

B I O G R A P H Y .

Of JOSIAH COCKING

Born 11th May, 1867 at Kadina, South Australia.

Died 27th July, 1960. Aged 93 at Mayfield, N.S.W.

Biography written during 1989

by

Arthur James Cocking

Born 4th June, 1916.

Died 8th November, 1989.



Dedicated to Mum (nee Mary Jane Anderson) who married him, variously tolerated him, supported him, opposed him, cajoled him, coerced him, nursed him but steadfastly loved him and bore him 8 children.

JOSIAH COCKING, My father.

He was Cornish through and through - perhaps more fervently Cornish than the Cornish. He was born and bred in Cornwall, Australia - that little triangle Moonta, Kadina, Wallaroo which is still known as "Little Cornwall." His forebears were Cornish. His father, Thomas, said to be a mining engineer, Thomas' wife Elizabeth and their infant daughter Elizabeth left Cornwall about 1860, when the mining industry in England was depressed, but copper mining in South Australia was in such a state of boom that thousands were leaving one Cornwall to establish another.

Look at a map of England. Down in the south western corner is a sharp pointed promontory which appears to be part of England. It's not really, ethnically or geographically. It's attached to England but the people are not exactly attached to the English. Many regard the folk to the East of the River Tamar as "furriners" - "they English."

The Cornish are somewhat like the Irish - their sense of humour, their fixity of purpose, which the unkind call stubbornness, their strong prejudices, their even stronger loyalties and their dedication to hard work and religion. Josiah inherited all these qualities. He thought like a Cornishman, he behaved like a Cornishman - he spoke like a Cornishman. (Although he did not have a Cornish accent, he just couldn't pronounce certain words, e.g. Murray, as we do.)

"Little Cornwall" was a most unsuitable area in which to grow up. It was arid, flowerless, harsh and poverty stricken and was a young children's graveyard. Poor baby Elizabeth didn't live past infancy. Josiah and his two brothers must have been mighty tough to survive the typhoid and other threats to health. The problem was water. Infrequent rain, no chlorination. Water was drawn from wells, often tainted. In most houses there was "an underground tank" which was a cistern hewn out of limestone. The water was sweet and clear, being filtered through rock but the germs were not filtered out. Infant mortality was frightening.

Conditions in the Cocking household were by no means ideal. "Grandma" never washed saucepans so they must have been septic menaces. There was no money for medicines, in fact very little for food. How did they manage to survive? No social services, and Thomas deserted the family when the boys were quite young. Schooling was an unaffordable luxury: the eldest brother was working at the "picky table" at the age of 9. (At the "picky table," boys stood in front of a conveyer belt, scanning the copper ore as it came past. Their job was to pick out the small stones.) Josiah, the youngest, did manage to pick up a little bit of schooling and eventually became quite a scholar. He was the only literate one of the family, for his mother never learned to read and write.

This literacy became both an asset and a liability. He spent hours reading to his mother, and, in adolescence, reading and writing his brothers' love letters. The brothers grew tired of this lack of privacy and induced their "little brother" to teach them to read and write. Dad was only partly successful as a teacher, for Uncle Bob never had any idea where to put commas or full stops. He wrote, though in excellent style, phonetically and without punctuation. ("Hand myty had", being interpreted, was, "And, might I add,.",)

One of Dad's earliest recollections was a close shave with a pig. (He later used the story to win the "Close Shave" competition of Gillette.) Outside the back door several goats and a stray pig were roaming. Boylike, Joe began to tease the pig. Piglike, the pig resented it. Joe ran inside. So did the pig. Little Joe ran around the table crying, "Mum, the wild pig's going to eat me." His quick witted mother picked up a breadsaw that was lying on the table. Next time the pig came round, she "sawed" him across the back. The poor, tortured, bleeding animal ran out of the door and calm resumed.

Another incident was when his virtue of obedience was stupidly exploited. His mother said, "Joe, you're the most obedient boy I've known. If I told you to go down the old pit, you'd do it, wouldn't you?. "Yes," said Dad. "All right, I'm telling you. Go down the ladder to the bottom of the old pit." Obediently, little Joe climbed down the shaft of the abandoned mine. The ladders were rickety and the air could have been foul, but he escaped without mishap. When he got home he announced, "You've just made a fool of me! I'll never do as you tell me any more." I don't think he kept his threat

We know very little of Josiah's boyhood. We do know that - unlike his brothers - he went to (an elementary) school for at least two years. We also know that he worked at the "picky table" when he was too young to go down the mine.

Of his youth, we know practically nothing either. It was probably uneventful. Certainly there was no sawing of wild oats or drunkenness, and he didn't have a girlfriend. One particular mate - with whom he corresponded for several years after he left the district for Wallsend, was a witty young man who once reached a maximum weight of 7 stone so that he was always painfully thin even though he was very fond of his beer.

Apparently, at the age of 19, each tried to outdo the other in witticism and conundrum. Here is a sample from James Henna (Jenna) Grose: - When will your sole find it's rest? (Answer), When you take your boot off for the night. Jenna was poor, so poor that on occasions he couldn't afford to buy a stamp, and was often ill; but their letters were always light and cordial. Only lads of character could retain their sense of humour in their condition, even though it sometimes showed up in rather puerile riddles: - e.g. Whole, I am a division of the atmosphere (ozone). Beheaded, I'm a division of the earth (zone). Again, I am a number (one). Curtail, then I'm a vowel (e).

One of Josiah's (30 page) letters contained these. They showed originality of thought and expression and a cleverness most unusual in a 19 year old boy. They were published in the "Town and Country Journal."

"I am one of the usefulest things upon earth,
 But those who own me know not, my worth:
 I am found in all climes, I am living and dead:
 I am black, I am white, brown, yellow and red,
 All the diamonds and rubies were first got by me!
 I am loose, I am tight, I am strong, I am weak
 And although I've no mouth I seemingly speak.
 I am composed of five, yet I am only one:
 And little without me in life could be done,
 I give and I take: I construct and destroy
 And often do harm when I'm used by a boy.
 I'm a weapon, a shield, I supply every need
 And although I've no eyes I can easily read.
 I am soft: I am hard: I am fast, I am slow
 And the alphabet I by my motions can show.
 I often am taken by men in a game.
 Now I've told you my looks, please tell me my name."

Answer: The human hand.

Also he included these square words:-

OVERT	'TABLE	HAREM	ESTOP
VALUE	ARRAN	ANILE	STATE
ELAIN	BRUNT	RIVAL	TASIE
RUINS	LANCE	ELATE	OTTER
TENSE	ENTER	MELEE	PEERS
LADLE	LOBES	OVERT	
AMAIN	OPERA	VIPER	
DAUNT	BEVEL	EPODE	
LINER	ERECT	REDAN	
ENTRY	SALTS	TREND	

The primals and finals of the first word in each square spell two of Shakespeare's plays, Othello and Tempest.

