roost.

Henry Lawson

Who'll Wear The Beaten Colours?

Who'll wear the beaten colours—and cheer the beaten men?
Who'll wear the beaten colours, till our time comes again?
Where sullen crowds are densest, and fickle as the sea,
Who'll wear the beaten colours, and wear them home with me?

We closed the bars and gambling dens and voted straight and clean,
Our women walked while motor cars were whirling round the scene,
The Potts Point Vote was one for Greed and Ease and Luxury
With all to hold, and coward gold, and beaten folk are we.

Who'll wear the beaten colours, with hands and pockets clean?
(I wore the beaten colours since I was seventeen)
I wore them up, and wore them down, Outback and across the sea—
Who'll wear the beaten colours, and wear them home with me?

We wore them back from Ladysmith to where the peace was signed,
And wore them through the London streets where Jingoos howled behind.
We wore them to the Queen's Hall, while England yelled "Pro-Boers!"
And sat them over victory while London banged the doors.¹

We wore them from Port Arthur round till all sunk in the sea—
(Who'll wear the white man's colours, and wear them home with me?)
I've worn them through with gentlemen, with work-slaves and alone—
Who'll wear the beaten colours, boys, and wear them on his own?

There's one would look with startled eyes and shrink while I caressed,
Came I not with the colours of the conquered on my breast.
And twenty thousand Bushmen would stand with hands behind
And scorn in all their faces for the coward of his kind.

Who'll wear the beaten colours and raise the voice they drowned—
It may be when we march again, they'll bear some other sound—
Who'll pin the beaten colours on and drive the beaten pen—
It may be other steel and ink when we march out again.

Henry Lawson

Who's Dot Pulleteen?

To the Editor of The Albany Observer

Dear Sir,

Smarting from the effects of a neat back-hander administered to it by the Sydney Bulletin, the W.A. Bulletin prints the following:—"Says the S. Bulletin—"The talented Henry Lawson has left Sydney for Western Australia.' Who's Henry Lawson?" The W.A. Bulletin might reasonably ask this question, but it is not right that an unknown writer should be used as a weapon of spite by one paper against another, and this mysterious individual in question, who might be a German, could easily relieve his injured feelings as follows:

O my prow vas plack mit curses,
Ven I dries to write dose verses;
Ven I dries to write dot boem,
Dot de best was effer been.
All in vain my peer I guzzles,
But I gannod solve dot broblem,
"Who's dot Western Pulleteen?"

Und I swear mit pleets and dvonder,
Und I ferry often wonder,
Would dot paber's cirgulation
Shusta little pigger been,
If dey toog deir seissor-pinchers,
Shust to cut some leetle inches
From that smarty-smarty writer
Of dot Western Pulleeteen.

"Let dose mountains fall and hide us"
Gry benighded odersiders,
Shame come round and woe betide us,
Und our fellow men deride us
If we effer yet can find oud
"Who's dot Western Pull-it-in?"

HENRICH HERTZBERG LAWSON

I remain, Yours etc.,
JOE SWALLOW

Henry Lawson

Wide Lies Australia

Wide lies Australia! The seas that surround her
Flow for her unity – all states in one.
Never has Custom nor Tyranny bound her –
Never was conquest so peacefully won.
Fair lies Australia! with all things within her
Meet for a Nation, the greatest to be:
Free to the White Man to woo and to win her:
Those who'd be happy and those who'd be free.

Free to live fully and free to live cleanly,
Free to give learning to daughter and son;
Free to act nobly but not to act meanly,
Free to forget what the old lands had done.
Free to be Brothers! Our hymn and our sermon
To keep for the White World the balance of Power,
Welcoming all, be they British or German,
All come to help us – we'll wait for the hour.

Out in the West where the flood-water gathers –
Out in the drought on the sand desert lone –
Went the brave English and brave foreign fathers
Fearlessly facing the fearful unknown.
Gemmed with their names lies the great past behind us.
Dark lie the storm clouds before us today,
Let us so live the future shall find us
Facing the danger as dauntless as they.

Henry Lawson

Wide Spaces

When my last long-beer has vanished and the truth is left unsaid;
When each sordid care is banished from my chair and from my bed,
And my common people sadly murmur: " 'Arry Lawson dead,"

When the man I was denounces all the things that I was not,
When the true souls stand like granite, while the souls of liars not –
When the quids I gave are counted, and the trays I cadged forgot;

Shall my spirit see the country that it wrote for once again?
Shall it see the old selections, and the common street and lane?
Shall it pass across the Black Soil and across the Red Soil Plain?

