**Classic Poetry Series**

# Sir Henry Parkes

## - poems -

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**Fatherland**

THE BRAVE old land of deed and song,
Of gentle hearts and spirits strong,
Of queenly maids and heroes grand,
Of equal laws,—our Fatherland!

Though born beneath a brighter sun,
Shall we forget the marvels done,
By soul outspoken, blood outpoured,
By bard and patriot, song and sword?

Forget how firm and true our sires,
Still lighted by their battle-fires,
'Gainst kingly power and kingly crime,
Long struggled in the darkened time?

How in a rolling sea they stood,
Where every wave was freemen's blood,—
Shall we forget the time of strife,
When freedom's only price was life?

Shall Cromwell's memory, Milton's lyre,
Not kindle 'mong us souls of fire,
Not raise in us a spirit strong—
High scorn of shams, quick hate of wrong?
Shall we not learn, Australians born!
To smile on tinselled power our scorn,—
At least, a freeman's pride to try,
When tinselled power would bend or buy?

The brave old land of deed and song,
We ne'er will do her memories wrong!
For freedom here we'll firmly stand,
As stood our sires for Fatherland!

Sir Henry Parkes

**Four Score**

I count the mercifullest part of all
God's mercies, in this coil of eighty years,
Is that no sense of being disappears
Or fails; I see the signal, hear the call,
Can calmly estimate the rise and fall
Of moth-like mortals in this "vale of tears";
And all His glorious works--the heavenly spheres,
The ocean, and the earth's unending wall--
Remain, for thought and wonder! Marvellous
Is God's creation, with its endless space
And those inhabited bright worlds by law
Divinely governed, as they shine on us,
Still keeping through all time their ordered place;
I bow my head in rapture and in awe.

Sir Henry Parkes

**The Buried Chief**

(November 6th, 1886)

With speechless lips and solemn tread
  They brought the Lawyer-Statesman home:
They laid him with the gather'd dead,
  Where rich and poor like brothers come.

How bravely did the stripling climb,
  From step to step the rugged hill:
His gaze thro' that benighted time
  Fix'd on the far-off beacon still.

He faced the storm that o'er him burst,
  With pride to match the proudest born:
He bore unblench'd Detraction's worst, --
  Paid blow for blow, and scorn for scorn.

He scaled the summit while the sun
  Yet shone upon his conquer'd track:
Nor falter'd till the goal was won,
  Nor struggling upward, once look'd back.

But what avails the "pride of place",
  Or winged chariot rolling past?
He heeds not now who wins the race,
  Alike to him the first or last.

Sir Henry Parkes

**Weary**

WEARY of the ceaseless war
 Beating down the baffled soul,—
Thoughts that like a scimitar
 Smite us fainting at the goal.

Weary of the joys that pain—
 Dead sea fruits whose ashes fall,
Drying up the summer’s rain—
 Charnel dust in cups of gall!

Weary of the hopes that fail,
 Leading from the narrow way,
Tempting strength to actions frail—
 Hand to err, and foot to stray.

Weary of the battling throng,
 False and true in mingled fight;
Weary of the wail of wrong,
 And the yearning for the night!

Weary, weary, weary Heart!
 Lacerated, crush’d and dumb.
None to know thee as thou art!
 When will rest unbroken come?

Sir Henry Parkes