The 3 boys grew up into reputable, law abiding citizens although they lacked a father's guiding hand, for their father had deserted them when they were very small and they had no contact whatever with him from then on. One exception, an "Enoch Arden" situation! When the boys were adolescents, a strange man appeared unannounced at the Cocking home. It was Thomas Cocking! Grandma certainly didn't receive him with open armed open hearted enthusiasm. "Oh dear, this is awkward. They told me you were dead. I've remarried, and I have a little girl." A potentially explosive situation, but Thomas defused it by saying. "Don't be worried. I won't kick up a fuss. Just tell the boys that I'd like to see them on the common at nightfall."

The 3 boys did meet him and he said, "Come with me, I'm a rich man. I'll make your fortune and give you a gold watch." After some questioning, Josiah commented, "I think you're just looking for cheap labour. You weren't here when we needed you, but now you need us. The others can go, but I certainly won't." His brothers concurred. Thomas was left alone to disappear into the proverbial sunset **and** the family never saw him again. .

No, Grandma, the innocent bigamist, was never charged. She and her new "Husband" lived together more or less happily until death parted them.

The 3 brothers left hane in 1886 and went to NSW. The first to leave was Uncle Johnny, the eldest. Jack (and his Uncle Charlie) were going to Port Macquarie, but they halted at Queanbeyan where they got temporary work.

Jack was resolved to keep going as far as Port Macquarie where his girlfriend - a Salvation Army lass ~~from~~ Wallaroo - was now living; but he got only as far as Newcastle where he got work making the Glebe reservoir. Not long after, he was joined by his brother Bob. Finally, Dad joined them and worked on a new road deviation near the Cardiff railway tunnel.

Uncle Johnny never reached his sweetheart in Port Macquarie. He married another Salvation Army lass in Wallsend. Sane years later, Uncle Bob married her sister.

At first the boys camped in a tent, but they sent for Grandmother (now Mrs. Charlie Giles) and daughter Liz Jane (Aunty Lizzie) and the family was installed in a newly bought house in Wallsend. It cost 180 pounds (\$360) but there was very little work available so they were unable to keep up the payments and after paying **off** 90 pounds, they lost possession - and their 90 pounds.

The family rented a damp brick house where Grandmother caught rheumatic fever which not only nearly killed her but permanently injured her heart and kidneys so that fran then on she could do little or no housework and had to hire girls. For us this was very significant, for one such girl was Mary Jane Anderson - who in due course became our mother.

Mary Jane was then about 21 years old. Her mother had died or disappeared when Mum was very young. Her earliest recollection is of being carried in the arms of a bearded man, presumably her father, who left her with a Mr & Mrs Reed of Lithgow. This couple, whom she called Uncle & Aunt, looked after her tenderly though they were sick **and** very poor. After a few years, the bearded man's infrequent visits ceased altogether and Mum virtually became their daughter although she was never adopted, and retained the name Mary Jane Anderson.

She grew up in Lithgow, went to work as a servant girl in Surry Hills when she was 13, and some years later moved to Wallsend where she lived with her "brother" and his wife - but apparently not very harmoniously.

Now back to the story of Josiah Cocking. He first met his future wife when she came to work for his mother on 10th Dec. 1895. Dad's first comment in his diary was that Jane seemed to be a "good girl". Within 2 weeks he was writing, "I like Jane better every day. She is the only girl that I have ever thought much about." This latter remark was most surprising for he was then 28 years old. (He confided to us that it was her "beautiful red hair" that first attracted him.) That Boxing Day he went to the Baptist Picnic and had lunch with her. On Sunday, 29th Dec. he "went to the evening (Baptist) service with Jane and came home with her."

Next day, "I told Jane to-day that I went to the pictures because she was there, which was true. Sat under (sic) the verandah until 10 p.m. with mother and Jane." But things at home had been stormy for some days. The entry for Dec. 31st. reads, "Mother walked up the hill to Liz Jane's house because I was vexed with her about Jane. I met (brother) Bob in the street and he told me to tell Mother to go home and let Jane get out. I went up but found that Mother had gone home in our cart." New Year's Day saw an uneasy truce and the family (plus Jane) went by cart and had a picnic at Newcastle Beach.

The course of true love didn't "run smooth" for long! Next day's entry was, "Mother and I had a quarrel last night about Jane Anderson. Mother does not want me to keep company with Jane: so, to avoid trouble and sorrow to both of them I have promised not to do so while Jane is here. It is a great sacrifice to me. Jane wasn't there for long for, on Jan 7th, "Mother and Jane Anderson quarrelled to-day and mother sent her away, "after which she was a damsel in distress" willingly protected by Dad. Fortnight later, "I went with Jane to a party----- . We had a game of forfeits. I had to forfeit a pencil, and kiss Jane (for the first time) and afterwards every girl in the room. We left later with another couple."

There are no entries in Dad's diary for nearly all of 1896. Perhaps it was because his eyes - which had been very sore for over a year - gave a great deal of trouble. His eyesight, though, was good enough for him to write several letters (in which he mentions his "courting") plus a few newspaper articles and poems. Obviously the romance continued. It would be hard to conceive of Dad as a dashing suitor, but he was certainly a persistent one. In November he contacted Sydney Hospital on Jane's behalf and found out that her "foster" father had died there from heart disease, leaving nothing, not a box, not a will, only the clothes he had been wearing.

In 1896, when, presumably, Dad and Mum were engaged, Dad got a reference from Mum's employer to the effect that she was "strictly honest and trustworthy, and extremely kind to little children." That was the second such reference Dad treasured. The motive? It's hard to tell. Perhaps Dad thought that if he didn't **marry** her he would at least help her employment prospects. He most certainly didn't need references for her as his prospective wife!

The engagement proceeded to the culmination of marriage, and the marriage to fruition in the birth of a son some twelve months later. Here Dad's record is not only disappointing but exasperating. The diary gives no detail - not even a mention of any of these 3 events save, in a letter in 1939, married on 22nd May, 1897. "We bought a little cottage. Our first child - a son - was born on 1st May, 1898 and we called him Robert Rowe as Rowe was Mother's maiden name. Unfortunately, when Bobby was only 7½ months old, he died of bronchitis. He was a lovely boy and we still mourn his loss."

Mum and Dad's cup of bitterness was overflowing. Dad felt betrayed by God and deserted by his family. Mum had been grudgingly accepted rather than welcomed into the family. Grandma's motives are not clear, but many a mother regards her son's girlfriend and later his wife as a rival, a usurper, a stealer of her son's affection that belongs rightly and exclusively to his mother. Dad was her favourite son. He was loving and most dutiful. He read to her by the hour: he had given her almost all he earned - keeping only 20c. a week "pocket money", he wrote all "her" letters: he was the last son left at home, for by now his brothers had married earlier. Maybe Grandma was a "snob" - albeit a penniless one - and opposed her son's marriage to a "mere servant girl." Perhaps hers was a difficult, jealous nature. After all, she had plenty of time to brood on her wrongs: She couldn't work, could hardly walk, couldn't read - and of course there was no radio or even a gramophone in the house. According to Mum (who was almost certainly biased and was, herself inclined to give the fiery retort rather than the "soft answer" that "turneth away wrath",) she just sat, gave orders and then criticised the way they were carried out.