Shall it see the gaunt Bushwoman "slave until she's fit to drop",
For the distant trip to Sydney, all depending on the crop?
Or the twinkling legs of kiddies, running to the lollie-shop?

Shall my spirit see the failures battling west and fighting here?
Shall it see the darkened shanty, or the bar-room dull and drear?
Shall it whisper to the landlord to give Bummer Smith a beer?

Will they let me out of Heaven, or Valhalla, on my own –
Or the Social Halls of Hades (where I shall not be alone) –
Just to bring a breath of comfort to the hells that I have known?

Henry Lawson

Will Yer Write It Down For Me?

In the parlour of the shanty where the lives have all gone wrong,
When a singer or reciter gives a story or a song,
Where the poet's heart is speaking to their hearts in every line,
Till the hardest curse and blubber at the thoughts of Auld Lang Syne;
Then a boozier lurches forward with an oath for all disguise—
Prayers and curses in his soul, and tears and liquor in his eyes—
Grasps the singer or reciter with a death-grip by the hand:
'That's the truth, bloke! Sling it at 'em! Oh! Gorbli'me, that was grand!
'Don't mind me; I've got 'em. You know! What's yer name, bloke! Don't yer see?
'Who's the bloke what wrote the po'try? Will yer write it down fer me?'

And the backblocks' bard goes through it, ever seeking as he goes
For the line of least resistance to the hearts of men he knows;
And he tracks their hearts in mateship, and he tracks them out alone—
Seeking for the power to sway them, till he finds it in his own,
Feels what they feel, loves what they love, learns to hate what they condemn,
Takes his pen in tears and triumph, and he writes it down for them.

Henry Lawson

William Street

'Tis William Street, the link street,
That seems to stand alone;
'Tis William Street, the vague street,
With terraces of stone:
That starts with clean, cool pockets,
And ancient stable ways,
And built by solid landlords
And in more solid days.
Beginning where the shadow streets
Of vacant wealth begin,
Street William runs down sadly
Across the vale of sin.
'Tis William Street, the haggard,
Where all the streets are mean
That's trying to be honest,
That's trying to keep clean.

'Tis William Street with method,
And nought of show or pride,
That tries to keep its business
Upon the right-hand side.
No pavement exhibition
Of carcasses and slops;
But old-established principles
In old-established shops.

'Tis William Street the highway—
Whichever way it be—
To business and the theatres,
Or empty luxury.
'Tis William Street (the East-end)—
The world-wise and exempt—
That sells Potts Point its purgatives
With something of contempt.

With fronts that hint of England,
As England used to be,
Old houses once in gardens,
And signs of Italy.

With hints of the forgotten,
Strange Sydney of the past,
When bricks were burnt for all time,
And walls were built to last.

'Tis William Street that rises
From stagnant dust and heat,
(Old trees by the Museum
Hold back with hands and feet)—
And where the blind are plying
Deft fingers, supple wrists—
'Tis William Street, exclusive,
Where pray the Methodists.

The blind courts see the clearer,
Side lanes grow trim and neat,
The wretched streets are cleaner
That run from William Street.
The sick streets' lonely matron
Seems stern, as matrons do—
'Tis William Street, redeeming,
Regenerating "Loo."

Henry Lawson

With Dickens

In Windsor Terrace, number four,
I've taken my abode—
A little crescent from the street,
A bight from City Road;
And, hard up and in exile, I
To many fancies yield;
For it was here Micawber lived
And David Copperfield.

A bed, a table, and a chair,
A bottle and a cup.
The landlord's waiting even now
For something to turn up.
The landlady is spiritless—
They both seem tired of life;
They cannot fight the battle like
Micawber and his wife.

But in the little open space
That lies back from the street,
The same old ancient, shabby clerk
Is sitting on a seat.
The same sad characters go by,
The ragged children play—
And things have very little changed
Since Dickens passed away.

Some seek religion in their grief,
And some for friendship yearn;
Some fly to liquor for relief,
But I to Dickens turn.
I find him ever fresh and new,
His lesson ever plain;
And every line that Dickens wrote
I've read and read again.

The tavern's just across the 'wye,'
And frowsy women there
Are gossiping and drinking gin,

And twisting up their hair.
And grubby girls go past at times,
And furtive gentry lurk—
I don't think anyone has died
Since Dickens did his work.

