

**THE TWO POWERS AND OTHER
ORIGINAL TALES WITH MISCELLANEOUS
PIECES IN PROSE AND VERSE BEING THE
FIRST OF SERIES ENTITLED THE
AUSTRALIAN "ONCE-A-YEAR"**

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The Two Powers and Other Original Tales with Miscellaneous Pieces in Prose and Verse Being the First of Series Entitled the Australian "Once-A-Year" by E. M. Mooney

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E. M. MOONEY

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T W O P O W E R S
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THE AUSTRALIAN "ONCE-A-YEAR"

BY
E. M. MOONEY.

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M D C C C L X X.

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And for the few that only lend their ear,
That few is all the world ;

* * * *

But what if none? It cannot yet undo
The love I bear unto this holy skill.

SAMUEL DANIEL, *16th Century.*



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INTRODUCTION.

CHRISTMAS is a time for unbending. Business relaxes its plodding muscles and softens and yields to the spirit of the season. Shops, whether ministering to the comfort of the outer or inner man, put forth their daintiest wares; those that provide our intellectual treats, serve them under the most attractive covers, and unknown toys start forth to meet the juvenile gaze, largely exciting the organs of wonder, admiration, and acquisitiveness!

Public amusements invite us, in letters a yard tall, to come and be fascinated. Pantomimes rake up the ashes of Cinderellas, stir up Sleeping Beauties, and rub up old Aladdin's Lamps to enchant, charm, and bewilder us; making children stare, adults grin, and even grey beards wag.

At such a time we put forth our little venture, to sink or swim in the tide of public opinion. We were about to say, in stereotype fashion, the "good-natured public," but on second thoughts the public is

not good-natured; if pleased it will smile, if displeased will frown, if *ennuyèd* will yawn like any other body.

So we have endeavoured to trim our barque for the season with the lightest sails, paint her with the brightest colours we possess, and furnish her with the happiest imaginary crew at our command.

Some well-meaning friends, with a view to elevate public taste, would have us exclude fiction. In vain. When nature creates a demand, she must have a supply; as well strive to arrest the corolla in the plant or the blossom on the tree.

Our great Teacher himself did not disdain fiction. What are parables but divine fictions? True, they have a moral, and when we can combine instruction with amusement, be it so.

But consider the lilies! If they have a use, the world has been nearly six thousand years old without discovering it. Unlike many plants they will neither fatten or poison us; nor like flax and hemp can they be twisted into either a good or a bad purpose! Their use is to be beautiful; if they innocently please, their leaves (like ours, we hope) shall not have been unfolded in vain.

We planted a lily once in a stagnant pool (we were afraid of the Inspector of Nuisances); it bloomed

luxuriantly. How many stagnant pools are there in neglected natures, hopeless to the moral agriculturist which yet may yield a soil to a "thing of beauty."

We are aware there is a class of people who, Gradgrind like, will wall you in with facts, and crush the flowers of imagination under a stone, who hold to fact as a lame man to his crutch. Well, these individuals can feed on books of Dates; cannibal-like, devour Biographies, and hold to the Multiplication Table; they may even have a sort of rhyming taste, like the lunatic who repeated five times to an admiring audience, with a musical cadence of voice, and when he came to the climax, "five times twelve are sixty," the applause was as enthusiastic as that bestowed on the wind-up of an American Stump Orator's speech, when (half-seas over) he pathetically appealed to the "Bar tangled spanner"!

Others again with friendly caution insinuate that every topic is exhausted, that "there is nothing new under the sun."

Can the material for thought ever be used up in the endless diversity of nature and art?

We saw a toy the other day, a Charomorphoscope; well, throw in anything, raw or wrought material, at the open end, look in at the tube at the opposite extremity; behold! beautiful transformations, patterns

exquisitely contrasted, mosaics fit for the halls of fairy queens!

Every mind is something of a Charomorphoscope. No two minds see exactly the same patterns. Nature is for ever turning the instrument, and with the same materials producing an infinite variety of "chaste designs" and "elegant novelties."

All we ask is for the public to look through our toy (it is but a toy), and if pleased with our assortment, it will be an inducement to us to revolve our machine once more, hoping that upon the ensuing anniversary the public will be willing to pay for another peep.

DECEMBER, 1870.