They were childless, Dad was by no means well and his eyes were still giving trouble they were penniless and Dad was workless. Dad was often out of work - much more often than his stepfather or brothers were. The reason? His left wing political views, his inflammatory writing and his fierce denunciation of the "bosses" and the capitalist system. He had always had more fervour than tact - was never any good at keeping his mouth shut. He was never a "yes" man, When "fierce indignation lacerated his heart, he didn't resent in silence but gave utterance whatever the consequences." These were dire. Local colliery proprietors just wouldn't employ him. At first he solved the problem by going to mines outside of the Wallsend area. At one stage, he walked 4 miles to work then 3 miles underground, did a full day's work at the coalface and then walked the 7 miles home again. Fourteen miles of walking and perhaps ten hours' working per day, possibly capped by evening attendance at debates, Socialist meetings, photography club meetings and hours of writing.

After some (short) time, Dad had got "offside" with his new employers. Perhaps this was not surprising as this story illustrates. At one job - not in the mine - the men were working seven days a week. Dad got his workmates to agree not to go in on the following Sunday. The next Sunday Dad stayed at home but his work "mates" - including his two brothers - went to work as usual, rendering Dad conspicuous by his absence.

On the Monday he was called into the boss's office. "Where were you yesterday?" "I was at home. There's no need for us to work seven days a week." "I suppose you could run this project!" "I most certainly could - and a sight better than you do." Result, the immediate sack. No unionist protection. No work anywhere.

"On the 18th March, 1899, we sold our house and as I was victimised by the colliery proprietors and could not get work in the district, my wife and I went to Wallaroo Mines, South Australia."

Employment in the copper mines of South Australia was practically guaranteed. Dad had contacted the famous "Captain Hancock" enclosing sane references indicating that he was "sober, industrious and well above average intellect," and had received the encouraging news that he "would have no difficulty in obtaining work."

Obtain work he did - and shelter in the form of one room in a friend's house. There they stayed until after the birth of their second child, Josiah junior in September, 1899.

Things now seemed to be going well. Dad was busy cutting and splitting sandstone after work and in due course built a comfortable little house which was still standing when we - Dad, Mum, sister Flo and I visited it in 1939. But things only seemed to be going well. Dad was "born to trouble as the sparks fly upward." The Boer War had broken out and Dad, with his genius for being on the unpopular side, was very vocal in stating that the British attitude was wrong - that the Boers were entitled to a vote and some self determination. History has now shown that he was right, but everyone then was convinced that he was traitorously wrong.

The simple, uneducated, "my country, right or wrong" miners were naturally convinced that Britain and Australia, which had sent troops to South Africa, were fighting a just war. Their ignorance was typified by a man working beside Dad. Several of the miners had sat down together to eat their "crib" (lunch), when one asked, "What's this Boer War all about?" The man said, "Well, it's like this. There's a race of people in South Africa called Franchises. They want to vote and Britain won't let them." The educated, the influential and the clergy maintained that the Boer War was not only just but was almost a holy war. Who, then, was this little "knowall" Joe Cocking who said it was wrong? He should be tarred and feathered. They didn't go that far but several times in the middle of the night a group of drink inflamed miners would gather outside Dad's house to "tin kettle" him. That consisted of beating with sticks or billycans, saucepans and anything else that would make a noise. During pauses they'd shout. "You're only a Boer. Go off to South Africa and help your friends the enemy." However, Dad bore it all with surprising patience and his workmates, seeing that he was a good worker, gradually accepted him and they "agreed to disagree."

Things were going nicely. Dad had work, the baby was doing well, their house nearly completed was comfortable and Mum was settling down in her new environment. It was the closest the family had been to Eden but now the snake emerged in the form of Grandma.

For some time she had been "writing" that she was sad, lonely and felt neglected - even though she had a husband, two sons and several relatives living nearby. Couldn't, wouldn't he come back home? He and his wife and baby could live at her place. Poor doting, doubting Dad, poor bewildered Mum!

At first, Dad resisted his mother's sentimental outpourings, but the dripping of her tears soon wore away the soft stone of his resistance. He wrote that he was in two minds about returning to Wallsend. "We have been here eleven months now and during that time I have worked long and hard to make a new home for us. We are just beginning to feel at home and comfortable and now we find that you are anxious to get us to go back to the place we were so glad to get out of, not withstanding our sorrow at leaving the family. This puts me in a peculiar position for I am anxious not to do anything to give you pain and sorrow and, at the same time, I wish to look after the welfare of Jinny and our baby. We couldn't live with you: I know full well that you and Jinny couldn't live peacefully in the same house. As you know, ever since I married Jinny she has been in constant trouble with one or another of the family. Her life and mine were hard enough with poverty and sickness but that didn't prevent someone from making it harder and more cheerless by secretly carrying yarns about little or nothing. Ever since we've been here Jinny has had a peaceful mind and has been better in health and spirit for it. She dreads to go back where her life was made bitter by poverty, scandal and death. There was too much unfriendliness shown to her by those who should have remembered that she was an honest, hard-working orphan girl and one that I considered good enough to be my wife. She is a good wife to me and a good mother to her children. You will see by this that there are 2 obstacles in the way of our returning and they are the fear of my being out of work and Jinny's fear of poisoned-tongued back biting and scandal."

Foolish, soft hearted, soft headed (albeit highly intelligent) Dad finally agreed to return to Wallsend if (1) He was guaranteed work for a boss who would pay at least 5/6 a day and NOT in the Cooperative Pit and (2) (Most importantly) "Jinny" would be treated properly.

So, against their better judgement, Mum, Dad and baby left Kadina in June, 1900 for the 4 day train trip to Wallsend.

The trip to Newcastle via Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney was tedious and uncomfortable. In Adelaide they went to a cheap cafe for a meal. The plague coming from the battlefields and spread by rats - was raging throughout Australia. The State Government was offering a bounty of 3d. for every rat killed - on production of the tails of the deceased. Just as Mum was finishing her meal, in came a successful "ratter" with a bundle of unwrapped rats tails, sat down at the next table and put the tails on the floor. Mum was terrified! She had already lost one baby and here she was with a 5 months old babe and a pile of infection just feet away. How could she get Dad away without causing a scene, perhaps even a fight? "Come on Joe. Finish your meal and let's get going." "What's the hurry?"

Our train doesn't go for hours. Sit and relax." Finally she got him outside and told him about the rats' tails and had the greatest difficulty in restraining him from going back into the cafe and berating the man for his carelessness and selfishness.

Relatives met the couple at 9 p.m. on their arrival at Newcastle and transported them "home" by cart. Dad soon got work at 9/- per day and was employed so constantly that after 2 years, he could write that he had averaged 44/- per week - a reasonable wage at the turn of the century. Now that Grandma was indeed Grandmother rather than just Mother-in-law, her attitude to Mum was softened. Josiah had long since resumed his practice of reading to his mother for hours at a time.

