

**SONGS BY
THE STOEP**

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Songs by the Stoep by John Runcie

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JOHN RUNCIE

**SONGS BY
THE STOEP**



BY THE STOEP.

To
MY MOTHER,
WHO
IS DEAD.

THE Author desires to acknowledge his deep and lasting gratitude to that fine and representative body of Colonial artists who have so generously and enthusiastically taken upon themselves the duty of illustrating certain of his verses. Messrs. G. Crosland Robinson, Edward Roworth, Hugo Nande, G. Smithard, Mrs. Penstone, Miss Glossop, Messrs. Denis Santry, N. Egersdorfer, and F. W. B. Ross, are so well known in the world of South African Art, that merely to have their signatures appended to the dozen beautiful drawings illustrating this volume is sufficient guarantee, at least in this land of ample sun and distances, that the pictures will be of a high level of excellence. Line drawing, simple black and white, gives but a poor idea of the genius and ability of artists who dip their brushes in the glory of colour on our eternal hills and who create with brush and pigment such living lyrics of sea and shore. They have given, however, the author of their best, freely and without price, although the medium prescribed was in some cases unfamiliar, and whatever interest may be in the text itself is certainly doubly enhanced by the inclusion of the illustrations of these gifted Colonial artists.

LIST OF ARTISTS.

G. CROSLAND ROBINSON, President of South African
Society of Artists (*Frontispiece: By the Stoep*).

EDWARD ROWORTH (*A Pagan Hymn*).

EDWARD ROWORTH (*Worn Hands*).

HUGO NANDE (*Crossing the Hex Mountains*).

G. SMITHARD (*Van Riebeeck and I*).

G. SMITHARD (*A Slumber Song of The Gardens*).

MRS. PENSTONE (*Calvary*).

MRS. PENSTONE (*"Once in a Garden"*).

DENIS SANTRY (*Adventure*).

MISS GLOSSOP (*The Greatest Quest is Peace*).

N. EGEDORFER (*The Jock's Prayer*).

F. W. B. ROSS (*Blue Hills Far Away*).

ACKNOWLEDGMENT.

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SONGS BY THE STOEP.

Stoep Philosophy.

The moon comes drifting from the sea,
Above my stoep the stars are beating ;
I watch the night moths lazily
Behind the tamarisk trees retreating.
Why should I worry, fume, or fret,
Because so many folk are richer,
If fate with genial kindness yet
Shall fill my plate and pipe and pitcher ?

A glass of dop, if old and musty,
I do not yet disdain to treble ;
Or "Hermitage," if pure and crusty,
(Who likes may buy a foreign label).
These things are not a great ambition :
Some folks prefer a dainty cellar,
And some a more material mission
Than lies in lunar dreams or stellar.

Each man, I think, must have his weakness,
And mine is simply drowsy lazing.
Those draughts that come with velvet sleekness,
And clothe themselves in gentle phrasing
I much prefer; I do not yearn
For hustling schemes of power and money,
The while the eyes of darkness burn
Because somewhere the light is sunny.

Here by my stoep the moths are drifting
On glimmering wings between the aloes;
My pipe is like a dream uplifting
In aureoles and wreaths and halos;
All ends in smoke, and dust, and quiet,
And so I love these things ethereal,
That, far removed from strife and riot,
Are palpable, if immaterial.