There's Jingle, Tigg, and Chevy Slyme,
And Weevle—whom you will;
And hard-up virtue proudly slinks
Into the pawnshop still.
Go east a bit from City Road,
And all the rest are there—
A friendly whistle might produce
A Chicken anywhere.

My favourite author's heroes I
Should love, but somehow can't.
I don't like David Copperfield
As much as David's Aunt,
And it may be because my mind
Has been in many fogs—
I don't like Nicholas Nickleby
So well as Newman Noggs.

I don't like Richard Carstone, Pip,
Or Martin Chuzzlewit,
And for the rich and fatherly
I scarcely care a bit.
The honest, sober clods are bores
Who cannot suffer much,
And with the Esther Summersons
I never was in touch.

The 'Charleys' and the haggard wives,
Kind hearts in poverty—
And yes! the Lizzie Hexams, too—
Are very near to me;
But men like Brothers Cheeryble,
And Madeline Bray divine,
And Nell, and Little Dorrit live
In a better world than mine.

The Nicklebys and Copperfields,
They do not stand the test;
And in my heart I don't believe
That Dickens loved them best.
I can't admire their ways and talk,
I do not like their looks—
Those selfish, injured sticks that stalk
Through all the Master's books.

They're mostly selfish in their love,
And selfish in their hate,
They marry Dora Spenlows, too,
While Agnes Wickfields wait;
And back they come to poor Tom Pinch
When hard-up for a friend;
They come to wrecks like Newman Nogga
To help them in the end.

And—well, maybe I am unjust,
And maybe I forget;
Some of us marry dolls and jilt
Our Agnes Wickfields yet.
We seek our friends when fortune frowns—
It has been ever thus—
And we neglect Joe Gargery
When fortune smiles on us.

They get some rich old grandfather
Or aunt to see them through,
And you can trace self-interest
In nearly all they do.
And scoundrels like Ralph Nickleby,
In spite of all their crimes,
And crawlers like Uriah Heep
Told bitter truths at times.

But—yes, I love the vagabonds
And failures from the ranks,
And hard old files with hidden hearts
Like Wemmick and like Pancks.
And Jaggers had his 'poor dreams, too,'
And fond hopes like the rest—

But, somehow, somehow, all my life
I've loved Dick Swiveller best!

But, let us peep at Snagsby first
As softly he lays down
Beside the bed of dying Joe
Another half-a-crown.
And Nemo's wretched pauper grave—
But we can let them be,
For Joe has said to Heaven: 'They
Wos werry good to me.'

And Wemmick with his aged P—
No doubt has his reward;
And Jagers, hardest nut of all,
Will be judged by the Lord.
And Pancks, the rent-collecting screw,
With laurels on his brow,
Is loved by all the bleeding hearts
In Bleeding Heart Yard now.

Tom Pinch is very happy now,
And Magwitch is at rest,
And Newman Noggs again might hold
His head up with the best;
Micawber, too, when all is said,
Drank bravely Sorrow's cup—
Micawber worked to right them all,
And something did turn up.

How do 'John Edward Nandy, Sir!'
And Plornish get along?
Why! if the old man is in voice
We'll hear him pipe a song.
We'll have a look at Baptiste, too,
While still the night is young—
With Mrs. Plornish to explain
In the Italian tongue.

Before we go we'll ask about
Poor young John Chivery:
'There never was a gentleman

In all his family.'
His hopeless love, his broken heart,
But to his rival true;
He came of Nature's gentlemen,
But young John never knew.

We'll pass the little midshipman
With heart that swells and fills,
Where Captain Ed'ard Cuttle waits
For Wal'r and Sol Gills.
Jack Bunsby stands by what he says
(Which isn't very clear),
And Toots with his own hopeless love—
As true as any here.

And who that read has never felt
The sorrow that it cost
When Captain Cuttle read the news
The 'Son and Heir' was lost?
And who that read has not rejoiced
With him and 'Heart's Delight,'
And felt as Captain Cuttle felt
When Wal'r came that night?

And yonder, with a broken heart,
That people thought was stone,
Deserted in his ruined home,
Poor Dombey sits alone.
Who has not gulped a something down,
Whose eye has not grown dim
While feeling glad for Dombey's sake
When Florence came to him?

(A stately house in Lincolnshire—
The scene is bleak and cold—
The footsteps on the terrace sound
To-night at Chesney Wold.
One who loved honour, wife, and truth,
If nothing else besides,
Along the dreary Avenue
Sir Leicester Dedlock rides.)

