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XXXX AUSTRALIAN GIRL

AND OTHER VERSES

ETHEL CASTILLA

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THE AUSTRALIAN GIRL

AND OTHER VERSES

THE AUSTRALIAN GIRL

AND OTHER VERSES

BY

ETHEL CASTILLA

GEORGE ROBERTSON & CO. PROPRIETARY LIMITED
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P R E F A C E .

MISS ETHEL CASTILLA'S artistic illustration of Australian life and scenery will attract readers trained to appreciate the refined treatment of familiar subjects. Her volume proves the possession of qualities which may lead her far in the path of literary success. A reverent, tender knowledge of childhood's grace runs through her work. An accurate presentment of Australian climatic contrasts discloses a life-long experience. Her habit of careful observation, joined to the true poetic instinct, should ensure a future of successful recognition.

ROLF BOLDREWOOD.

THIS BOOKLET OF VERSES
IS INSCRIBED TO MY UNCLE
MAJOR-GENERAL ROBERT STANWIX ROBERTSON
AS A SLIGHT TOKEN OF
AFFECTION AND OF GRATITUDE
FOR
LITERARY SYMPATHY.

ETHEL CASTILLA.

Some of these Verses appear for the first
time in print. Others have been published
in various Australian periodicals.

Ethel Castilla.

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THE AUSTRALIAN GIRL.

She's pretty to walk with,
And witty to talk with,
And pleasant, too, to think on."

—*Sir John Suckling.*

SHE has a beauty of her own—

A beauty of a paler tone

Than English belles ;

Yet Southern sun and Southern air

Have kissed her cheeks, until they wear

The dainty tints that oft appear

On rosy shells.

Her frank, clear eyes bespeak a mind
Old-world traditions fail to bind.

She is not shy,
Or bold, but simply self-possessed.
Her independence adds a zest
Unto her speech, her piquant jest,
Her quaint reply.

O'er classic volumes she will pore
With joy, and true scholastic lore
Will often gain.

In sports she bears away the bell,
Nor under music's siren spell,
To dance divinely, flirt as well,
Does she disdain.

THE AUSTRALIAN WOMAN.

SPRUNG of a race whose conquering tread,
From pole to pole, the wide earth owns,
Will is her rightful heritage ;

Vigour and power breathe in her tones,
Light her brave eyes from youth to age,
Shine in the poise of her proud head ;
Her freeborn mien and gracious smile
Proclaim her queen of the great isle
The blue Pacific zones.

A winsome queen, straight, supple, tall,

 'A wild rose of the wilderness

Her bold forefathers faced and tamed,

 Where Nature's deepest loneliness

Her doubts and fears has never claimed ;

Nor has its stern power caused to fall

The beating of her dauntless heart,

Yet versed in a true woman's part,

 To brighten and to bless.

A nation's youth is in her face,

 Its radiance round her forehead clings,

Lives in the freshness of her mirth,

 Falls on her pathway as she brings

Into a hard, cold, languid earth

The fragrance borne from trackless space,
And, purely free from all alloy,
The best and sweetest earthly joy—
 The spirit of the Springs.

The dawn of a new nationhood
 She waits with hopeful eyes to see ;
The bursting of the bonds she hears
 That sets her country's strong soul free,
And feels her power, in future years,
To mould its mighty course for good,
To write, in characters of gold,
Brighter than seer has yet foretold,
 Her children's destiny.

September, 1899.

AN AUSTRALIAN LULLABY.

My baby sleeps ;
His smile, that is the token
Of sweetest thoughts unspoken,
Lingers and peeps
Through lips as red as roses,
Whose parting line discloses
Pearls from the deeps.

Australia showers
On him gifts best and rarest.
His dear hands are the fairest
Of rosy flowers ;

His blue eyes have the brightness,
His small, proud form the lightness,
Of blossoming powers.

My darling's hair
Is bright as wattle golden ;
Like shells from ocean olden

His wee feet are ;
His starry eyes are peerless ;
His loving heart is fearless
Beyond compare.

Fire Spirits dread !
Relentless, stern, and lowering,
Who blast the forest flowering
Withered and dead,

Oh ! hear a mother's weeping,
And leave to my poor keeping
His sacred head.

Spirits of Flood !
Who change the singing currents
To raging mountain torrents
In angry mood,
Oh ! move in gentlest measure,
And lull my sleeping treasure,
And o'er him brood.

Wind Spirits strong !
You hold the storms and thunder,
Whose harvest is a wonder
Of loss and wrong ;

Oh ! guard my prince's slumbers,
Sing him in softest numbers
A cradle song.

My folded flower
Is born to make the glory
Of our unwritten story
Of growing power,
Heir to vast bushlands sunny,
A land of milk and honey,
With peace for dower.

