

**Classic Poetry Series**

# **Daniel Henry Deniehy**

**- poems -**

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### **Daniel Henry Deniehy (18 August 1828– 22 October 1865)**

It was at a public meeting, on 15th August 1853, that Daniel Deniehy first appeared "on the public stage". He opposed William Wentworth's draft NSW Constitution, which proposed to establish a parliamentary Upper House consisting of hereditary Australian Lordships. At that, and a subsequent meeting Deniehy eloquently condemned what he called Wentworth's proposed "Bunyip Aristocracy", and spoke in favour of a widespread democracy. His speech caused great laughter at the Establishment's expense, and was roundly applauded; and later reported favourably in the newspapers of the day.

Deniehy, a thorough republican, later became involved with free-thinkers such as Henry Parkes, Charles Harpur and the Rev. J.D. Lang. Deniehy supported Lang in his opposition to Britain's "foreign war" in the Crimea. He hoped to set up a popular party, to oppose the entrenched squattocracy and non-elected politicians (appointed by the colony's Governor).

Daniehy was elected to the NSW Legislative Assembly in 1857, with his main aim to open up public lands to the working class. He helped form the New South Wales Electoral Reform League, in order to push for greater democracy. He stayed in the Legislative Assembly at great personal expense, as in these days Members of Parliament were not paid. He had to fund his time there, losing money in constant travelling to Sydney and lodging there, together with the loss of trade to his business (he finally had to move to Sydney). The Reform Leagues policies became generally accepted, and a law was passed which essentially granted for representation by population (rather than by land-owners) and for more equal electorates; however, several undemocratic features remained.

Deniehy's reputation as an orator and propagandist for land reform attracted much attention, especially in Victoria where similar attempts were being made. Indeed, one of the demands of the Eureka rebels in 1854 was to "unlock the lands". In 1858 Deniehy was invited to Victoria, and gave a speech to a large meeting of the Land Convention Brotherhood of United Australians.

Deniehy also spoke out against giving top public service jobs to specially imported Englishmen, and to government funding of religion (after a row with the Catholic hierarchy, Deniehy was excommunicated).

After being defeated in electoral contests, Deniehy founded his own newspaper, the Southern Cross (the first issue appeared on 1st October 1859) which aimed to review public affairs, foster "national sentiment", and work towards the federation of the colonies. It was in the Southern Cross

that he published the most famous of his writings "How I Became Attorney-General of New Baratavia", ridiculing the Cowper governments appointment of L.H. Bayley to the ministry, in what "was considered at the time to be one of the most forceful and brilliant political satires in the English language". Unfortunately his newspaper closed on 11th August 1860, due to financial difficulties. Before its closure, however, Deniehy had written, besides his purely political pieces, "with insight and elegance on a wide range of topics".

In May 1860 Deniehy was re-elected to parliament, but was defeated in December of the same year. Thereafter he rarely appeared at public functions. However, he came "out of retirement" to address the large assembly of Australians in the anti-Chinese demonstrations in Sydney, following the riots at Lambing Flat, whereby he deplored the recent violence, although acknowledging the consequences of aliens being present in a European civilisation.

He tried one last time for re-election in September 1861, but failed. The following year he went to Melbourne to edit the Victorian newspaper. His outspokenness meant that the paper ran into trouble, and it was closed in April 1864, by which time he was seriously ill, as well as impoverished. The death of his only surviving son later in that same month degraded his sobriety.

Wrestling with ill-health, poverty, and alcoholism, he returned to Sydney where he tried to re-establish his legal practice; after which he went to Bathurst, where he died on 22nd October 1865.

Daniel Henry Deniehy, nativist republican patriot, led his life according to his principles. He worked hard to:

- 1: advance a genuine people's democracy.
2. make land available to the ordinary citizen.
- 3: promote Australianism against imperialism.

In these times, when the Establishment undermines the future of Australia through domination and exploitation by foreign interests, where our own culture heritage and identity is scorned by anti-Australian multiculturalists, mass immigrationists and Asianisers, Daniel Deniehy remains a beacon for Nationalists.