We'll go round by Poll Sweedlepipe's,
The bird and barber shop;
If Sairey Gamp is so dispoed
We'll send her up a drop.
We'll cross High Holborn to the Bull,
And, if he cares to come,
By streets that are not closed to him
We'll see Dick Swiveller home.
He's looking rather glum to-night,
The why I will not ask—
No matter how we act the goat,
We mostly wear a mask.
Some wear a mask to hide the false
(And some the good and true)—
I wouldn't be surprised to know
Mark Tapley wore one too.

We wear a mask called cheerfulness
While feeling sad inside;
And men like Dombey, who was shy,
Oft wear a mask called pride.
A front of pure benevolence
The grinding 'Patriarch' bore;
And kind men often wear a mask
Like that which Jaggars wore.

But, never mind, Dick Swiveller!
We'll see it out together
Beneath the wing of friendship, Dick,
That never moults a feather.
We'll look upon the rosy yet
Full many a night, old friend,
And tread the mazy ere we woo
The balmy in the end.
Our palace walls are rather bare,
The floor is somewhat damp,
But, while there's liquor, anywhere
Is good enough to camp.
What ho! mine host! bring forth thine ale
And let the board be spread!—
It is the hour when churchyards yawn

And wine goes to the head.

'Twas you who saved poor Kit, old chap,
When he was in a mess—
But, what ho! Varlet! bring us wine!
Here's to the Marchioness!
'We'll make a scholar of her yet,'
She'll be a lady fair,
'And she shall go in silk attire
And siller have to spare.'

From sport to sport they hurry her
To banish her regrets,
And when we win a smile from her
We cannot pay our debts!
Left orphans at a tender age,
We're happiest in the land—
We're Glorious Apollos, Dick,
And you're Perpetual Grand!

You're king of all philosophers,
And let the Godly rust;
Here's to the obscure citizen
Who sent the beer on trust?
It sure would be a cheerful world
If never man got tight;
You spent your money on your friends,
Dick Swiveller! Good night!

'A dissolute and careless man—
An idle, drunken path;'
But see where Sidney Carton spills
His last drink on the hearth!
A ruined life! He lived for drink
And but one thing beside—
And Oh! it was a glorious death
That Sidney Carton died.

And 'Which I meanersay is Pip'—
The voices hurry past—
'Not to deceive you, sir'—'Stand by!'

'Awast, my lass, awast!'
'Beware of widders, Samivel,'
And shun strong drink, my friend;
And, 'not to put too fine a point
Upon it,' I must end.

Henry Lawson

Write By Return

Clerk, corresponding,
"Rooster and Comb",
Here I sit idle
"Thinking of home";
I must be grafting—
Living to earn,
More correspondence,
"Write by return."

Clerk in employ of
"Shoddy and Woods",
Thinks that we have not
Forwarded goods.
Parcel we sent them—
Missing, I learn,
Says in his postscript:
"Write by return."

Here is another
Letter from Bland—
"Cheque he expected
Isn't to hand."
How we forgot it
Cannot discern,
"Forward remittance,
Write by return."

Here is another—
O how they come?
Treats of a "Bender"
Planned by a chum.
See on the margin,
Big letters: "Burn
After perusal—
Write by return."

Mail in from England,
Letters for me—
Dear little sweetheart

Over the sea.
"Quite broken-hearted,
O how I yearn
Only to see you. . . .
Write by return."

One who will "never
Think that I'm bad"
Writes me a letter
Tearful and sad.
Thinks that I'm starving,
Filled with concern,
Sends me some money—
"Write by return."

Letter from father,
Sent to his son,
"All is forgiven—
Fat calf for one."
O that I ever
Thought he was stern—
Money for passage—
Write by return.

Henry Lawson

Written Afterwards

So the days of my tramping are over,
And the days of my riding are done—
I'm about as content as a rover
Will ever be under the sun;
I write, after reading your letter—
My pipe with old memories rife—
And I feel in a mood that had better
Not meet the true eyes of the wife.
You must never admit a suggestion
That old things are good to recall;
You must never consider the question:
'Was I happier then, after all?'
You must banish the old hope and sorrow
That make the sad pleasures of life,
You must live for To-day and To-morrow
If you want to be just to the wife.

I have changed since the first day I kissed her.
Which is due—Heaven bless her!—to her;
I'm respected and trusted—I'm 'Mister,'
Addressed by the children as 'Sir.'
And I feel the respect without feigning—
But you'd laugh the great laugh of your life
If you only saw me entertaining
An old lady friend of the wife.