Dad was busy after work, going into the bush at night, cutting down trees and "snigging" them i.e. dragging them behind a horse and, in due course, pit sawing them roughly into slabs. (This was done by two men, one, the "underdog" standing in a pit and sawing above his head while he was showered by sawdust. The topdog stood above on a platform working the crosscut saw from there. To get assistance, Dad had usually to consent to be the "underdog". The slabs were erected vertically and the chinks between were covered by zinc strips. The floor was earth, the roof galvanised iron, the partitions hessian covered by newspaper, while the oven was a built-in oil drum. A sturdy, reasonably comfortable, 4 room hane which, unpainted stood on "Billygoat Hill" for at least 50 years!

An interesting note for May 1902 was "At the Market, I heard 3 tunes played on the phonograph." (The practice was to have the phonograph on a stand on the footpath and charge "1d a listen" through earphones.) "Paid brother Bob 5/- which makes 10/- repaid. Balance 60/-." May 12, 1902, "Yesterday was my birthday. I was 35 years old." About this time, a friend suggested that Dad try to get a job as a paid newsarticle writer. Nothing came of it. Dad could never conform to "editorial policy."!

In 1910, Dad's mother died painlessly in her sleep.

By 1911 work in the mines was almost non existent. Our family by then included 5 children, the eldest 12 and almost ready to go to work. Strong minded Mum had vowed that "no son of mine will ever be a miner," and was anxious to get away from a mining area. No wonder! Strong bodied Mum had often supported the family by running a shop from her front room. She would walk down to the tram terminus, take a tram to the city, get supplies from the wholesalers, catch the tram back to Wallsend and then trudge to Billygoat Hill laden with parcels. Her baby would be awaiting her at home, but her absence presented no great problem. She and Aunty May had a reciprocal arrangement. Both had babies about the same time and each would happily breast feed the other's baby in addition to her own if the need arose. Indanitable Mum had for years borne hardships that would have broken the spirit of a lesser woman. Her husband was a good worker who often just could not work either because there was no work available or because he was too sick to work. His eyes and the skin of his legs were often very painful (injuries from mine accidents when he was young) especially his shins which looked like raw meat

especially after he had spent all night in the mine on his own standing in water above his knees and baling with a bucket. At one stage, on a doctor's advice, he went to live for some months beside Lake Macquarie where he soaked his legs in the salt water several times a day. He lived in a tent so food was his only expense but he nearly starved. No Social Security, no sick pay, just what Mum could give him. Poverty was so acute that the miners held a benefit concert for the Cocking family.

Mum had to cope with the management of the household and the children on her own. She was used to it! Dad was a wonderful man with young children especially when he was old, but, like all men of his time, he considered looking after them to be "women's work". He'd help in an emergency of course, but it never occurred to him to lend a hand in everyday affairs. In 1914, the family moved to Tighe's Hill - a handy suburb to the Newcastle Steelworks which was being established. Dad never worked in a mine again, and not one of his sons became a miner.

They bought into a shop for 10 pounds, and Mum, although she then had 5 sons and a daughter, was again a shopkeeper; but for not more than about a year, when she sold out for 20 pounds and moved to a large house in Mayfield East where, a few months later her seventh son the author was born. Since Mum was then 43 and Dad was 50, that was the last addition to the family. Not long before this, the contents of the wardrobe caught fire. Jack - a teenager- was using a lighted candle to search for something when the flame caught a dress and that flame quickly spread. Fortunately the fire was soon put out. The wardrobe was merely singed so the damage was minimised, but all the baby clothes for the newcomer were totally destroyed.

Despite his inauspicious beginning, the child ("the most loved baby in Australia" according to a neighbour) thrived remarkably, being well and amply breastfed. However, he cried a lot from "wind", and one Sunday afternoon he was screaming lustily, so Mum said, "Dad, go down to the pub and get a bottle of gin," for a drop or two of gin was the accepted remedy for "wind" in those days.

Josiah was not familiar with "pubs" (see later) and had overlooked the fact that the "Six o'clock Closing Act" of 1916 had tightened up on hotels' operating hours. He started to walk boldly through the front door, but the publican said, "Where are you going?" "I want to buy a bottle of gin." The publican replied, "I can't sell it to you here. Go into the alley and I'll hand it over the side fence." Dad put the bottle of gin into his hip pocket and walked off.

Opposite the Cross Keys Hotel was a narrow strip of land between the footpath and a muddy branch of Throsby Creek. Underneath the big Moreton Bay fig trees was a circle of seats known as the "Old Men's Parliament." A crowd of men was listening to a speaker bitterly opposing prohibition which was an issue in 1916.

Dad could never resist a political meeting or an argument, so, forgetting his howling baby at hane, Josiah joined the crowd. The "orator" was saying, "They say beer is a poison. We get pure grain, pure malt, pure water etc. and mix them together. How can the product be poison?"

"Wait a moment." said Dad, "You must think that we know nothing about chemistry. You get pure sugar and pure grain and let them ferment and that starts chemical changes." Someone in the crowd yelled out, "If you know so much about it, why don't you get up on the stump?" "Right I will," so Dad, boiling over with information and indignation, went on, "you get pure sugar, which is C12 H22 O11 and the process of fermentation easily turns it into alcohol, which is C2 H5 OH and that alcohol is a POISON."

Tolerance of opposing ideas never has been a strong point with Newcastle working men, so one man called out, "Let's throw him in the creek." The idea was readily accepted by the mob: but then someone shouted, "Hang on a minute! Can't you see he's just pulling your legs? I just saw him buying sanething over the side fence of the pub. Look he's got a bottle on his hip now." The crowd's mood changed. "He's on our side and is just joking." "What a sense of humour." "Good on yer mate." Poor Dad slunk hane with his tail between his legs: but at least he had avoided immersion in the muddy stinking creek.

The "new" 4 bedroom house was most canfortable, Dad and Josiah junior had constant work at the B.H.P. Steelworks for sane years so that the family's finances were at least secure. At the age of 52, Dad could at last say, "for the first time in my life, I am out of debt apart fran what we still owe on the house." Jack, who had won a Bursary to the High School, had duly completed his "Intermediate", had begun a night diplana course in Chemistry and was an apprentice working in the laboratory at the Steelworks.

Though life was secure, it was by no means easy. Both Dad and Joe had to do work which was hard, hot, noisy and uncomfortable and broken up into dayshift - till 4 p.m. - afternoon shift, 4 p.m. till midnight, and dog watch - midnight till 8 am. At times, Dad an unskilled labourer had to work for hours in the rain.

Once, when Dad was working in front of the "open hearth" furnaces, two Company officials came along and examined the fracture in a sample of pig iron. The practice then was to pour out a small portion of molten steel into a mould called a piglet (hence the term "pig iron") deliberately break it up with a sledge hammer and then, by examining the fracture, seeing whether the steel was up to standard. On this occasion sanething was wrong. One man said to the other, "This is far too brittle. Something's gone wrong." Said Dad, "I can tell you what's wrong. It's got too much phosphorus in it." "Who asked you?" "Nobody." "Then mind your own business and hold your tongue." They didn't realise that this "ignorant labourer" had dabbled in chemistry since he was a boy, and that his son Jack was working in the laboratory and was to find out on analysis that the problem was indeed, "too much phosphorus." (They never knew either, that the "ignorant labourer" was well read, had a mastery over words, wrote poetry and had taught himself shorthand and typing.)