## A Song for the Night

O the Night, the Night, the solemn Night,  
When Earth is bound with her silent zone,  
And the spangled sky seems a temple wide,  
Where the star-tribes kneel at the Godhead's throne;  
O the Night, the Night, the wizard Night,  
When the garish reign of day is o'er,  
And the myriad barques of the dream-elves come  
In a brightsome fleet from Slumber's shore!  
O the Night for me,  
When blithe and free,  
Go the zephyr-hounds on their airy chase;  
When the moon is high  
In the dewy sky,  
And the air is sweet as a bride's embrace!

O the Night, the Night, the charming Night!  
From the fountain side in the myrtle shade,  
All softly creep on the slumbrous air  
The waking notes of the serenade;  
While bright eyes shine 'mid the lattice-vines,  
And white arms droop o'er the sculptured sills,  
And accents fall to the knights below,  
Like the babblings soft of mountain rills.  
Love in their eyes,  
Love in their sighs,  
Love in the heave of each lily-bright bosom;  
In words so clear,  
Lest the listening ear  
And the waiting heart may lose them.

O the silent Night, when the student dreams  
Of kneeling crowds round a sage's tomb;  
And the mother's eyes o'er the cradle rain  
Tears for her baby's fading bloom;  
O the peaceful Night, when stilled and o'er  
Is the charger's tramp on the battle plain,  
And the bugle's sound and the sabre's flash,  
While the moon looks sad over heaps of slain;  
And tears bespeak  
On the iron cheek  
Of the sentinel lonely pacing,  
Thoughts which roll  
Through his fearless soul,  
Day's sterner mood replacing.

O the sacred Night, when memory comes  
With an aspect mild and sweet to me,  
But her tones are sad as a ballad air  
In childhood heard on a nurse's knee;  
And round her throng fair forms long fled,  
With brows of snow and hair of gold,  
And eyes with the light of summer skies,

And lips that speak of the days of old.  
Wide is your flight,  
O spirits of Night,  
By strath, and stream, and grove,  
But most in the gloom  
Of the Poet's room  
Ye choose, fair ones, to rove.

Daniel Henry Deniehy

## **Amans Amare**

A cottage small be mine, with porch  
Enwreathed with ivy green,  
And brightsome flowers with dew-filled bells,  
'Mid brown old wattles seen.

And one to wait at shut of eve,  
With eyes as fountain clear,  
And braided hair, and simple dress,  
My homeward step to hear.

On summer eves to sing old songs,  
And talk o'er early vows,  
While stars look down like angels' eyes  
Amid the leafy boughs.

When Spring flowers peep from flossy cells,  
And bright-winged parrots call,  
In forest paths be ours to rove  
Till purple evenings fall.

The curtains closed, by taper clear  
To read some page divine,  
On winter nights, the hearth beside,  
Her soft, warm hand in mine.

And so to glide through busy life,  
Like some small brook alone  
That winds its way 'mid grassy knolls,  
Its music all its own.

Daniel Henry Deniehy

## Love in a Cottage

A cottage small be mine, with porch  
Enwreathed with ivy green,  
And brightsome flowers with dew-filled bells,  
'Mid brown old wattles seen.

And one to wait at shut of eve,  
With eyes as fountain clear,  
And braided hair, and simple dress,  
My homeward step to hear.

On summer eves to sing old songs,  
And talk o'er early vows,  
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## To His Wife

O Pure of soul, and fond and deep of heart  
For those who darkened be,  
Lift up thy holy voice, at morn and eve,  
And pray for me,—

For me, who for this thronging world's hot strife  
A prize hath brought to be  
Among the known—but sweet too dearly earned;  
Ah, pray for me.

Not aye the scholar's path a track of peace,  
Nor from the dread sins free;  
Hard by the Isles of Truth doth Circe prowl;  
Oh, pray for me.

The spirits' hell-gloom and its hurricane  
Round studious cells may be;  
Thou patient Moon of Memory's dreary sky,  
Oh, pray for me.

When through thy well-known window, oped beneath  
The uneasy, whispering tree,  
Burn stars we children two have tried to count,  
Then pray for me.

At hour of rest, and when the moon makes pleased  
The melancholy sea,  
And noon's surcease of happy household toil,  
Yes, pray for me.

Some solace for this wrung and rifted heart,  
That, wheresoe'er thou be,  
Thou wilt, God's holiest gift, thou woman pure,  
Yet pray for me.

Daniel Henry Deniehy