

Classic Poetry Series

Charles Thatcher

- poems -

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Chinese Immigration

You doubtless read the papers,
And as men of observation,
Of course you watch the progress
Of Chinese immigration--
For thousands of these pigtail chaps
In Adelaide are landing;
And why they let such numbers come
Exceeds my understanding.

On Emerald Hill it now appears
A Joss House they've erected;
And they've got an ugly idol there--
It's just what I expected;
And they offer nice young chickens
Unto this wooden log;
And sometimes with a sucking pig
They go the entire hog.

Now some of you, perhaps, may laugh,
But 'tis my firm opinion,
This colony some day will be
Under Chinese dominion.
They'll upset the Australian government,
The place will be their own;
And an Emperor with a long pigtail,
Will sit upon the throne.

Melbourne will be the seat of power,
And then 'tis my impression,
Of the stations up the country
They'll quickly take possession.
The squatters will be used as slaves,
By the Celestial nation;
And growing tea or rice will be
Their only compensation.

The mandarins will seize for wives
The fair Australian girls;
And from Melbourne to the diggings
They'll cut lots of canals.
And for fear the coves of New South Wales
Should pay a hostile call;
Between this colony and that
No doubt they'll build a wall.

The customs of their country
Of course will then prevail;
And every English slave will have
To wear a long pigtail.
We'll all of us be fed on rice,
As true as I'm a sinner;
And 'stead of spoons we'll have to use

Those chopsticks for our dinner.

This picture, perhaps, is overdrawn;
But, however, who can say,
That all these things will not take place,
If we let them have their way.
If it comes to pass, these English songs
Away I'll quick be flinging,
And learn their language; and come out
In Chinese comic singing.

Charles Thatcher

Two Years Ago

The light of other days burns dim,
And in the shade is cast,
You'll own I'm right, if you will just
Look back upon the past;
It's glories all are faded,
And each of you must know
That times ain't what they used to be
About two years ago.

Bendigo, you know, my lads,
Was just then in its prime,
And those who happened to be here
Had a most glorious time;
But now its sadly altered,
And things are precious slow,
And times ain't what they used to be
About two years ago.

They opened Golden Gully then,
And we had many a lob,
To see the place so cut up now,
It really makes me sob:
When'er I pass the fav'rite spot
It fills me full of woe,
Ah! times ain't what they used to was
About two years ago.

Just now look at the difference,
Ah! here's the dreadful rub,
They're washing for two pennyweights
To every blessed tub;
At such a paltry sum as that,
Why, all of us you know
Would have laughed and turned our noses up
About two years ago.

Two years ago, my lads, we used
To take our nuggets down,
Sell the lot, and go and have
A spree in Melbourne town;
We rode about in two-horse cabs,
And made the champagne flow,
And ate bank notes in sandwiches
About two years ago.

A sweetheart, then, on either arm
About the town we'd range,
And buy the dear things cashmere shawls,
And refuse to take the change;
Then to dancers at the theatre
Our nugget we did throw,
Those were the glorious times, no flies,

About two years ago.

And when we'd quite run out of cash
We'd tramp back every mile,
And go to work again and get
Another tidy pile;
I ask you, can we do it now?
But, echo answers no;
Ah! times ai'nt what they used to was
About two years ago.

But after all, my lads, what use
Is there in vain regret,
No doubt some stunning golden piece
Of ground may turn up yet,
Then keep up all your peckers,
And let your spirits flow,
The good time yet may come again,
Just like two years ago.

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