A SUMMER SUNSET.

“ Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,
Stains the white radiance of Eternity.”

—*Shelley.*

THE sun is sinking towards the sea,
And land and sky are flushed with light ;
Each sombre eucalyptus tree
Flames ruddy-golden in my sight.
The earth hath doffed her robes of green,
And moorlands, where no streamlets run,
Are only clothed in Summer sheen.
The flowers have vanished one by one,
And Mother Earth lays bare her bosom to the sun.

No cry of gull, or note of bird,
Breaks through the silence calm and sweet ;
The cricket's chirp is scarcely heard
From the parched ground beneath my feet ;
Peace broods above the watching cliffs,
And, at their base, no whisp'ring breeze
Stirs the brown sails of fishing skiffs,
Or moves the face of crystal seas ;
The west wind sighs no more among the sheoak
trees.

On misty hills and sun-kissed strand,
On arching dome and sea below,
Doth Nature paint, with faultless hand,
Hues of the fairest flowers that blow :

The living gold of fragrant broom,
Of daffodil, of primrosè shy,
The waratah's, the lilac's bloom
Shine each in turn, and, when they die,
A glow of pearly light fills all the western sky.

Our web of life hath sunset dyes,
Red stains of wrath, grey threads of care,
And hope displays to weary eyes
Her golden gleams, as bright as rare.

Like evening hues, that fade from sight,
Each glowing flame, each lingering ray,
Our griefs and joys, when Death brings night,
Shall also pale and pass away,
Shall faint and die in light of the eternal day.

THE BUSH.

A TRIAD OF SONNETS.

A QUEEN of new, illimitable lands,
Wild clematis upon her sunlit hair,
Who holds, as symbols royal, a burden fair
Of purple grapes and wheat-ears in her hands.
Near portals of a green, calm world she stands,
And whispers, in a voice like purling streams
Tired city toilers hear oft in their dreams,
Gentlest entreaties, veiled and soft commands :
“ Leave smoke-dimmed towns, with cares and miseries
rife !
Come where the forest waters rise and fall,

And I will give ye freedom, and a life

Sweetened by pastoral joys, that never pall.

Gods ye will be, above low, sordid strife,

Lords of yourselves and conquerors of all !”

A witch, whose fiery glance enchants and slays,

Who promises to men their hearts' desire :

“ Ye shall have golden joys that cannot tire,

And length of lustrous, sweet, triumphant days.

Where musk and myall twine in fragrant maze,

The bushman rides o'er undiscovered gold,

Uncounted treasure waiting for the bold.

To cowards leave the city's slavish ways !”

Beneath the mocking light of brazen skies,

That arch the barrenness of arid plains

Her victims hear the dismal crows' harsh cries,
And pass to that dread world where pale Death
reigns.

They die alone, and none may hear their sighs ;
Unhonoured, nameless graves their only gains.

A mother of heroic, selfless deeds,
Wrought by her sons in fire, and flood, and drought,
Stern, scathing tests, that search their manhood out.

A passionate response to human needs
They learn in dreary wastes, where river reeds
Hear nothing but the voices of the winds,
Where Nature's mighty power hearts closer binds
Than all the pedants' prized fraternal creeds.

The polished worldlings crush with doubts their will,
And action lose for lore, and strength for grace ;
With warring words the fevered cities fill,
In civil strife for honours, wealth, and place.
Her strong, bronzed, silent sons the Bush keeps still—
The sturdy forebears of the future race.

THE AUSTRAL SEASONS.

GREY Winter holds the land
Close in his icy hand,
Green hills and wind-swept sand
 And foaming seas.

The wild winds howl in pain,
And driving, cheerless rain
Sobs, in a sad refrain,
 Among the trees.

Yet he hath milder ways,
And store of crystal days,

That lift the misty haze
From hill and plain.
Sweet daffodils appear
In violet-scented air,
And roses blushes wear
In Winter's reign.

Child of his milder moods,
When storm no longer broods,
When no harsh wind intrudes,
Fair Spring is born.
Her robes are gold and green,
Her eyes like gems are seen,
Her midnight's starry sheen
Is bright as morn.

Her golden tresses shine ;
Her breath is like strong wine ;
She brings with her divine
 And sunlit hours.

And when old Winter dies,
Lulled in her arms he lies,
Beneath clear turquoise skies,
 'Mid scented flowers.

The dull green heaths blush red
Beneath her airy tread ;
A crown is on her head
 Of wattle bloom.

Her coming meadows greet,
With carpets, for her feet

Of golden capeweed, sweet
With faint perfume.

In Spring's fair, blue-eyed face
Her breeding leaves its trace ;
Wed to her maiden grace
Is Winter's power.

