

Classic Poetry Series

# **Arthur Maquarie**

## **- poems -**

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## Arthur Maquarie(1874-1955)

Arthur Maquarie was born in Dubbo, NSW, as Arthur Frank Macquarie Mullens, later changed his name by deed poll. After graduating from the University of Sydney in 1895 he worked in England as a freelance writer, in Italy as a teacher of English, and also lived in France and Spain; he was active in the Royal Society of Literature and organised the British committee which promoted intellectual harmony among the Allies in the First World War. He wrote several plays on medieval subjects and several volumes of lyrical verse, but is most significant for the assistance he provided to Henry Lawson in London in 1900-1; as well as writing articles about Lawson which helped introduce him to literary London, Maquarie arranged meetings with editors, publishers and literary agents, and lived with Lawson while part of the Joe Wilson sequence was being written. Lawson's poignant portrait of Maquarie's struggle as a hack writer in London forms part of recently discovered material and is included in Brian Kiernan's *The Essential Henry Lawson* (1982).

## Autumn Eve

The yellow poplar leaves have strown  
Thy quiet mound, thou slumberest  
Where winter's winds will be unknown;  
So deep thy rest,  
So deep thy rest.

Sleep on, my love, thy dreams are sweet,  
If thou hast dreams: the flowers I brought  
I lay aside for passing feet,  
Thou needest nought,  
Thou needest, needest nought.

The grapes are gather'd from the hills,  
The wood is piled, the song bird gone,  
The breath of early evening chills;  
My love, my love, sleep on;  
My love, my love, sleep on

Arthur Maquarie

# Brittania's Throne

MIRROR of the trackless sky,  
Priestess of its changing mood,  
Ere thy shores were piled on high  
Thou didst feel God's Spirit brood;  
Thou didst hear His word alone;—  
Be thou still Britannia's throne.

From thy deeps the creeping things  
Spread through cove and brook and fen,  
Changing scales for soaring wings  
And the mould of mortal men;  
From thy womb the world hath grown!  
Be thou still Britannia's throne.

Then among the happier ones  
Filing in millennial train,  
Thou didst make us favoured sons,  
Teaching us to rule and reign:  
Thou didst call us for thine own—  
Be thou still Britannia's throne.

Mighty Mistress, thou didst school  
England's heart in all thy ways;  
May she learn no nicer rule  
In the ease of after days;  
For the greatness we have known  
Be thou still Britannia's throne.

For the passion of our plea,  
For the memory of our brave,  
For the fights we fought for thee,  
For the bones that thou dost lave,  
For the love that we have shown!  
Be thou still Britannia's throne.

Arthur Maquarie

# Love's Palace

IF the woodland and the heath,  
And the hedgerows thick with may,  
And the weed-flowers underneath,  
And the clambering honey-sheath,  
And the mosses green and grey,

And the flecks of sun and shade  
Lying light upon the grass,  
And the ripple in the glade,  
And the songs that float and fade,  
And the joys that come and pass,

If the dog-rose choir of bees  
Whirling golden in the sun,  
And the sweetness of the breeze,  
And the joists of mighty trees,  
And the hoods of purple nun,

If this fabric of delight  
Spread around to make the spring  
Could but read my wish aright,  
Could but aid me as it might,  
Could obey me while I sing,

I should build thee such a bower  
As the fairies built of old,  
Walled with every fragrant flower,  
And with many a mighty tower  
Domed with purest morning gold.

And thy breath should draw the rose,  
And thine ears be filled with sweet  
Such as never poet knows,  
Such as tricks him while it flows,  
And eludes his bar and beat.

And thy couch should be more soft  
Than the silk of Eastern days,  
Than the rainbow's flush aloft,

Than the dawning clouds that oft  
Melt before us as we gaze.

There my dearest love should rest  
Like a bird upon the bough,  
Like a fledgeling in its nest,  
Like her head upon my breast,  
Like my kiss upon her brow.

Arthur Maquarie

## Of Glory

WHO will persuade me that one perfect song  
Is not more glorious than a victor's bays?  
I know not who. I ask because the phrase  
Runs lightly and the final words are strong.  
But did you press me for a right or wrong,  
Then would I bid you hunt for perfect lays,  
And rouse the dust of dead heroic days,  
And pass your judgement if you live so long.

To me it seems more worth, when all is said,  
To smoke a friend's cigar and see the moon  
Lie rippling on the Arno mid the strewn  
White ranks of rippling stars, to give my head  
Its own good leading, to expect no boon,  
To sing, and damn the world, and join the dead.

Arthur Maquarie

## Of Taking Things Easy

TELL me what boots to battle, when the end  
Is foreseen failure? What, by heaven, I ask—  
By bearded martyrs, and the holy cask  
Of papal comfort, what can struggle lend  
Of true nobility to those who bend  
Constrainèd after all? 'Twere better bask  
With resignation and a quiet flask  
Than rush to strokes that heaven will surely send.

Methinks the base desire to change our stars  
Is but the taint of old mortality,  
And as the wavelet curls in every sea  
The schoolboy bares his wounds and thinks him Mars.  
Give me Petrarca and a pot of tea,  
And carry thou thy honourable scars.

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# Rhapsody

LOVERS, are you faring forth?  
Will you seek the icy north?  
Are you steering by the sun?  
Where you journey there is none  
But a frozen viking's targe  
Resting idly on the marge.

Lovers, do you make your way  
To a land of larger day?  
Do you track the homing flight  
Of the birds that seek the light?  
They will lead you to your death  
In the desert's scorching breath.

North or east or south or west,  
Lovers, you will lose your quest,  
For the prize of your demand  
Yields not to the hunter's hand;  
He who searches love or truth  
Leaves them hid behind his youth.

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