

SINGABOUT

FEBRUARY 2017

AUSTRALIANS

With Australia Day just passed it is interesting to look at songs or poems about this country and the people that inhabit it. A bit of searching through Trove found this first selection written by George Nash and published in the Sydney Star in February 1910.

It was introduced as follows:

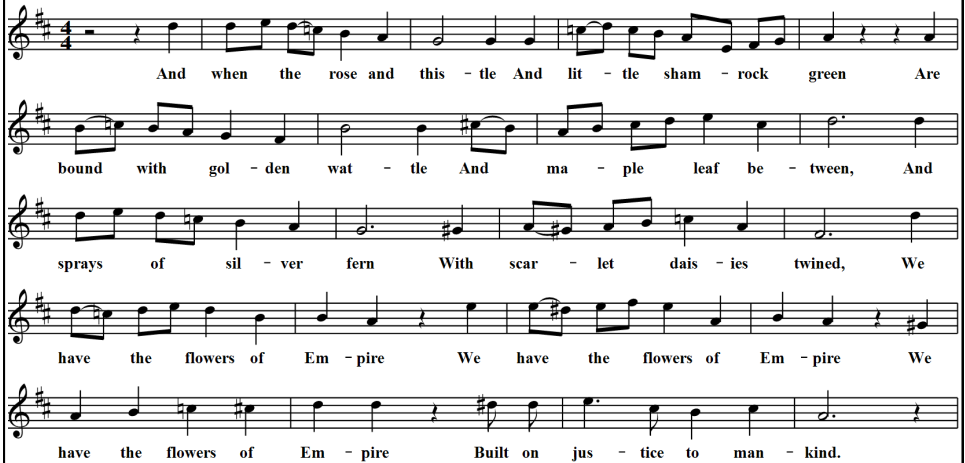
“Inspired by Sir George Reid's remark that the Australian National Anthem was "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow," Mr. George Nash, editor of the "Public Instruction Gazette," and well known also as a writer of short stories and educational articles, has written an excellent "song-poem" to take the place of that often hiccoupy wail. The words are exceedingly well chosen, and there is a true ring about them that is sure to appeal to patriotic Australians.”

The song was set to music by Theodore Tearne, State Superintendent of Music, and was performed by a choir of 200 children (boys and girls) at Fort Street school on 8th Feb 1910. (Reported in the Sydney Morning Herald, 9th Feb 1910, p10).

Indigenous Australians were not ignored by all our early writers and the poem on page S4 is from the pen of Henry Kendall and published in the Sydney Morning Herald, 14th July 1862, p 10. Many thanks again for the wonderful collection of digitised newspapers to be found in the National Library's Trove collection.

Australians All (excerpt)

Theodore Tearne (music), George Nash (words)



And when the rose and this - tle And lit - tle sham - rock green Are
bound with gol - den wat - tle And ma - ple leaf be - tween, And
sprays of sil - ver fern With scar - let dais - ies twined, We
have the flowers of Em - pire We have the flowers of Em - pire We
have the flowers of Em - pire Built on jus - tice to man - kind.

Australians All

A New Patriotic Anthem by George Nash

1
Australians all!- our mighty States
Are joined in union free,
We love our own Australia
With its blue encircling sea.

2
Britannia's fairest daughter,
With her locks of fleecy gold,
And starry eyes a-gazing down
The ages yet untold.

3
She sees her children's children
Amongst the Nations stand.
And honor, truth, and justice
Are the watchwords of the land.

4
For we are sons of Britain,
Of sires who crossed the seas,
From Devon's sands and Galway's cliffs,
And distant Hebrides.

5
The tales our fathers told us,
Are the tales their fathers told,
Of Britain's sturdy heroes
In the great, brave days of old.

6
And when the rose and thistle,
And little shamrock green
Are bound with golden wattle
And maple leaf between:

7
And sprays of silver fern
With scarlet daisies twined.
We have the flowers of Empire
Built on justice to mankind.

8
And sons of fair Australia
From York to Leeuwin's shore
Are ready when the Empire calls
To meet her foes once more.

To give a better idea of the music, here is part of the original score as published in the Star. Only the melody line has been redone on the opposite page.

The image shows a page of musical notation for a song. It consists of four systems of music, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "And when the rose and this - - - - - the And lit - - - - - the sham - - - - - rock green Are bound with gol - - - - - den was - - - - - the And ma - - - - - ple leaf be - - - - - tween And sprays of sil - - - - - ver fern With scar - - - - - let du - - - - - are". The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like *dim.* and *delos cantabile*. The piano part features a rhythmic accompaniment with chords and moving lines.

Aboriginal Death-Song by Henry Kendall

Euroka go over the tops of the hill,
For the death-clouds have passed us to-day,
And we'll cry in the dark for the footfalls still,
And the tracks which are fading away !
Let them yell to their lubras, the Bulginbah dogs,
And say how our brothers were slain ;
We shall wipe out our grief in the blood of their chief,
And twenty more dead on the plain --
On the blood spluttered spurs of the plain !
 But the low winds sigh,
 And the dead leaves fly,
 Where our warriors lie,
In the dingo's den- in the white-cedar glen
On the banks of the gloomy Urara !
 Urara ! Urara !
On the banks of the gloomy Urara !
The Wallaroos grope through the tufts of the grass,
And crawl to their coverts for fear,
But we'll sit in the ashes and let them pass
Where the boomerangs sleep with the spear !
Oh ! our hearts will be lonely and low to-night,
When we think of the hunts of yore ;
And the foes that we sought, and the fights which we fought,
With those who will battle no more---
Who will go to the battle no more !
 For the dull winds sigh,
 And the dead leaves fly,
 Where our warriors lie,
In the dingo's den- in the white-cedar glen
On the banks of the gloomy Urara !
 Urara ! Urara !
On the banks of the gloomy Urara !
Oh ! the gorges and gullies are black with crows,
And they feast on the flesh of the brave,
But the forest is loud with the howls of our foes
For those whom they never can save !
Let us crouch with our faces down to our knees,
And hide in the dark of our hair ;
For we will not return where the camp-fires burn,
And see what is smouldering there---
What is smouldering, mouldering there !
 Where the sad winds sigh---
 The dead leaves fly,
 And our warriors lie,
In the dingo's den- in the white-cedar Glen
On the banks of the gloomy Urara !
 Urara ! Urara !
On the banks of the gloomy Urara !