

Classic Poetry Series

**Martha M Simpson**  
**- poems -**

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# Martha M Simpson()

Miss Martha Mildred Simpson was born on 3rd May 1869 in County Tyrone, Ireland.

In the year of 1883 she and her father emigrated to Australia, living in the Northern rivers area of New South Wales.

Martha began working with the Department of Public Instruction in 1886 and was later made head of the Kindergarten section of the Public School in Tamworth. She later became a Lecturer on education matter within the district and was to become involved in new ways of education after an overseas visit.

The new system was named the 'Montessori method of Education'. The Blackfriars Demonstration School located in Sydney, Australia was one of the first public schools in the world to adopt the Montessori approach to education.

Miss Simpson was by now the Mistress of the Infants' Department became enthusiastic for the Montessori approach and travelled to Europe in 1912/13 to research the method.

In 1914 Miss Simpson prepared a "Report on the Montessori Methods of Education" commissioned by the Hon. A. C. Carmichael, Minister for Education. The report included numerous photographs of the Blackfriars Montessori environment. this method was to be adopted at Blackfriars school upon her return to Australia.

# To An Old Grammar

Oh, mighty conjuror, you raise  
The ghost of my lost youth --  
The happy, golden-tinted days  
When earth her treasure-trove displays,  
And everything is truth.

Your compeers may be sage and dry,  
But in your page appears  
A very fairyland, where I  
Played 'neath a changeful Irish sky --  
A sky of smiles and tears.

Dear native land! this little book  
Brings back the varied charm  
Of emerald hill and flashing brook,  
Deep mountain glen and woodland nook,  
And homely sheltered farm.

I see the hayrick where I sat  
In golden autumn days,  
And conned thy page, and wondered what  
Could be the use, excepting that  
It gained the master's praise.

I conjugate thy verbs again  
Beside the winter's fire,  
And, as the solemn clock strikes ten,  
I lay thee on the shelf, and then  
To dreams of thee retire.

Thy Saxon roots reveal to me  
A silent, empty school,  
And one poor prisoner who could see,  
As if to increase her misery,  
Her mates released from rule,

Rushing to catch the rounder ball,  
Or circling in the ring.  
Those merry groups! I see them all,

And even now I can recall  
The songs they used to sing.

Thy syntax conjures forth a morn  
Of spring, when blossoms rare  
Conspired the solemn earth to adorn,  
And spread themselves on bank and thorn,  
And perfumed all the air.

The dewdrops lent their aid and threw  
Their gems with lavish hand  
On every flower of brilliant hue,  
On every blade of grass that grew  
In that enchanted land.

The lark her warbling music lent,  
To give an added charm,  
And sleek-haired kine, in deep content,  
Forth from their milking slowly went  
Towards the homestead farm.

And here thy page on logic shows  
A troop of merry girls,  
A meadow smooth where clover grows,  
And lanes where scented hawthorn blows,  
And woodbine twines and curls.

And, turning o'er thy leaves, I find  
Of many a friend the trace;  
Forgotten scenes rush to my mind,  
And some whom memory left behind  
Now stare me in the face.

Ah, happy days! when hope was high,  
And faith was calm and deep!  
When all was real and God was nigh,  
And heaven was "just beyond the sky",  
And angels watched my sleep.

Your dreams are gone, and here instead  
Fair science reigns alone,  
And, when I come to her for bread,

She smiles and bows her stately head  
And offers me -- a stone.

Martha M Simpson