The good times lasted only a few years. By the end of 1921 there was very little work at the Steelworks. In Jan. 1922 the diary reads, "This morning I went to the B.H.P. office and waited in the rain to hear if my name was called. It was not." The next day, "I went to the steelworks gate and waited until 10 am. but my name was not called. We are all idle at hane now, but Jack expects to start working to-morrow."

There was sane relief work provided by the Labour Bureau. Thurs. Feb. 1922. "I started work with 20 others to cut a new channel for Throsby Creek. The wage is 15/2 per day." By June, even this relief work ceased, but there was Sane intermittent work by the end of the year and by 1923 there was regular work with the B.H.P.

4th May, 1923, "Unloaded limestone etc. with Will Johnson, who is over 40 and can't tell the time." For years the entries show how strenuous and unpleasant was the life of a labourer, doing things by hand that are nowadays done by front end loaders, bulldozer. and other machines.

"Worked in rain all night. Raincoat leaked, so got wet through." "Loaded a truck with bagged cement." "Unloaded ammonium sulphate." "Cleared and levelled part of the slag dump." "Have a boil on my wrist and a boil on my leg - both in the way when I'm working."

Many of the men escaped into grog and gambling (3 men were drunk on the same shift.) Dad had retreated into poetry, religion and politics, so that he was a very lonely man among men who could talk profanely about sex, sport and smut, and were certainly not interested when he tried to talk to them about socialism, salvation and literature. Dad lived, not just in another world, but in a separate universe.

There were problems at hane too. Charlie Cocking had been a sickly cry baby. Dad had spent many an hour walking the floor trying to soothe him to sleep by playing the mouth organ to him. (Charlie grew up to be a brilliant trombonist, saxophonist and clarinetist. Was there a nexus?). The sickly baby grew into a consumptive boy so it was deemed wise to make him sleep outside on the front verandah. At the head of his bed was a lattice covered by a honeysuckle vine. He was scared by the rustling noises that the wind made at night and he told Dad, "I'm afraid of the man in there." Dad replied, "Oh we'll soon fix that! Here, take this tomahawk. Chop into him. Kill him! Now he's dead and he'll never worry you anymore." He made a mess of the vine and lattice, but the psychology worked, and from then on, the little boy slept unafraid. As he grew older he grew stronger and the consumption disappeared, but Charlie continued to sleep outside even though at 17 he was a strong, energetic, robust young man - perhaps because there was no room in the house.

One morning, Charlie's bed was empty and there was no sign of him. He had disappeared. So had his bicycle and his suit - but no money. In those days there was no reason to suspect foul play so it was obvious that he had run away- although there had been no argument and he had seemed quite contented with hane life. .

Dad contacted the police, who told him that he couldn't force Charlie to come home, BUT, since the lad was apprenticed to Reuben Wilson, he could swear out a warrant, have him arrested and then brought back. Dad paid for the warrant and proceedings were begun.

Meantime, enquiries to police on the North Coast and to several country Salvation Army Officers brought results. Two young men riding long distances were pretty conspicuous so Charlie and his mate were recognised by a Salvation Army Officer, who counselled him to return home. He, then, started to ride back home- alone. Dad caught a train to Taree in the hope of intercepting him, then on to Kempsey. Somehow he missed him. When Dad arrived back home Charlie was already there. Somehow they had passed each other.

There was no more running away. However, brother Jack developed the wanderlust. He left home but announced that he was going. He threw up his job, abandoned his studies at the Tech. and headed north. Chasing work took him as far as Townsville, but permanent work was hard to get. He wandered south and south west through Queensland into smaller and smaller towns and even worked for some weeks on a remote farm. Finally, the prodigal returned and comparative tranquillity again ruled in the home.

Only comparative tranquillity. Jack remained truculent, Charlie was unpredictable and now Fred started smoking and Dad found out about it. Smoking, in Dad's eyes and nostrils was not just an undesirable habit, but a major soul and body destroying misdemeanour. He was convinced that smoking dulled the brain and hastened death. (On the latter, Dad was right although at that time there was no known link between smoking and lung cancer. He was proved right when Fred died of a heart attack caused by a massive blockage of heart blood vessels. Fred was 53 and otherwise in good health. The post mortem verdict was that death was assuredly caused by smoking heavily for 40 years.)

Josiah was a strange mixture of the compassionate and the cruel: he fully believed that at times he had to be cruel to be kind. The tender, loving, self sacrificing, considerate father became a raging monomaniac. He was determined to "cure" Fred of the habit. First, he had made him take some herbalist concoction to cause aversion and when that didn't work, he decided to "belt it out of him." Here was a most harrowing confrontation between two stubborn people. Dad asked Fred, then perhaps 14 or 15, where he had got his cigarettes from. Fred refused to answer so Dad hit him across the face with his open hand. Still silence, not even cries of pain, so Dad took off his stout leather belt and lashed him with that. No result save more "righteous" anger and stubborn non cooperation. Reason had been abandoned! I, a boy of 7 or 8 saw the whole nasty business. Mum tearfully cried, "No, don't hit him with the buckle end" and then, frantically, "Don't! Joe, don't kick him when he's down!" The result was - no result. There was no actual bodily harm. but I'm convinced that there was psychological injury. Fred remained a withdrawn, "behind the shed" smoker all the rest of his shortened life. They forgave each other in grudging respect, and Fred looked after Dad tenderly in his old age.

Was it Josiah's fault that there was conflict with 3 of his sons. (But no trouble with his daughter and his other 3 sons.) Was he so engrossed in his poetry, so excessively zealous in Salvation Army activities, so wrapped up in his own thoughts that he never established a proper rapport with his family? Could be!

Josiah had very little, but sent some money from time to time to England, and gave small sums to relatives here. For a little while, he "owned" 2 houses - let one for 30/- per week to pay the 30/- per week due on "new" (actually old and run down) house. He wrote to Jack Lang, Premier, regarding a sick, penniless widow with 4 children. Jack acted, and she received 2 pounds plus 2 pounds p.w. Dad was an unusual anti-Catholic. He wore a green tie and sash on St. Patrick's Day "in honour of that good man." Though a militant Protestant, in 1925 he wrote a letter to The Catholic Press - "I am a sympathetic friend of Ireland, and an admirer of those great and good men like Daniel O'Connell."

