

**Classic Poetry Series**

**Caroline Carleton**  
**- poems -**

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## Caroline Carleton(6 October 1811 – 10 July 1874)

Caroline Carleton was a South Australian poet, born in England, who is best known for her prize-winning poem *Song of Australia*, which, put to a tune by Carl Linger was used as a patriotic song in South Australian schools and elsewhere, and one of four in a national plebiscite to select a National Song in 1977.

She was born Caroline Baynes, at Bonnar's Hall (also written Bonner's Hall), Middlesex near London, the youngest child of bookseller William Baynes (29 May 1760 – 7 January 1832) and his second wife Mary Ann (née Bailey) (1771 – 1862). Although her birthdate is generally given as 1820, this may have been a useful fiction, as baptism records give the 1811 date. She was highly intelligent and received a good education; she could converse in French and Italian, as well as being well-versed in Latin; she played pianoforte and harp. In 1836, at West Hackney (perhaps on York Road near modern Dalston?), she married Charles James Carleton (ca.1814 – 20 July 1861), a medical student working at Guy's Hospital and who could claim a family connection with the Earls of Dorchester. Together with their two young children they left for Australia in 1839, on the *Prince Regent*. It was a rough passage and both children died and were buried at sea. The passengers disembarked at Glenelg on 26 September 1839.

<b>Charles' activities</b>

After a few false starts making cordials, castor oil, and other commodities, Charles (who never completed his degree) became around 1844 medical dispenser to the Colonial Surgeon, Mr. James George Nash F.R.C.S. They may have resided at the Adelaide Hospital, where Caroline had two more children. In 1842 he was assayer with Alexander Tolmer's expedition to Mount Alexander which subsequently escorted a quarter of a ton of gold to Adelaide. In 1845 he and a Dr. Davy built a trial lead-smelting furnace. In 1847 they moved to Kapunda, where Charles was employed as assayer and perhaps as medical officer.

In 1849 they returned to Adelaide, where he opened a chemist's shop at 37 Hindley Street, then in August 1851 to ca.51 Rundle Street. He visited the gold diggings at Forest Creek, Victoria, perhaps working as an assayer and gold buyer, and returned to his Rundle Street shop with new advertising directed at shop was taken over early in 1853 by James Parkinson and throughout 1853 to May 1854 he was selling bottled English porter and stout at Blyth's Building, Hindley Street.

He was returning officer for Grey Ward in the 1855 Census.

He took a position as superintendent of the West Terrace Cemetery in November 1855, He died on 20 July 1861 and was buried at the same cemetery. For the last two years as his health deteriorated, most of the work was done by Caroline.

### <b>The Song of Australia</b>

It was while at the cemetery in 1859 that she wrote The Song of Australia in response to the Gawler Institute's contest for a patriotic poem that could be set to music, and submitted it under the pseudonym "Nil Desperandum". Her poem won the prize of ten guineas (£10 10s.); several thousand dollars by today's values.

The second stage of the Gawler Institute's contest was for a tune for the winning poem as published on 21 October 1859. Again, the prize was ten guineas. The winner, announced on 4 November 1859 was Carl Linger, whose pseudonym was "One of the Quantity".

Their song was performed at the South Australian Institute soirée at White's Rooms, King William Street, on 14 December 1859 by the Liedertafel, conducted by Herr Linger.

### <b>Later Life</b>

With the death of her husband in 1861, she applied for the job as curator of the cemetery but was refused. As was the resort of many well-educated women left without an income, she founded a school for girls at Waterhouse's Building, 231 North Terrace, in 1861, but insufficient income to run her establishment forced her insolvency in re-opened her school in Tavistock Street in 1868, then Hanson Street in 1869, then in 1870 or 1871 moved to the bustling city of Wallaroo where her daughter Amy had a school (a photograph, ca.1874, may be viewed here). She may have made several trips between Adelaide and the "copper triangle" of Moonta, Kadina and Wallaroo. It was during one of these trips, while staying at "Matta House" near Kadina that she died. It is likely that she was given the use of this house by the manager of Moonta Mines, the mining magnate and patron of the arts and sciences William Austin Horn (1841 – 1922) who published Bush Echoes on his return to England.

Caroline was buried in the Wallaroo cemetery on 12 July 1874. During the South Australian Centenary, on 13 March 1936, some three thousand citizens and eight hundred schoolchildren made a pilgrimage to her graveside. The stone also

memorializes Charles James her husband and Charles James her son. The grave may be viewed [here](#).

# Lines

On observing the light of two lamps in the  
Town form a Triangle with a conspicuous  
Star in the Evening Sky.

Two lights below and one above—  
Two lights that lead astray,  
And one that points to blissful rest  
After life's feverish day.

False Lights of Earth! that shine to lure  
The wayworn traveller on,  
Till in some lonely wild he sinks  
And lies in darkness down.

Fair star of night! thy friendly ray,  
To erring man is given,  
The finger-post of Deity  
Marking the road to Heaven!

Caroline Carleton

# Song For Australia

There is a land where summer skies  
Are gleaming with a thousand dyes  
Blending in witching harmonies,  
in harmonies;  
and grassy knoll and forest height,  
are flushing in the rosy light,  
And all above is azure bright -  
Australia, Australia, Australia.

There is a land where honey flows  
Where laughing corn luxuriant grows;  
Land of the myrtle and the rose,  
land of the rose.  
On hill and plain the clustering vine  
Is gushing out with purple wine,  
And cups are quaffed to thee and thine -  
Australia, Australia, Australia.

There is a land where treasures shine  
Deep in the dark unfathomed mine  
For worshippers at Mammon's Shrine;  
Where gold lies hid, and rubies glean,  
And fable wealth no more doth seem  
The idle fancy of a dream  
Australia, Australia, Australia.

There is a land where homesteads peep  
From sunny plain and woodland steep  
And love and joy bright vigils keep;  
Where the glad voice of childish glee  
Is mingling with the melody  
Of nature's hidden minstrelsy  
Australia, Australia, Australia.

There is a land where floating free,

From mountain top to girdling sea,  
A proud flag waves exultingly, exultingly  
And freedom's sons the banner bear,  
No shackled slave can breathe the air;  
Fairest of Britain's daughter fair  
Australia, Australia, Australia.

Caroline Carleton

# Wild Flowers Of Australia

Oh say not that no perfume dwells;  
The wilding flowers among,  
Say not that in the forest dells  
Is heard no voice of song.

The air is laden with the scent  
Borne from the clustering flower,  
With which the wattle is besprent;  
Like Danae's golden shower.

And silv'ry wattles bending low,  
Sweet incense scatter far—  
When night-winds kiss the pensile bough,  
Beneath the evening star.

And there are flowers of varying dye;  
Now white, now blushing red,  
Their beauteous blossoms charm the eye,  
And fragrant odours shed.

There's perfume breath'd from Austral flowers,—  
And melody is there  
Not such as in far Albion's bowers  
Falls on th' accusom'd ear.

But thrilling snatches of wild song,  
Pour'd forth from lonely glen—  
Where winds the hidden creek along  
Far from the haunts of men.

And hoarser notes in wild woods heard  
Sound like strange harmonies,  
As flashes past the bright-winged bird  
Gleaming in azure skies.

Then say not that no perfume dwells,  
The wilding flowers among;  
Say not that in the forest dells  
Is heard no voice of song!

Caroline Carleton