

**Classic Poetry Series**

**John Liddell Kelly**

**- 3 poems -**

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### **John Liddell Kelly (19 February 1850-1926)**

Born near Airdrie, Scotland, 19th February, 1850. John Liddell Kelly left school at the age of eleven and was self-educated afterwards. He married in 1870 and emigrated to New Zealand in 1880.

He worked as a Sub-editor for the Auckland Star and as editor for the Auckland Observer. Mr Kelly also has served as assistant editor for the Lyttelton Times and editor of the New Zealand Times.

Works:

Tahiti, the Land of Love and Beauty (Auckland, 1885).

Tarawera, or the Curse of Tuhoto (Auckland, 1887).

Zealandia's Jubilee (Auckland, 1890).

Heather and Fern (Wellington, 1902).

## **Heredity**

More than a fleshly immortality  
Is mine. Though I myself return again  
To dust, my qualities of heart and brain,  
Of soul and spirit, shall not cease to be.  
I view them growing, day by day, in thee,  
My first-begotten son; I trace them plain  
In you, my daughters; and I count it gain  
Myself renewed and multiplied to see.

But sadness mingles with my selfish joy,  
At thought of what you may be called to bear.  
Oh, passionate maid! Oh, glad, impulsive boy!  
Your father's sad experience you must share --  
Self-torture, the unfeeling world's annoy,  
Gross pleasure, fierce exultance, grim despair!

John Liddell Kelly

## **Immortality**

At twenty-five I cast my horoscope,  
And saw a future with all good things rife --  
A firm assurance of eternal life  
In worlds beyond, and in this world the hope  
Of deathless fame. But now my sun doth slope  
To setting, and the toil of sordid strife,  
The care of food and raiment, child and wife,  
Have dimmed and narrowed all my spirit's scope.

Eternal life -- a river gulphed in sands!  
Undying fame -- a rainbow lost in clouds!  
What hope of immortality remains  
But this: "Some soul that loves and understands  
Shall save thee from the darkness that enshrouds";  
And this: "Thy blood shall course in others' veins"?

John Liddell Kelly

## **The Christian Philosopher's A.B.C.**

Alone and hopeless in a world of woe,  
By friends deceived, and spurned by many a foe,  
Can man exist, and think, and act, nor feel  
Despondency o'er all his being steal?  
E'en faith in God and His all-gracious plan  
Fails when we lack man's sympathy for man.  
'Give us,' we cry, 'friends faithful and sincere—  
Happy our present, and our future clear ;  
In peace, oh God, our cups with plenty fill,  
Join earth to heaven, all sin and sorrow kill;  
Kill want and woe, then we shall gladly own  
Love rules the earth, and God doth reign alone—  
Mercy His crown, and Righteousness His throne!  
Nay, speak not so, it ill becomes a clod  
Of lowly earth to dictate to his God !  
Put down rebellion in thee, and no more  
Question those gifts God poureth from his store.  
Remember whence thou art, and whither bent ;  
Say not 'tis evil which the Lord hath sent  
To serve His gracious ends. He shall hold sway  
Until each soul shall love him and obey.  
Virtue brings peace. Seek her and thou shall find  
What arms 'gainst griefs the philosophic mind.  
Xantippe might scold, yet Socrates pursued,  
Year in, year out, his philosophic mood—  
Zealous for God, and for the cause of good.

John Liddell Kelly