Since he was a very keen member of the Salvation Army (more on his religious beliefs later) Josiah approached the bosses to have every Sunday off. He succeeded, but, to his disappointment, he also had to take his regularly rostered day off. He would have loved to have had even more leisure, for his was a most strenuous life. He often remarked "a very heavy day to-day" or "very tired to-night." Normally his week was *six* days' hard labour and then an exhausting round of activities on the Sunday. A typical Sunday was: Rise at 5 a.m. early prayer meeting (Knee Drill) 6 a.m. after a mile walk. One mile home again. Back to the Salvation Army Hall for morning service at 11 a.m. Home for lunch. A 3 mile walk to Islington Park (Newcastle Domain), where the Army had an openair service. Back home. Prayer Meeting at 6 p.m. Evening Meeting 7 p.m. Home again by 10 p.m. To sum up, on Sundays he walked 12 miles and spoke at 3 or 4 services. A "blink of rest" would have been a "sweet enjoyment," but our hero was a workaholic and needed the money to keep his wife, his 4 non working children, and keep up the payments on the house he was buying - and send a little now and then to his penniless relatives in England. Days off were spent painting and repairing our "new" but somewhat old house. An extract from his diary, "Aug. 23rd 1923. Rain made us all uncomfortable at work. The only handy shelter we have is a box with a sheet of iron on it. The new Superintendent said the men could have no shelter as he wanted them to work in the rain. And the men took it like lambs!" Perhaps they could see the threat of unemployment looming.

By the end of 1923 work was again scarce. Being an unskilled labourer, Josiah was often on the scrap heap of unemployment for short periods. Again, "Sept. 1926, intermittent work." Oct. 1926 "Went to Mullins' who had advertised for 4 labourers and found the places were filled by 7 a.m. 100 had applied."

Oct. 1926. Dad and his mate were picked to work on the new Newcastle Sydney road. They caught a train to Gosford and then, with their bags and baggage were taken by bus to the camp 6 miles away. They lived in tents: rent was 1/- per week.

In his first letter hane was a description of the area with, as usual, comments on the geology. The camp was surrounded by "trees and lovely wild flowers" and, thanks to a clear spring, good water was abundant. He also pointed out that "I am writing this on *my* knee by candlelight, as we have no boxes to make tables. The men cooked for themselves with provisions obtained fran Gosford.

A hard life? Dad found it incredibly easy - regular hours, day work only and for the first time in many years he was assured of every week-end off so that he could come hane on Friday night. Pay, at about 18/- per day, he considered good - so good in fact that he could afford to spend 7 pounds 13/- to travel 2nd class rail to Kadina and back. He found several of his old friends but, since the mines had closed down, he found "Dirt, destruction and decay" in the street where he had lived sane 27 years before.

accompaniment being his button accordeon. However, Josiah was no Billy Graham and

One Saturday when he was doing his washing, he said to one of his mates, "Throw your washing in with mine. It won't make much difference. I'll do them both together." Soon a few other "mates" added their dirty clothes, until he found himself "washer-woman" for about *six*. He kept this up for some months but finally had to announce that in future he would do his own washing only. The workmates gave him a shaving set and a letter of appreciation as a token of their esteem.

In 1928 the economic writing was on the wall. Work became scarcer and wages lower. With the boys often out of work, the struggle to make ends meet was intensified. Every shilling had to be accounted for. The letters to and fran hane often read like financial statements. By 1929 Dad and 3 of his sons were out of work.

There was employment of a sort chipping mortar off used bricks, at so much per 1000 but it was sweated labour and a piece of brick entered Dad's eye, thus aggravating an injury of 50 years before. He had to enter hospital for treatment, and for sane time there was a threat that the eye would have to be removed.

Dad went to considerable pains to get the birth certificate of Mum, nee Mary Jane Anderson and to find out her mother's name and whether she was ever married to Thomas Anderson. Several letters to Sanerret House where English births, deaths and marriages are recorded elicited very little precise information. He ~~did~~ receive a birth certificate for a Mary Jane Anderson who was born in the same month as Mum but if that certificate is correct she was *two* years younger than she thought. That means that she started work, not at age 13 as she had thought but when she was 11. Child labour?

1933. "No longer working. Alone made brick path in front of and beside Salvation Army Hall at Tighe's Hill. Carted sand for cement by several trips with a billycart," "Made a copy in longhand of several poems." Dozens of red ink changes showed meticulous revision.

Wed. June 15 1922. "Yesterday there was an eviction riot in Clara St. Mayfield and many men were injured by the batons of the police and several policemen were taken to hospital. Strangely, our hero was not even present, but his son Jack was, and his youngest son Arthur - on his way home from school - saw a good deal of what occurred.

What did occur was this:- A family called Woods had lived in the house for years, but for over a year had paid no rent because Mr. Woods had no income other than the dole. The owner asked the family to leave, but the tenants refused on the grounds that they had nowhere else to go. The owner then obtained an eviction order. The police arrived to enforce the order and proceeded to carry out the furniture and put it on the footpath. The Unemployed Worker's Movement of which Jack was an enthusiastic member, also arrived and proceeded to carry the furniture back into the back door as fast as the police carried it out the front door. Vicious assaults on both sides! The police laid on with their batons: the unemployed workers tore pickets from the front fence - nails and all. Some of the palings were used as firewood under a back yard "copper" to boil water to throw on the "enemy" "coppers". Others were used as clubs. A really nasty confrontation! Many casualties: the ambulance ran a shuttle service. Finally, the police gained a Pyrrhic victory - the furniture remained on the footpath. Quite a few men were charged with serious offences. Clive Evatt defended. The Crown maintained that the accused couldn't possibly get a fair trial in Newcastle because no jury would convict a group of their "fellow workers" so the trial venue was changed to a small country town some 50 miles away - very inconvenient for everybody but it was felt that a rural jury might be more likely to convict. Clive Evatt was brilliant! He showed convincingly that his clients - though perhaps not quite as innocent as babes in arms, were public minded, law respecting citizens whose "excess zeal" was due to their passionate love of justice. To everyone's surprise he won! All were acquitted!

In 1934, Dad wrote his sister a letter - all in verse. Christmas Cards etc., too, all contained his own verses.

About this time, he applied for the old age pension, and after many detailed questions re assets etc, he finally received it. Though retired, he was always working - hard physical work, e.g. digging postholes and helping erect a fence at his eldest son's place, and putting down a brick path for his 2nd eldest son. He attended several churches, including "4 square gospel." He contributed verses to "The War Cry", "Common Cause", the B.H.P. review, "Waratah/Mayfield Weekly" etc. Some poems were rejected, but many were printed. Topics? - Road safety, safety at work, gardens, flowers, fascism, war, politics, faith, hope and charity, stupid mankind, and especially **Liquor**.

Naturally, as Dad grew older, his life was much less eventful. In 1934 he was 67 years old, and from then on there was very little of moment to ripple the smoothness of his life. He had been anaemic for some years, and, apart from getting regular injections, he had to eat liver every day. He then developed Bright's disease, and although treated by the doctor and a herbalist, got weaker and weaker. He seemed so close to death, that several of us insisted that he go back to the doctor, which he did. Food strengthened him. He got well, and lived to be 93.