By-the-way, when you're writing, remember
That you never went drinking with me,
And forget our last night of December,
Lest our sev'ral accounts disagree.
And, for my sake, old man, you had better
Avoid the old language of strife,
For the technical terms of your letter
May be misunderstood by the wife.

Never hint of the girls appertaining
To the past (when you're writing again),
For they take such a lot of explaining,
And you know how I hate to explain.

There are some things, we know to our sorrow,
That cut to the heart like a knife,
And your past is To-day and To-morrow
If you want to be true to the wife.

I believe that the creed we were chums in
Was grand, but too abstract and bold,
And the knowledge of life only comes in
When you're married and fathered and old.
And it's well. You may travel as few men,
You may stick to a mistress for life;
But the world, as it is, born of woman
Must be seen through the eyes of the wife.

No doubt you are dreaming as I did
And going the careless old pace,
While my future grows dull and decided,
And the world narrows down to the Place.
Let it be. If my 'treason's' resented,
You may do worse, old man, in your life;
Let me dream, too, that I am contented—
For the sake of a true little wife.

Henry Lawson

Written Out [1]

Sing the song of the reckless, who care not what they do;
Sing the song of a sinner and the song of a writer, too—
Down in a pub in the alleys, in a dark and dirty hole,
With every soul a drunkard and the boss with never a soul.

Uncollared, unkempt, unshaven, sat the writer whose fame was fair,
And the girls of the streets were round him, and the bullies and bludgers there;
He was one of themselves and they told him the things that they had to tell—
He was studying human nature with his brothers and sisters in hell.

He was neither poor nor lonely, for a place in the world he'd won,
And up in the heights of the city he'd a thousand friends or none;
But he knew that his chums could wait awhile, that he'd reckon with foes at last,
For he lived far into a future that he knew because of the past.

They remembered the man he had been, they remembered the songs he wrote,
And some of them came to pity and some of them came to gloat:
Some of them shouted exulting—some whispered with bated breath
That down in a den in the alleys he was drinking himself to death.

Thus said the voice of the hypocrites—and the true hearts sighed with pain,
'Oh! he never will write as he used to write! He never will write again;'
A poet had written his epitaph in numbers of sad regret,
And the passing-notice was pigeon-holed, and the last review was set.

But the strength was in him to rise again to a greater height, he knew,
For the sake of the friends who were true to him and the work that he had to do;
He was sounding the depths that he had to know, he was gathering truths for his craft,
And he heard the chatter of little men—and he turned to his beer and laughed.

Henry Lawson

Years After The War In Australia

The Big rough boys from the runs out back were first where the balls flew free,
And yelled in the slang of the Outside Track: 'By God, it's a Christmas spree!
'It's not too rusty'—and 'Wool away!'—'stand clear of the blazing shoots!'—
'Sheep O! Sheep O!'—'We'll cut out to-day'—'Look out for the boss's boots!
'What price the tally in camp to-night!'—'What price the boys Out Back!
'Go it, you tigers, for Right or Might and the pride of the Outside Track!
'Needle and thread!'—'I have broke my comb!'—'Now ride, you flour-bags, ride!
'Fight for your mates and the folk at home!'—'Here's for the Lachlan side!
Those men of the West would sneer and scoff at the gates of hell ajar,
And oft the sight of a head cut off was hailed by a yell for 'Tar!'

I heard the push in the Red Redoubt, irate at a luckless shot:
'Look out for the blooming shell, look out!'—'Gor' bli'me, but that's red-hot!
'It's Bill the Slogger—poor bloke—he's done. A chunk of the shell was his;
'I wish the beggar that fired that gun could get within reach of Liz.'
'Those foreign gunners will give us rats, but I wish it was Bill they missed.'
'I'd like to get at their bleeding hats with a rock in my (something) fist.'
'Hold up, Billy; I'll stick to you; they've hit you under the belt;
'If we get the waddle I'll swag you through, if the blazing mountains melt;
'You remember the night when the traps got me for stoushing a bleeding Chow,
'And you went for 'em proper and laid out three, and I won't forget it now.'
And, groaning and swearing, the pug replied: 'I'm done . . . they've knocked me
out!
'I'd fight them all for a pound a-side, from the boss to the rouseabout.
'My nut is cracked and my legs is broke, and it gives me worse than hell;
'I trained for a scrap with a twelve-stone bloke, and not with a bursting shell.
'You needn't mag, for I knowed, old chum, I knowed, old pal, you'd stick;
'But you can't hold out till the reg'lars come, and you'd best be nowhere quick.
'They've got a force and a gun ashore, both of our wings is broke;
'They'll storm the ridge in a minute more, and the best you can do is smoke.'

