

Classic Poetry Series

William Forster
- poems -

Publication Date:
2004

Publisher:
Poemhunter.com - The World's Poetry Archive

William Forster(1818 - 1882)

William Forster was born on October 16, 1818 in Madras, India, son of Thomas Forster, Army Surgeon in the British Army in India. He accompanied his parents when they were transferred back to Ireland in 1882, and there the young William began his first formal education. In 1829 the family again moved, to New South Wales. William completed his education in this country and showed two distinct leanings - Literature and Politics.

During the period 1834 - 1855 he selected land and farmed it, generally as a cattle grazer, although he spent some of his time in authorship of articles of a political nature to various publications in Sydney.

He also accompanied two expeditions of an exploratory nature seeking to know more of the land he had adopted as his home. The first expedition was to Port Phillip, whilst the second was a survey of the Clarence River area.

In 1848 he married Miss Eliza Jane Wall.

Politics evidently fascinated him, for although party politics were forming and the two opposing factions - Liberals and Conservatives were active. He ascribed to neither.

He was according to some writers of the day, a singularly dedicated independent, to the point of complete "pig headedness".

However, he had sufficient following to be elected to Parliament in 1856. It appears his chief interests were the disposal and occupation of lands of the State, and the formation of a Legislative Council.

With literally no party of adherents, Parliamentary loyalties were rather nebulous, and any leader had to have something special to obtain the loyalties of a house of what were changeable independents. In this system there were frequent "spills" and it was through one such that William Forster became Premier and Colonial Secretary over a period 1863 - 1865.

He tried to effect several bills relating to his chief interests, but through considerable dispute relative to methods of voting powers he lost the support of his followers and stepped down from the Premiership, stating that the downfall of his Parliament had been simply that as they "did not have a party and that he was obliged to depend upon the principal - upon mere measures - and it was

found that the time had not yet come when a Government which did not depend upon personnel adherence's could stand."

He was Colonial Treasurer for 1875 - 78, then took a break from active politics over a period 1876 - 1879, the first two years he spent as agent general in London.

He re-entered Parliament upon his return to New South Wales, where he remained a member until his death on October 30, 1882. During his lifetime he wrote quite extensively, and is credited with publication of the *The Wier-Wolf* a tragedy (1876), *The Brothers* a drama (1878) *Political Presentments*, (1878) and *Midas* (1882).

Mr. Forster died on Oct 30, 1882

Perennial Calendar (Excerpt)

If now the sun extends his cheering beam,
And all the landscape casts a golden gleam
Clear is the sky, and calm and soft the air,
And through thin mist each object looks more fair.
Then, where the villa rears its sheltering grove,
Along the southern lawn 'tis sweet to rove:
There dark green pines, behind, their boughs extend,
And bright spruce firs like pyramids ascend,
And round their tops, in many a pendent row,
Their scaly cones of shining auburn show;
There the broad cedar's level branches spread,
And the tall cyprus lifts its spiry head;
With alaternus ilex interweaves,
And laurels mix their glossy oval leaves;
And gilded holly crimson fruit displays,
And white viburnum o'er the border strays.
Where these from storms the spacious greenhouse screen,
Ev'n now the eye beholds a flowery scene;
There crystal sashes ward the injurious cold,
And rows of benches fair exotics hold;
Rich plants, that Afric's sunny cape supplies,
Or o'er the isles of either India rise.
While striped geranium shows its tufts of red,
And verdant myrtles grateful fragrance shed;
A moment stay to mark the vivid bloom,
A moment stay to catch the high perfume.

William Forster

The Love In Her Eyes Lay Sleeping

The love in her eyes lay sleeping,
As stars that unconscious shine,
Till, under the pink lids peeping,
I wakened it up with mine;
And we pledged our troth to a brimming oath
In a bumper of blood-red wine.
Alas! too well I know
That it happened long ago;
Those memories yet remain,
And sting, like throbs of pain,
And I'm alone below,
But still the red wine warms, and the rosy goblets glow;
If love be the heart's enslaver,
'Tis wine that subdues the head.
But which has the fairest flavour,
And whose is the soonest shed?
Wine waxes in power in that desolate hour
When the glory of love is dead.
Love lives on beauty's ray,
But night comes after day,
And when the exhausted sun
His high career has run,
The stars behind him stay,
And then the light that lasts consoles our darkening way.
When beauty and love are over,
And passion has spent its rage,
And the spectres of memory hover,
And glare on life's lonely stage,
'Tis wine that remains to kindle the veins
And strengthen the steps of age.
Love takes the taint of years,
And beauty disappears,
But wine in worth matures
The longer it endures,
And more divinely cheers,
And ripens with the suns and mellows with the spheres.

William Forster