However, there was one incident in 1955 which filled in a great gap in the family history. As we have already said, Thomas Cocking, Josiah's father had deserted his family round about 1870, and apart from one brief appearance, was never seen again.

Dad as a middle aged man had, with the help of a spiritualist medium, learned that his father had lived in the Taree area. Dad had taken a train to Taree where he hired a horse and sulky to explore the district but had learned practically nothing.

It so happened that Arthur, Dad's youngest son, was appointed to Taree High School. He asked several old people had they known Thomas Cocking. Yes, they had. He had lived at Dingo Creek - in the hills at the end of a dead-end road and had moved to Minimbah where he was killed by the wheel of his own tip dray and was buried at Failford. Also, a pupil brought along an old School Paper which mentioned Thanas Cocking as an identity of the district. Then, old Mr. Hallam who lived closeby said, "Yes, I knew Thanas Cocking well. I can take you to the spot where he used to live." Dad, his eldest son, and Arthur drove Mr. Hallam to the site. They followed an obscure branch road which branched into a more obscure branch road which went further into the hills and then ceased. Thomas's house had gone, but they saw the farm that he had owned. It was a little Garden of Eden - rich volcanic soil in a sheltered, well watered valley, when, many years before, he had told his sons that he was rich, he no doubt spoke the truth. He hadn't stayed rich, however, the Minimbah farm was a poor one and he died a comparatively poor man.

For the next few years very little happened to Dad until, at 88, he had occasion to see a lady dentist. She was Mrs. Longworth, a left wing, strong minded vegetarian who often wrote letters to the paper. The two remained close friends until her death. Mrs. Longworth recommended that Dad have all his teeth extracted, so, with cheerful confidence that he would live long enough to get his money's worth, he got his first set of false teeth.

He **did** get his money's worth, for he lived another 5 years: still with his wits about him until the day he died - a contented man, convinced that the success of his family had made him rich though he had very little money. He told the family that his special pride was the fact that not one of his progeny **had** ever been a "crook" or a **drunkard** and all had done well scholastically- for they had a B.A., a B.Ec., 3 Tech. Diplomas, an I.C.S. Diploma, an M.B., B.S., and an **A.T.N.A.** nursing certificate among them.

After life's "bitter struggle", he sleeps well.

-----ooOoo-----

He was a little man, five feet two (157cm.) tall and he wore a boy's sized hat. Perhaps in overcompensation he was an assertive little man who never suffered oppression in silence and always voiced his opinions whether they were asked for or not and whether the utterance was to his advantage or not. His voice was deceptively soft. He deplored shouting and once told an opponent, "Put your strength into your argument, not into your voice."

He had a thirst for knowledge, a zest for enquiry and a most encouraging desire that his children should be well educated. An omnivorous reader, he dabbled in literature (but not fiction, which he called "literary lies"). He burned fictitious books by pegging them to the clothes line and setting a match to them. Whenever any female relatives were married, he gave them a copy of Mrs. Beaton's cook book after tearing out the pages on alcoholic drinks. His solution to the world's ills was Christian Socialism. His spelling was flawless and he had a real mastery over words. Quotations, especially from Shakespeare and the Bible, came easily to his mind and readily from his tongue. Humour of a subtle type appealed to him. E.g. of his brother Bob, he wrote, "Poor Bob! He has really mastered the art of making himself unpopular wherever he goes." He often mouthed such quips as, "He was the mildest mannered man that ever scuttled ship or cut a throat" or "What has posterity ever done for me?"

Dad was an untidy, unkempt little man. His clothes were such that he gave the impression that he could get dirty and rumpled in a vacuum. His belt, instead of being through his trouser loops, was worn quite a lot lower - down round his hips. The laces of his boots were often left undone and he refused to wear a tie. Clothes were just not important to his mind.

However, he always was meticulously clean and carefully washed his teeth with a flannel cloth and soap at least twice a day. On the ground that he was "too young to go bald" (in his 80's and 90's), he brushed his hair with 100 strokes per day. He wore a moustache, for he deemed that that was God's provision to filter out dust and dirt. Dad was sexist - benevolently, but firmly as this poem will show:-

TO MRS. NEWLYWED.

Blest is the man whose wife can make
A Christmas pudding or a cake,
That tastes just as he wishes -
Who loves her husband and her home,
And stays "neath her domestic dome
Neglecting not her dishes.

For Love is murdered by Neglect
And all good married men expect
Their wives and homes good looking:
And all wise married men agree
The best of life is just these three -
Love, Labour and GOOD COOKING!

Dad was a man of strong loves and perhaps even stronger aversions. He loved the family, fidelity, sobriety, chastity, faith hope and charity, the poor, the outcast and the oppressed. He detested the "better classes" especially Royalty (whan he termed parasites) and the nobility. "Who is lower than a Lord." He was suspicious of mine owners, "A mine is a hole in the ground and the owner of that hole is a liar."

He was a strong little man. He walked everywhere, never having learned to ride a bicycle. Even in his 80's he would walk from Mayfield West to Newcastle and back (16km) even though by now he could afford to go by tram. He trudged 6½km. to Mrs. Longworth's dental surgery in Mayfield East and, having had all his teeth extracted, **WALKED BACK.**

liquor trade he attacked directly - in poems. He was a rabid, vehement anti-smoker. Perhaps his thinking was coloured by the fact that, in middle age, his lungs had been "dusted" in the mines. The doctors couldn't do any good, so he went to a "quack", a butcher

A man bordering on genius should have had a better command of mathematics than he had. Numerical thinking was certainly not Josiah's forte. He was hindrance when he tried to "help" in Mum's shop, for he didn't know the price of anything and would sell a 3d. chocolate for 1d. The business of buying a house perforce rested on his wife's shoulders, for business bewildered him. He knew more about the Second Caning than he did about a second mortgage!

Dad was a cunpulsive buyer of books - mainly second hand. He made a device for cutting his own records for the gramophone, and always had the latest, home-made wireless right from the time that the crystal set came to Australia. He could talk learnedly about cat's whiskers, super heterodynes, valves and condensers. He **owned** a big, cumbersome magic lantern and a microscope.

-----oooOooo-----

Josiah Cocking - His Religion and His Politics.

Since he was brought up in little Cornwall, Josiah was "rooted and grounded" in Methodism. In his late teens, fully convinced that religion, was, indeed the "opiate of the people", he became an atheist for many years. Next, he became a Methodist again and later joined the Salvation *Army*. He also dabbled in Spiritualism and became a spiritualist medium. He was convinced that it was possible to get in touch with the spirits, but it was unwise, even dangerous to do so. Religiously, Dad was omniverous that he sampled rather than devoured several religions. He tried, and rejected - Christadelphianism and often bought the tracts of the Jehova's Witnesses.

Dad was really keen on the Salvation Army, but the *Army* was not really keen on him. He was a Salvationist Socialist. Most of the Salvo's were very right wing in their politics. It was a case of "Right is right, and Left is wrong." If Dad couldn't avoid Socialist entanglements, he should at least keep his religion and his politics separate. To this Christian Soldier, this notion was absurd. If one's religion and his politics didn't intertwine, there was something wrong with both. Finally, after many years' skirmishing, the *Army* declared open war. An officer told him, "You've embarrassed and upset everybody. We're tired of your disruption. It might be better if you don't come any more." Bitterly disappointed, but with no rancour, Josiah accepted his "excommunication" as final.