She hides Earth's new-born gold
In frosty mantle cold,
Or blows a dread blast bold,
A dreary hour.

She has a thousand wiles,
Dark frowns, and radiant smiles ;
She threatens and beguiles
From hour to hour,

Moans beneath inky skies,
And, when her black mood flies,
Rain-drops like diamonds rise
On every flower.

Two months have swiftly fled
Above Spring's flower-like head,
Two months have passed on red
And golden wing.

The maid is woman grown,
Her maiden grace has flown,
And golden Summer's own
Is form of Spring.

And, in the lengthening days,
Lit by the fierce sun's rays,

Summer herself arrays

 In robes of brown.

Beneath hard sapphire skies,

Fire from her angry eyes,

Shrivels the grass, that dies

 Before her frown.

The gaudy sunflower turns

To Summer's face, that burns,

And all the waving ferns

 Are tipped with gold.

In each warm, lustrous hour

The rose falls from the bower ;

Of every fair spring flower

 The days are told.

Red suns sink in the west,
And, without pause or rest,
From Earth's brown, sunburnt breast

Rise moons blood-red.

The day joins hands with night,
Each lingering hour is bright,
Flowers faint in glaring light,

And hope is fled.

Summer has lovers twain—

The North wind, with his train
Of withering fires and pain,

And the cool South.

The South has conqueror's bliss,
Her fate is twined with his,

He leaves his sweetest kiss
Upon her mouth.

Fruit of their wedded life,
Darkened by storm and strife,
With fierce dissensions rife,
Strong Autumn comes.

His robes are gold and grey,
Tossed by the winds at play,
His path is strewn with gay
Chrysanthemums.

Inconstant Summer turns,
Where the fierce North wind burns,
And, linked with him, she spurns
Her sturdy boy.

The thirsty flocks and herds,
The faintly twittering birds,
In plaints like human words

Hail him with joy.

“ Oh ! Autumn come ! ” they cry,
“ Come nigh and still more nigh,
We faint, we sink, we die,

Haste, Autumn, haste ! ”

And Autumn comes apace,
His tread has manly grace,
And joy is in his face

Of war to taste.

The North wind stands beside
His fiery-tressèd bride,

And blows a blast in pride,

The South to smite.

The South fights well and long,

And sings a triumph song

To see calm Autumn strong

Rise up in might.

The North and Summer yield ;

She drops her shining shield ;

Prone on the yellow field

Lies Summer slain.

Autumn has filial grace,

Old memories leave their trace,

And o'er her prostrate face

Tears fall like rain.

His tears the parched land fill,
Refresh each sun-kissed hill,
And every languid rill

Sings sweet refrain.

The flowers arise in grace
In many an arid place,
And Earth's hard, darkened face

Grows green again.

IN CARNIVAL TIME.

NOVEMBER comes crowned with Spring flowers ;

The red tulip glows ;

We feel in the soft, dewy showers

The breath of the rose ;

On green turf the crimson pea blazes

In meadows bespangled with daisies,

And forests hide wild, tangled mazes,

Where sweet myall grows.

The gold capweed gleams on the forelands,

And bends 'neath our feet ;

The eucalypt flowers on the moorlands,

The bloom's on the wheat.

The beards on the barley are risen,

Bright, dew-sprinkled clover-heads glisten,

In green elms birds twitter and listen

In parleyings sweet.

To-day, when all Nature is singing

A carnival song,

When woodlands with bird-notes are ringing,

Clear, joyous, and strong,

Our Flemington gathers its forces—

Gay crowds and swift thoroughbred horses ;

And men, for a space, forget sources

Of sorrow and wrong.

And, linked by a common emotion,
 There meet on the lawn,
John Bull, splashed with spray from the ocean,
 Priests shaven and shorn,
And charming with native-born graces,
Spring's hues on their ribbons and laces,
Slim belles, whose bright, flower-like faces
 Are fresh as the dawn.

Mirth reigns where the gay fountains bubble,
 Leap upward, and shine,
In hill crowds, who, casting off trouble,
 Shout 'neath the sky-line.
On hill and on flat there is laughing,
Jests, betting, and holiday chaffing,

And merry-faced revellers are quaffing
Their cups of red wine.

The brazen-voiced "bookie's" loud bawling
On him may draw down,
When odds on the field he is calling,
The purist's black frown.

He frowns on the men with keen faces,
Whose lore is of "points" and of "paces,"
Who think that November's great races
Of Spring are the crown.

The critic, who blames without measure,
Finds sport sweet and rare
In hunting to death for his pleasure
A harmless red deer.

He keeps from the boor and the peasant
The pastimes, to Britons so pleasant,
Of killing an innocent pheasant
Or poor timid hare.

