

Classic Poetry Series

**Douglas Brooke Wheelton
Sladen
- poems -**

Publication Date:

2004

Publisher:

PoemHunter.Com - The World's Poetry Archive

A Christmas Letter From Australia

'T IS Christmas, and the North wind blows; 't was two years yesterday
Since from the Lusitania's bows I looked o'er Table Bay,
A tripper round the narrow world, a pilgrim of the main,
Expecting when her sails unfurled to start for home again.

'T is Christmas, and the North wind blows; to-day our hearts are one,
Though you are 'mid the English snows and I in Austral sun;
You, when you hear the Northern blast, pile high a mightier fire,
Our ladies cower until it 's past in lawn and lace attire.

I fancy I can picture you upon this Christmas night,
Just sitting as you used to do, the laughter at its height:
And then a sudden, silent pause intruding on your glee,
And kind eyes glistening because you chanced to think of me.

This morning when I woke and knew 't was Christmas come again,
I almost fancied I could view white rime upon the pane,
And hear the ringing of the wheels upon the frosty ground,
And see the drip that downward steals in icy casket bound.

I daresay you 'll be on the lake, or sliding on the snow,
And breathing on your hands to make the circulation flow,
Nestling your nose among the furs of which your boa 's made,—
The Fahrenheit here registers a hundred in the shade.

It is not quite a Christmas here with this unclouded sky,
This pure transparent atmosphere, this sun midheaven-high;
To see the rose upon the bush, young leaves upon the trees,
And hear the forest's summer hush or the low hum of bees.

But cold winds bring not Christmastide, nor budding roses June,
And when it 's night upon your side we 're basking in the noon.
Kind hearts make Christmas—June can bring blue sky or clouds above;
The only universal spring is that which comes of love.

And so it 's Christmas in the South as on the North-Sea coasts,
Though we are starved with summer-drouth and you with winter frosts.
And we shall have our roast beef here, and think of you the while,
Though all the watery hemisphere cuts off the mother isle.

Feel sure that we shall think of you, we who have wandered forth,
And many a million thoughts will go to-day from south to north;
Old heads will muse on churches old, where bells will ring to-day—
The very bells, perchance, which tolled their fathers to the clay.

And now, good-night! and I shall dream that I am with you all,
Watching the ruddy embers gleam athwart the panelled hall;
Nor care I if I dream or not, though severed by the foam,
My heart is always in the spot which was my childhood's home.

Douglas Brooke Wheelton Sladen

From the Drama of "Charles II"

COME and kiss me, mistress Beauty,
I will give you all that 's due t'ye.

I will taste your rosebud lips
Daintily as the bee sips;
At your bonny eyes I 'll look
Like a scholar at his book:

On my bosom you shall rest,
Like a robin on her nest:
Round my body you shall twine,
I 'll be elm, and you be vine:

In a bumper of your breath
I would drain a draught of death;
In the tangles of your hair
I 'd be hanged and never care.

Then come kiss me, mistress Beauty,
I will give you all that 's due t' ye.

Douglas Brooke Wheelton Sladen

Salopia Inhospitalis

TOUCH not that maid:
She is a flower, and changeth but to fade.
Fragrant is she, and fair
As any shape that haunts this lower air;
In form as graceful and as free
As honeysuckles and the lilies be;
Insensible, and shrinking from caress
As flowers, which you peril when you press.
Gaze not on her;
She is a being of another sphere.
Brilliant is she, and bright
As any star illuminate at night;
Of stuff as sober and as fine
As hers whose glory through the moon doth shine;
Unliker to come down to this thy love
Than any orb that 's fixed for aye above.
Heed her no more:
She is a gem whose heart thou canst not bore;
Glistering is she, and grand
As any stone that decks a monarch's hand;
In face as free from flaw or stain
As diamond from mine, or pearl from main:
But she thy fire and fever never felt,
For adamant can neither waste nor melt.

Douglas Brooke Wheelton Sladen

Sunset On The Cunimbla Valley, Blue Mountains

I SAT upon a windy mountain height,
On a huge rock outstanding from the rest;
The sun had sunk behind a neighboring crest,
Leaving chill shade; but looking down, my sight
Beheld the vale still bathed in his warm light
And of the perfect peace of eve possessed,
No wave upon the forest on its breast
And all its park-like glades with sunshine bright.
It put me into mind of the old age
Of one who leaves ambition's rocks and peaks
To those inhabited by nobler rage,
And still existence in life's valleys seeks;
His is the peaceful eve; but then one hour
Of mountain life is worthy his twenty four.

Douglas Brooke Wheelton Sladen

The Tropics

LOVE we the warmth and light of tropic lands,
The strange bright fruit, the feathery fanspread leaves,
The glowing mornings and the mellow eves,
The strange shells scattered on the golden sands,
The curious handiwork of Eastern hands,
The little carts ambled by humpbacked beeves,
The narrow outriggered native boat which cleaves,
Unscathed, the surf outside the coral strands.
Love we the blaze of color, the rich red
Of broad tiled-roof and turban, the bright green
Of plantain-frond and paddy-field, nor dread
The fierceness of the noon. The sky serene,
The chill-less air, quaint sights, and tropic trees,
Seem like a dream fulfilled of lotus-ease.

Douglas Brooke Wheelton Sladen

Under the Wattle

"Why should not wattle do
For mistletoe?"
Asked one -- they were but two --
Where wattles grow.

He was her lover, too,
Who urged her so --
"Why should not wattle do
For mistletoe?"

A rose-cheek rosier grew;
Rose-lips breathed low;
"Since it is here, and YOU,
I hardly know
Why wattle should not do."

Douglas Brooke Wheelton Sladen