And Jim exclaimed: 'You can smoke, you chaps, but me—Gor' bli'me, no!
'The push that ran from the George-street traps won't run from a foreign foe.
'I'll stick to the gun while she makes them sick, and I'll stick to what's left of Bill.'
And they hiss through their blackened teeth: 'We'll stick! by the blazing flame,
we will!'

And long years after the war was past, they told in the town and bush
How the ridge of death to the bloody last was held by a Sydney push;
How they fought to the end in a sheet of flame, how they fought with their rifle-

stocks,

And earned, in a nobler sense, the name of their ancient weapons—'rocks.'

In the western camps it was ever our boast, when 'twas bad for the kangaroo:
If the enemy's forces take the coast, they must take the mountains, too;
'They may force their way by the western line or round by a northern track,
But they won't run short of a decent spree with the men who are left out back!
When we burst the enemy's ironclads and won by a run of luck,
We whooped as loudly as Nelson's lads when a French three-decker struck—
And when the enemy's troops prevailed the truth was never heard—
We lied like heroes who never failed explaining how that occurred.
You bushmen sneer in the old bush way at the new-chum jackeroo,
But 'cuffs-'n'-collers' were out that day, and they stuck to their posts like glue;
I never believed that a dude could fight till a Johnny led us then;
We buried his bits in the rear that night for the honour of George-street men.
And Jim the Ringer—he fought, he did. The regiment nicknamed Jim,
'Old Heads a Caser' and 'Heads a Quid,' but it never was 'tails' with him.
The way that he rode was a racing rhyme, and the way that he finished grand;
He backed the enemy every time, and died in a hand-to-hand!

I'll never forget when the ringer and I were first in the Bush Brigade,
With Warrego Bill, from the Live-till-you-Die, in the last grand charge we made.
And Billy died—he was full of sand—he said, as I raised his head:
'I'm full of love for my native land, but a lot too full of lead.
'Tell 'em,' said Billy, 'and tell old dad, to look after the cattle pup;'
But his eyes grew bright, though his voice was sad, and he said, as I held him
up:
'I have been happy on western farms. And once, when I first went wrong,
'Around my neck were the trembling arms of the girl I'd loved so long.
'Far out on the southern seas I've sailed, and ridden where brumbies roam,
'And oft, when all on the station failed, I've driven the outlaw home.
'I've spent a cheque in a day and night, and I've made a cheque as quick;
'I struck a nugget when times were tight, and the stores had stopped our tick.
'I've led the field on the old bay mare, and I hear the cheering still,
'When mother and sister and she were there, and the old man yelled for Bill;
'But, save for her, could I live my while again in the old bush way,
'I'd give it all for the last half-mile in the race we rode to-day!'
And he passed away as the stars came out—he died as old heroes die—
I heard the sound of the distant rout, and the Southern Cross was high.

Henry Lawson

Young Kings And Old

The Young King fights in the trenches and the Old King fights in the rear—
Because he is old and feeble, and not for a thought of fear.
The Young King fights for the Future, and the Old King fights for the Past—
The Young King is fighting his first fight and the Old King is fighting his last.
It is ever the same old battle, be the end of it Beer or Blood—
Or whether the rifles rattle, or whether a friend flings mud;
Or a foe to the rescue dashes, and the touch of a stranger thrills—
Or the Truth—or the bayonet flashes; or the Lie—or a bullet kills.

The young man strives to determine which are the truths or lies,
And the old man preaches his sermon—and he takes to his bed and dies;
And the parson is there, and the nurse is (or the bread is there and the wine)—
And the son of the minister curses as he dies in the firing line.

And ever, and ever, and ever, as it was in ages untold,
The women grow still more "clever," and the young know more than the old;
Till the seer on the hill cries "Treason!" and the witch grins out of her hole—
And a clarion voice shouts "Reason"!—and the Drums of Destruction roll.

The young bard bounds to the office, with eyes and with cheeks a-glow,
And he meets the old on the stairway, with tottering knees and slow.
And ever the Cowards of Conscience, or Envy, or Greed—or Trade
Are forcing us back from Antwerp, or forcing us from Belgrade.

But courage! By hut or steeple!—and courage for old and young!
No song for the sullen people has ever been left unsung!
And the crudest note that was worthy has never gone by unfelt—
I shall die in peace by the Danube, while you shall sing by the Scheldt!

Henry Lawson