Perchance 'tis the genial power
Of our sunny clime,
As sweet as the breath of musk flower
Or scent of wild thyme ;
'Tis sure that no hunted hare shivers,
No stag stands at bay by the rivers,
No dying quail trembles and quivers
In carnival time.

A SONG OF SYDNEY.

HIGH headlands all jealously hide thee,
O fairest of sea-girdled towns !
Thine Ocean-spouse smileth beside thee,
While each headland threatens and frowns.
Like Venice, upheld on sea-pinion,
And fated to reign o'er the free,
Thou wearest, in sign of dominion,
The zone of the sea.

No winter thy fertile slopes hardens,
O new Florence, set in the South !

All lands give their flowers to thy gardens,
That glow to thy bright harbour's mouth ;
Waratahs and England's red roses
With stately magnolias entwined,
Gay sunflowers fill sea-scented closes,
All sweet with woodbine.

Thy harbour's fair flower-crowned islands
See flags of all countries unfurled,
Thou smilest from green, sunlit highlands
To open thine arms to the world !
Dark East's and fair West's emulations
Resound from each hill-shadowed quay,
And over the songs of all nations,
The voice of the sea.

A BALLAD OF BRISBANE.

RIVER-KISSED town, where Summer sits smiling
On circling hills and tropical flowers,
And blue river-reaches, where bamboos lean.
While sons and daughters are trifling, wiling
Away the languorous, golden hours,
Thou liest asleep, like a spell-bound queen.

Crown of a land where Nature has given
Gifts with both hands to soil and to sea,
Rare ocean-born pearls and opals terrene ;
Favoured of the Australian seven,

Steeped in glamour of splendours to be.
Thou liest asleep, like a spell-bound queen.

Heart thou shouldst be of this mighty region,
Giving the people visions sublime,
On goldfields fevered and pastures serene,
Rich in memories of heroes in legion,
With shining records bright as thy clime.
Thou liest asleep, like a spell-bound queen.

In northern wilds the axes are ringing ;
The miner's pick falls on hidden gold,
And where cane-fields wide show shimmering green
The swart Kanaka is blithely singing.
All bring to thy feet riches untold.
Thou liest asleep, like a spell-bound queen.

Southern winds bring a soul-stirring story ;
Throes of a nation pulse through their wings.
Though all warring rights and wrongs intervene,
Thy sisters build a temple of glory,
And tune to one song mutinous strings.
Thou liest asleep, like a spell-bound queen.

June, 1899.

TO AN AUSTRALIAN BOY.

“History is the essence of innumerable biographies.”

— *Thomas Carlyle.*

CHILD of a sunny land,
By dome of crystal spanned,
Set in clear seas,
Where Liberty at last,
Triumphs o'er troubles past,
And, in dim forests vast,
Sings through the trees.

Heir to all England's fame,
Deeds linked with deathless name,
 And wrongs withstood.
For thee hath Cromwell wrought,
For thee hath Milton taught,
For thee was vict'ry bought
 With Hampden's blood.

Thine is a favoured clime,
Plague-spots of old-world crime
 There find no place ;
Man's right to air and land
Doth undisputed stand,
No despot's iron hand
 Keeps down the race.

Thy country's records wait
Last in the book of Fate,
 Fairest and best.

Oh ! may they ever be
Bright as her sapphire sea,
Telling of liberty,
 Labour, and rest.

Reverence for womanhood,
Zeal for thy brother's good,
 I wish for thee.

To cloud thy frank grey eyes,
No thought unworthy rise,
Clear as thy native skies
 Aye may they be.

And when thy story's told,
With good deeds writ in gold
 Bright may it shine !
Honoured and happy years,
Joys unbedimmed by tears,
Glad hopes that conquer fears,
 May these be thine.

A BIRTHDAY GREETING.

DEAR Dorothy May, you are one year old,
And Life has the charm of a tale untold
For your eager heart, for your laughing eyes,
As blue and as bright as your Queensland skies.
Long, long leagues away from your rosebud mouth,
I blow you a kiss, my sweet, from the South,
While I wish you glad returns of the day,

Dorothy May.

To-day, in the sun, each tropical flower
Bows low as you pass, where red cedars tower,

Quaint orchids, with all a butterfly's grace,
The shy, scented noya hiding her face,
And, waving their wands, the elves of the North
From white lotus cups trip gleefully forth,
All dancing and singing "Here's a *new* fay,
Dorothy May!"

Let me not wish you all joy without stain—
The sun's rays are brightest after the rain,
Repose is the sweetest won by our toil,
And light is the best with shade for its foil—
Only a life-path all strewn with good deeds,
The deep joy of min'st'ring to the world's needs,
A path lit by sunshine, not without play,
Dorothy May.

