

COLONIAL POEMS

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649759248

Colonial Poems by Mrs. William J. Anderson

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MRS. WILLIAM J. ANDERSON

**COLONIAL
POEMS**

COLONIAL POEMS.

BY

Mrs. WILLIAM J. ANDERSON,

YOUNGEST DAUGHTER OF THE REV. EDWARD BAKER, OF
SOUTH AUSTRALIA.



LONDON:

E. MARLBOROUGH & CO., AVE MARIA LANE.

1869.

280. m. 388.

P R E F A C E .

THE following poems are reminiscences of a beloved wife, who departed this life in her twenty-sixth year, on Sunday, 12th April, 1868, at Souillac, in the Island of Mauritius. There, with an infant daughter, she lies interred, in the joyful hope of a glorious resurrection.

The pieces were written under different circumstances and in various lands, during the last ten years of the author's life. They are strictly what their title implies, "Colonial Poems," the author never having visited Europe, but having spent her days in the colonies of South Australia, Mauritius, and the Cape of Good Hope.

During her last illness, she expressed a wish that her fugitive and scattered verses, some of which had appeared in Australian Periodicals under the signature of "*Frances*," should be collected,

and presented in a permanent form to her parents and others whom she had loved. While the present publication carries out that desire, it accomplishes something more, by placing before those of the public who may read the volume the breathings of a pious, gentle, and thoughtful spirit.

Most of the pieces are now published for the first time, several of them without having been revised by the author.

WILLIAM J. ANDERSON.

SOULLAC, MAURITIUS, 1889.

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P O E M S .



THE SHADOW OF THE PAST.

A TALE OF AUSTRALIA.

It was a peaceful place, that old farm-house,
Beneath the quiet shade of ancient trees,
That stretched their long white arms above and
round,

As if they strove to shelter from the world,
The cold unfeeling world, the fragile forms
That dwelt beneath. A quiet sleepy spot
Was that old white-faced cottage ; yet there'd been
The busy stir, the going out and in
Of many a toilworn form in days gone by ;
But now, the scene is changed.

The sun looks down
Upon a tranquil picture. 'Neath the shade
Of an old rose-tree lies the favourite dog,
Contentedly, with one great drowsy eye
Opening as each fresh shower of scented leaves
Is scattered by the zephyr's gentle breath.
A tame old magpie by the vine-wreathed porch

Tried many a clumsy leap, to reach a twig,
Where, all unconscious of the danger near,
A bright-backed beetle perches in the sun.
And almond and acacia trees grow down
The gentle slope, that scarcely could be called
A garden—for the fibry tangled weeds
Grow o'er the paths in wild luxuriance.
But by the windows and around the porch,
The grass is banished, and some careful hand
Has coaxed the sweet old flowers of home to bloom.
Behind the cottage, many an ample barn
Once filled, stands, falling into ruins now ;
And empty stalls, where once had waited steeds
To hear the crowing of a feathered host
That called them to another day of toil.
And far away—beyond the woods and fields
Lie the old gloomy hills, roll within roll,
Folding each other with eternal arms.
The spirit of repose reigns everywhere ;
And yet the very stillness has a voice
That murmurs of a long tumultuous past,
And tells the mighty force that raised each hill
From the dark heaving depths, and set it there,
Solemn and still, for ever to remain.
The stretching fields have found a silent voice
To speak of days when the old pioneers
Made all the echoes answer back the sound
Of ringing axes and of giant trees