Affiliation with the Labour movement had long since proved a disappointment. Dad had been campaign manager for a Labour Party candidate who was duly elected but did nothing much for the workers though he was re-elected and re-elected until his death and was succeeded by his son. In Dad's view neither father nor son over a period of 50 years did anything save that on one occasion the son said, "Hear! Hear" in the House.

-----oooOooo-----

Josiah could have been a god poet. Certain parts of this, are really poetic.

The Workers.

Let the poets write of flowers and of mossy dells and bowers
Where the wattle scented zephyrs kiss the blossoms of the trees.
And the sunset's golden glory gilds the sky with colours gory
While the silver sands are shining with the surf of emerald seas.

Let the bards continue dreaming of the foaming cascades streaming
In the fern-clad shady valleys where the sylvan fairies hide,
And the verdant vines are clinging to the trees where birds are singing
Dulcet songs of love and freedom - but I let such subjects slide.

For I battle for the toilers - those who slave **for** their despoilers.
Those who labour long for masters, but who very seldom think;
They're the subject of my verses, though their souls are seared with curses,
And they smoke and chew tobacco and destroy themselves with drink.

He had a flair for the unusual and a Puckish wit which showed itself in expressions like "Any kind of dirty work is done by dirty tools." "You were munching nuts when Noah left the ark," "They fail to see the showers for the rain." "The time is rotten ripe."

His wit is shown here :-

Leap Year.

O, give me the harp of King David, the Jew,
Or pipes from the land of Scotch Thistles,
Or hand me the trumpet that Gabriel blew,
Or give me some tuneful tin whistles.

It goes on:-

A woman may love with affection intense
A male of the bipedal genus
Who may keep her for several years in suspense
And tempt her to imitate Venus.

Further: -

But Leap Year's the time when maids free from restraint
Possessing both courage and beauty
May cease to repeat a cold lover's complaint
And teach their cold sweethearts their duty.

He often used satire - at times sardonically. When Billy Hughes retired from politics after changing his party three times, Dad wrote, "The Old Grey Mare ain't wot she Hughes'd to be, "containing the lines, -

"With my nephews and my nieces
And of course, my THIRTY PIECES."

(Con't - 2)

His sniping at the Drink traffic shows up in his

"New Nursery Rhymes."

"Mary's Little Sam."

If Mary had a little boy and not a little lamb
To cherish, fondle and enjoy and had him Christened Sam
And if, in spite of all he knew of matter, force and space,
Sam's appetite for liquor grew and sank him in disgrace.....

"Old Father Hubbard."

When Old Mother Hubbard advanced to the cupboard
To get a large bone for her dog
And found that the shelf was bare, (like herself)
The reason was probably Grog.....

"Little Bo-Peep."

Was Miss Ro-Peep, who lost her sheep in valleys dim and shady
And could not trace their hiding place, - an alcoholic lady?.....

"Sing a Song of Sixpence."

Sing a song of sixpence; bottles full of beer
That a sailor swallowed ere he tried to steer.
Sing how crew and captain perished in their sleep,
When the vessel foundered forty fathoms deep.....

And there were dozens of others.

Much of Dad's verse was political. For sane years he wrote to "The Common Cause" a miner's paper but he expressed his views on trade union matters in poetic form. Here, his originality of thought and expression was clearly shown. He advanced his arguments under two pen names in two very different styles. He became a well educated, somewhat pedantic gentleman and then an uneducated, semi-literate woman. These two poured hot scorn on one another - each taking the opposing point of view.

Readers, not knowing that "Dan D. Lion" and "Daisy" were one and the same man, took sides and wrote in letters supporting one and berating the other.

There was a serious motive behind everything that was written by Dad. Many of his poems hammered the theme of the evidence of the Creator in His Creation. e.g.-

CHRISTMAS BELLS.

O Christmas bells, bright Christmas bells,
Your fascinating beauty tells
Of God, the great unfolder!
Your graceful forms display His skill,
And with admiring wonder fill
The mind of each beholder.

(Con't - 3)

CHRISTMAS BELLS. (Con't)

O captivating Christmas bells,
You beautify the sylvan dells
With modest heads dependent,
But Solomon, with wealth untold,
Was ne'er arrayed in robes of gold
And scarlet so resplendent!

What matchless art and loving care
Combined to make your beauty rare,
To decorate the ranges!
Oh, *may* no lawless Vandal race
Exterminate you from the face
Of this sad world of changes.

And *may* each lovely drooping bell
Not only to beholders tell
The *story* of creation,
But *may* its garb of gold and red
Remind then of Christ's blood, once shed
That all *may* have salvation!

(Printed in the "Gosford Times", Dec. 6th 1928.) Also in the "Worlds News."
21/- was received from the editor of the W.N. for the poem.

TO A NOVEMBER LILY.

Lovely lily of November,
~~How~~ can you so well remember
~~When~~ to show your handsome flowers
In a manner so sublime?
Are you conscious of existence -
Of High Heaven in the distance -
And of one who gave you powers
To observe the march of time?

Is it true that you are gifted
With intelligence that lifted
You above your lowly brothers
By its attributes divine?
To observe each passing season
And select your month from others
As the time to rise and shine?

Your existence is a token
Of the fact, not often spoken.
That each creature is a wonder
Of construction and design:
And your bloom makes faith grow greater
That the good and wise Creator
Of the sun and all thereunder
Has a purpose most benign.

(Con't - 4)

TO A NOVEMBER LILY. (Con't)

He adorns the Earth with flowers
Which reveal His wondrous powers:
He has given you a beauty
Which no wise beholders spurn;
And, although they're not the rarest,
Your loved features are the fairest
Which it's your delightful duty
To display when you return.

Finally, there is a wistfulness about a "Bush Madrigal" published in the Gosford Times in 1928.

A BUSH MADRIGAL (Filling in a rainy day.)

Many years I have been married, and the shafts of Time I've parried
But the darts of doubt have harried with dark questions such as these:-
Is my love reciprocated? Am I truly loved - or hated -
By the wife with whom I've mated? Does she falsely smile to please?

But last night as I lay sleeping with the trees around me weeping
And the birds in silence keeping in the lonely forest's gloom,
Then she came with love's sweet token and doubt's spell at last was broken,
For affection's words were spoken as she stood within the room.

And I twined my arms around her in the twilight when I found her,
Then with accents true and thrilling, she my soul with bliss was filling,
And with kisses warm and willing
She confessed her love to me.

But alas! I did awaken, and my bliss was rudely shaken,
For I found myself forsaken in the morning bright and blue:
But I'll always think with pleasure of the vision that I treasure
Till my joy shall have no measure when that happy dream comes true.

-----ooOoo-----

In many respects, a good man lives on and on.