Providence hides all the way of your life :
Whether you shall be a maiden or wife ;
If graduate's gown with grace you shall wear,
And give your gold curls to Earth's wear and tear ;
If in stately halls your fate is to rest,
Or poverty be your most frequent guest,
Oh ! light be your burdens, joyous your way,

Dorothy May !

Melbourne, 11th August, 1893.

A BIRTHDAY SONG.

(WRITTEN FOR ALFRED PERCIVAL LESLIE DE JERSEY
GRUT, BORN AT BRISBANE, 12TH AUGUST, 1893.)

“ I can give you but a word,
Warm with love therein for leaven.”

—*Algernon Swinburne.*

WITH last year's oleanders,
You opened your blue eyes,
By graceful jacarandas,
Beneath bright Brisbane skies.
To-day, with smiles and laughter,
You pass life's first milestone,

At all that shall come after,
Such high hopes be your own.

Your red, round mouth, my darling,
Lips all Earth's sweetest words,
More sweet than song of starling,
Or notes of Austral birds.

Glad hope your brow discloses,
No line its beauty mars ;
Your cheeks are Earth's red roses,
Your eyes are Heaven's stars.

For you no hour brings trouble,
You dread no dawn of day,
Earth is a bright-hued bubble,
And Life has no sad way.

And by a path beguiling,
 You see a prospect sweet,
And tell me by your smiling,
 The world is at your feet.

Brave, hardy Netherlanders
 Gave you your hair of gold,
Your fathers fought for Flanders
 In cruel wars of old.

They saw their country sinking
 'Neath Alva's iron hand,
That, drenched with gore, unshrinking,
 Their fair and fertile land.

They crossed the ocean foaming,
 In all but honour poor,

And o'er the wave went roaming
To seek a foreign shore.
By priest and monk unshriven
They sailed the stormy sea,
Their land was freely given
For faith and liberty.

And Scots, who joyed in fighting,
A fearless, tameless race,
In war and strife delighting,
Gave you your sturdy grace.
They left you flawless honours,
A shield in fair fight gained ;
The life-blood of the donors,
Alone its brightness stained.

And pride and honour Spanish
Are yours to keep, my dear,
Ignoble deeds to banish,
And mean and craven fear.
Dear child of many nations,
You join, with dimpled hands,
Old Europe's aspirations,
New hopes of Austral lands.

Each noble nation's story
Is wrought of many a thread,
Of great deeds crowned with glory,
Of heroes quick and dead.
And may you leave your life, dear,
An heirloom bright to be,

When care and earthly strife, dear,
Have ceased for you and me.

The shield no longer rattles ;
The sword no longer rings ;
Of our sad modern battles
No modern Homer sings.
Yet, like the olden dragons,
Stalk Vice, and Care, and Want ;
No feasters fill their flagons
Without these spectres gaunt.

Against these ever striving,
May you, as man and boy,
Taste sweetest joy of living,
The sharing others' joy.

You came our hearts to gladden,
And may each August's wing
With joy for you be laden
As sweet as songs of spring.

Brisbane, 12th August, 1894.

A CITY BIRD.

“A child, more than all other gifts
That Earth can offer to declining man,
Brings hope with it and forward-looking thoughts.”

—*Wordsworth.*

My bird has swift-flying feet,
My bird has grey, glancing eyes,
Where laughter and mischief meet,
As Day meets Dawn in the skies.

She lives in the smoky town,
She sings in the crowded street,

Where myriad discords drown
Her twitterings low and sweet.

Poor bird ! To her dusty eaves,
On wings of Night there steals
No gladsome rustle of leaves,
But dreary rattle of wheels.

She never has filled her hands
With wattle-bloom's priceless gold ;
Her flowers grow on drapers' stands,
Her roses are bought and sold.

She may not roam flowerful lanes
To give the butterflies chase,
Or fly o'er the sunny plains,
With brooklets to run a race.

She knows not the ferny dells,
 Deep shadowed by gracious hills,
Where fairies ring grassy bells,
 Beside the clear, babbling rills.

She hears not the songs of the bush,
 The whip-bird's joyous call,
The warblings that break Dawn's hush,
 The magpie's sweetest of all.

She loses these joys and gains,
 In the din wherein she dwells,
The rushing of restless trains,
 The music of tram-car bells.

My bird glides through dust and glare
 Like a bright, half-opened flower,

Upborne on strong wildwood air
By Nature's measureless power.

Dear bird of the winning wiles,
We know by your childish grace,
That Nature still wears sweet smiles,
And joy still lives in her face.

A ROSEBUD.

HER frank and innocent blue eyes,
Twin mirrors of Australian skies,
 Are full of light and glee ;
Her laughter, sweet as silver bells
Touched by a skilful ringer, tells
 She finds it bliss to be.

Seven years old ! The passing years,
That bring us sorrows and grey hairs,
 Bestow on her instead
Radiant pleasures, never old,

And paint an aureole of gold
 Around her curly head.

The wattle-gold cannot compare
With the bright glory of her hair,
 True child of Southern race.

She has in airy form and walk
The poise of fern upon its stalk,
 And the wild orchid's grace.

Hers is a land of sapphire seas,
Broad, spreading forests, giant trees,
 Where Liberty may breathe ;
And racial hatreds pine and die,
Beneath the dome of our bright sky,
 No trace of bitter leave.

She holds in her dear, taper hands
The future of our Austral lands,
 Touching all things human,
Unconscious is she of this power,
Not knowing that she is a flower
 To bloom into a woman.

TO ALGERNON SWINBURNE.

STRONG and sweet singer ! You are crowned
With laurels won on classic ground,
Yet you do not disdain to be
Interpreter of childish glee,
Of sufferings in life's daily round.

Your lyre's sweet music, like the sea
Resounding, full-toned, strong, and free,
Is known and loved on Austral plains,
Where wattles pour their golden rains
And bell-birds warble merrily.

Your heart responds to childhood's grace,
To smiles or frowns on Ocean's face,
 To Gallic struggles to be free,
 Italia's stand for liberty,
To burdens of our mortal race.

Your lyre is wreathed by loving hands,
With flowers culled on many strands—
 French lilies, English roses fair,
 And let me add, if I may dare,
Acacia from Australian lands.

CHARITY.

WHEN Dante, in the bygone years,
Found Hades' shores in mystic trance,
He saw, amid its woes and tears,
Three maidens pass, with song and dance.

First, in the poet's wondrous dream,
Moved Charity, with robes like flame,
Then green-clad Hope, by Lethe's stream,
And snowy-vested, glad Faith came.

Faith sings her triumph songs no more ;
Hope's emerald robes have lost their sheen ;

The radiant maids that Dante saw,
Pale, weary, mute, to-day are seen.
Of doctrines strange Faith sees the birth,
Her sullied banner useless lies ;
And Hope sits blindfold on the earth
And hides its wrongs from her sad eyes.
One only of the happy three
That sang by Lethe triumphs yet—
The power of burning Charity
Endures till Earth's last sun be set.
Our brothers' sorrows touch the heart,
We sympathize with others' pains ;
Though Faith and Hope may both depart,
The greatest and the best remains.

KAREEN.

KAREEN stands high on sea-girt cliffs,

The blue waves dance below,

And fluttering sails of fishers' skiffs

Move swiftly to and fro.

A white house shading many a flower,

And framed in hillocks green,

Where spreading eucalypti tower,

And wave round fair Kareen.

When Spring turns every ti-tree white,

And pink heaths blush below,

When sheoaks gleam in golden light,

And graceful orchids glow,

The wattle boughs with gold are bent,
 Clematis hangs between,
And mixed with daffodils they scent
 The sweet air of Kareen.

When Summer comes with lustrous days,
 And robes the hills in gold,
The trees are veiled in misty haze,
 And roses' hours are told,
On shining waves of Western Port
 The tangled mangroves lean,
Among their leaves black swans disport,
 And sweep about Kareen.

The distant cries of flock and herd,
 The mopoke's dismal call,

The voice of many a forest bird,
Of waves, that rise o'er all,
Of balmy winds, that lull to sleep,
And temper summer sheen,
Alone disturb the silence deep
That broods o'er calm Kareen.

And often in the noise and heat
Of a vast city crowd,
Amid the tramp of hurrying feet,
And voices harsh and loud,
When in the burning summer air,
Poor wilted ferns are seen,
That droop and faint in dazzling glare,
I think of cool Kareen.

YANDILLA.

“ Nature never did betray the heart that loved her.”

—*Wordsworth.*

YANDILLA stands by sunlit waters shining,
Remote from din of towns,
And sheltered from harsh western winds repining,
That sweep the Darling Downs.
Wild cedars tall and fragrant pepperinas
Shadow the rose-decked home ;
The drooping date-palms kiss the sweet verbenas
And jasmine white as foam.

Deep peace reigns over downs and streams and islands,
 And the flower-scented air
Only resounds with notes from plains and highlands,
 Bird music far and near,
With cheerful sound of laughing children's voices,
 And song of honey bees,
And carolling, when each twitt rejoices,
 Among the bunya trees.

In summer fields, where mild-eyed flocks are straying,
 Rise ricks of golden hay ;
In summer fields are rosy children playing,
 Where blooms the English may.
No ploughman prays in vain the mighty Mother
 O'er all the smiling land,

Ungrudgingly as brother unto brother

She gives with open hand.

One wearied of the court and camp and city,

And townsmen's ceaseless strife,

That checks and dries the springs of love and pity,

Here leads a purer life,

In every bird that through the forest wanders

Unending pleasure finds,

In every breeze that stirs the oleanders

Sweet balm for wounded minds.

TO THE SOUTH WIND.

IN parching nights and burning days,
 When fields, once green, grow brown and bare,
When hills are wrapped in summer haze,
 And flowers droop in sultry air,
Thou comest, bringing odours sweet,
 Gathered above the surging sea,
The wild ferns wave about our feet,
 And tall trees bend to welcome thee !

Like strains of music, soft and rare,
 Heard 'mid the city's stunning strife,

Like radiant hope, that kills despair,
 Like sudden joy in shadowed life
Thy breezes come. Their gentle rise
 Heralds the blessèd healing rain,
And tells us our sun-wearied eyes
 Shall Spring-like Autumn see again.

CHRISTMAS LILIES.

DECEMBER comes, with golden sunflowers glowing
And roses red and white,
While myriad buds, from Earth's warm bosom growing,
Waken to life and light.

The clove pink through the radiant summer hours
A spicy perfume flings,
And, stately queen of all the fair month's flowers,
The Christmas lily springs.

To men of old these lilies, fraught with sweetness,
Whose pearly petals shine,
Were symbols of a faith that in completeness
Linked man with the divine.

The flowers told of Gabriel's visitation
 To mother-maid of yore,
The Heavenly babe, whose birthday's celebration
 Brought joy for evermore.

In vanished days, the lilies' strange revealing
 Provoked no sceptic sneer,
No burst of aught but reverential feeling,
 When summer changed the year.
The human heart bowed low to occult powers,
 As, o'er the smiling land,
Rose forests fair of those sweet, star-like flowers,
 Once held in Gabriel's hand.

Old fables pass, the legends of Earth's childhood
 Pass, like the fetish rude

The savage worshipped in his ancient wildwood,
Or beat in angry mood.

Now, to our modern eyes, no mystic story

The lilies come to show,

No lingering trace of Gabriel's white-winged glory

Brightens their cups of snow.

And still we find a happy, cheering reason,

In our bright southern clime,

Why lilies bloom at this glad Christmas season,

Scenting the sunlit time.

Symbolic is the flowers' mastering sweetness ;

It comes us to remind

Of generous deeds and kindly words, the meetness,

Of love to all mankind.

CHRISTMAS DAY.

“Blessed be childhood, which brings down something of Heaven into the midst of our rough earthliness.”

—*Henri Frédéric Amiel.*

THE children's morning breaks again,
Each household king and queen
Exults in Santa Claus's reign,
As bright as summer sheen.
The poor man's cot, the rich man's hall,
Are filled with music sweet,
Of childish voices' rise and fall,
And little pattering feet.

To land and sea the Christmas bells
The olden story bring,
The joyous chiming faints and swells
To hail the Heavenly King,
And tell the world the Lord of all
Was in a manger laid,
His weakness sheltered by a stall,
As babe of village maid.

The glory of the wondrous birth
Is dimmed by doubts of years,
The bells' glad message to the earth,
Comes now to sceptic ears,
To men whose Heaven has passed away,
Who wage this mundane strife

From weary day to weary day,
Hopeless of brighter life.

“ These joys and griefs are all,” they say,
“ And miracles are not ;
There is no Heaven to shed a ray
Upon our weary lot.”

Yet Earth, so sin-stained, grey with pain,
Bears harvests, heavenly sweet,
Of trusting child-hearts, glad and fain
To find all good they meet.

The earnest of a region bright
Lies round us, all unsought ;
As every child-soul springs to light
A miracle is wrought.

Truth, faith, and joy dower every child,
And through its clear eyes shine,
And Heaven and Earth are reconciled
By childhood's love divine.

EASTERTIDE.

BRIGHT Easter comes, when hill and dale

Are dry and bare,

When summer flowers droop and fail

In burning air,

When parching breezes never tire,

And aching eyes

See setting suns, like balls of fire,

In troubled skies.

When Easter comes, our hearts rejoice,

We hear once more

The shrunken streamlets, finding voice,

Sing as of yore.

By mighty winds, that howl and fight,

And welcome rain,

And sweet, cool breath of dewy night

Is Summer slain.

Chrysanthemums, bronze, milk-white, red,

Golden and pied,

A soft, autumnal glory shed

On Eastertide ;

And blooming roses, rendered fair

By autumn showers,

Make southern Easter, year by year,

A feast of flowers.

Our dying hopes, our faint desires,
 Shall live again,
Like flowers saved from summer fires
 By Easter rain.
This Spring-like season, born anew,
 In storm and strife,
Is symbol that to us is due
 A brighter life.

THE SONG OF THE SALVATION ARMY.

In the bygone ages,
 Drum-taps filled the air,
With the cries of peasants,
 Ruined everywhere.

In an army's footsteps
 Famine always came ;
Gaining and destroying
 Was the soldier's aim.

Our strange, modern army
 Other ends proclaim ;
Help to mortals bring we,
 Comfort in sore shame ;

Clear above the world's din
 Sounds our bugle call,
Telling free as air is
 God's grace for us all.

As Christ came as Saviour
 Of the low and poor,
Seek we Earth's submerged ones
 On each distant shore—
In vile slums of London,
 Afric's boundless sands,
Burning plains of Asia,
 Fair Australian lands.

Women fled despairing
 In the days of old,

At an army's coming,
 Fraught with ills untold ;
In our ranks as comrades
 Women march and sing,
Sweetly in our anthems
 Do their voices ring.

March we, strive we, ever,
 Till we see man's right,
Labour, leisure, pleasure,
 Sure as day and night.
Till we hear our war-cry
 Breathed o'er land and sea—
“ We our brothers' keepers
 Are and aye shall be ! ”

THE QUESTION.

“ Young blood must have its course, lad,
And every dog his day.”

—*Charles Kingsley.*

WHAT joy has the slave of the tillage ?

He labours in snow, rain, and cold,

Fast bound to a dull English village,

As were his serf fathers of old ;

The workhouse his last year's sole haven !

What optimist is there can say

That he, toilworn, half-fed, and craven,

Has ever a day ?

What splendour and colour and pleasure

 Belong to the lone station hand ?

His days, in monotonous measure,

 Flow on, as the wave beats the land ;

He snatches the hardly won ration

 Of weariest toil, the poor dole,

That rescues the man from starvation

 While starving his soul.

The seamstress still earns a bare living

 In dens of the north or the south,

For wretchedest livelihood giving

 Her hopes and her strength and her youth.

A dingy lane bounds her horizon,

 And Nature to her is a name ;

She hears not the earth's glad orison—

What day can she claim ?

The lodging-house maid has her burden

Of overwork, loneliness, sneers,

And harshness embitters her guerdon,

And fault-finding mingled with jeers.

A Heaven, where no bells are a-ringing,

Is dream of this poor little slave,

Her life has no leisure for singing—

What day does she have ?

We trust that a bright time is dawning ;

Our clear-sighted prophets can see

The flush of the radiant morning,

When visions incorporate shall be.

The rich shall have joy of the giving,
 Each heart shall have leisure and play,
The poor shall have joy of the living,
 And dogs have their day.

JUDITH.

(ON HEARING DR. PARRY'S ORATORIO.)

“ And Judith offered for an anathema of oblivion, the arms of Holofernes.”
—*The Book of Judith.*

THE arms of Holofernes are no more,
But Judith's fame grows bright from age to age,
Alike the painter's art, the poet's page,
Strive to reclaim it from Oblivion's shore.
And now, we hear the modern minstrel pour
His rich notes out. Our hearts in glad bondage
Feel that they gain a priceless heritage
From alien times of internecine war.

We seem to see the fearless Judith stand
'Mid white-robed singers, and the sweet refrain
Of stirring music. With her woman's hand,
She slays her country's tyrant once again.
She, who forgot her grief to save her land,
Lives by the coinage of a master's brain.

IN THE FACE OF THE DEAD.

“ Not the least of Life’s ironies is that there is no earthly rapture comparable to the joy in the face of the dead.”

THE artist wins plaudits by showing
The loveliest prize of Earth’s race,
His Helen with young life is glowing,
All human hopes summed in her face.
His name would be borne o’er the oceans,
His fame to the Poles would be spread,
Could he add to her play of emotions,
The joy in the face of the dead !

Enthroned by the love of a nation,
The actor rings clear in his part,
The gamut from grief to elation ;
His face is transformed by his art.
What lacks in his strong, histrionic
Appeals to the heart and the head ?
Whispers Death, with hoarse accent sardonic,
“ The joy in the face of the dead ! ”

The jockey is thrilled by the thunder,
Like peace after fever and fret,
That hails his great win as a wonder ;
His price above rubies is set.
His face blazons forth his glad story,
Whence triumph exultant is shed,

Yet its brightness is dulled by the glory
Of joy in the face of the dead !

Enthralled by white arms, clinging kisses,
The lover quaffs passion's strong wine.
Yet, sweet as the draught is, he misses
A joy he can never define.

The rose out of Eden the fairest,
Would come, with Love's secret flushed red,
Could he find in the eyes of his dearest,
The joy in the face of the dead !

December, 1898.

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