

Classic Poetry Series

William Henry Ogilvie
- poems -

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William Henry Ogilvie(21 August 1869 – 30 January 1963)

Born in Kelso, Scotland, Ogilvie moved to Australia at the age of twenty. One of his reasons for leaving his homeland was his admiration of the writer Adam Lindsay Gordon and like Gordon, a great love for horses. When he arrived in Australia he found work as a drover, a breaker, and a musterer. He worked at Maroupe, located in South Australia as well as Belalie on the Warrego. It was during this time that he began writing, his poetry focusing on the Outback life and its many adventures in an acclamatory, romantic verse. Ogilvie had many of his works published in the Mount Gambier Border Watch, the Australasian and the Bulletin. A couple of years before his return to Scotland in 1901 he published his most well known collection of verse in 1898. It is considered to be his best and most notable piece of work.

While all of his works were published in Australia, he never returned. After his return to Scotland he continued to write poems that concerned the Scottish borders. The well known poet, Hugh McDairmund, hailed his work as a triumph. Unfortunately, though he was successful in both countries, he died practically unknown and has become one of the more obscure poets of that era.

A Gallop From The Train

Though I can't afford a hunter -more's the pity,
I love a rousing gallop like the rest!-
Every morning as I travel to the city
I have five and forty minutes of the best.

As we leave our country station there's a holloa
(If it's but the engine whistle, never mind!).
By the window I am sitting, and I follow
Where the horn of fancy tells me of a find.

Through the rattle of our going comes the chorus,
'Tis a south wind and a proper scenting day,
There's a topping piece of country spread before us,
And I'll jump it all in fancy on the grey.

How he dances as I edge him through the others;
He is fond of this finessing for a start,
Just a little bit more eager than his brothers
By a beat, or maybe two beats of his heart

There's a gap we know of leading from the stubble,
And we have it while the other people pass.
A crash behind us! Some one tasting trouble!
We are over, in the lead, and on the grass.

How he lays him down to revel in his freedom!
How he snatches at his snaffle as he goes!
The field will have to gallop when we lead 'em!
Hark, behind us! There's another on his nose!

Here's an oak rail with a trappy ditch behind it,
And I feel the little beggar-shortening stride.
It's a big one, but I know he wouldn't mind it
Were it twice as big and half again as wide!

So I catch him by the head a little shorter,
And his answer comes a-thrilling from the bit;
Then I loose him, and he flies it. What a snorter!
And he never made the shadow of a hit!

So we take those rasping fences -well, perhaps a wee bit faster
Than we'd take 'em if we were not on a train!
And there's not a soul before us but the huntsman and the Master
And a toiling field is squandered once again.

By a grey suburban station, to the sullen air-brake's grinding,
We kill our dog fox handsomely at last.
It was five and forty minutes to the finish from the finding-
And at fifty miles an hour 'twas pretty fast!

William Henry Ogilvie

A Little Bit Of Garden

We need no crown or sceptre,
for now that it is spring,
just a little bit of garden-
and every man's a king!

A little breadth of border,
a little patch of grass,
above it all the April sky
where soft the south winds pass.

A spade and rake for comrades,
the smell of rain-wet mould,-
and every time we turn a clod
we turn a mint of gold.

A little bit of garden,
with daffodils a-swing,
and tulip-flowers whose crimson flags
are only flown for spring.

Shy blossoming primroses,
forget-me-nots of blue,
and here a blade and there a blade
of green things peeping through.

Who seeks for crown or sceptre
when every man's a king
whose patch of cottage garden
has felt the feet of Spring!

William Henry Ogilvie

As I Wandered Home

As I wandered home
By Hedworth Combe
I heard a lone horse whinney,
And saw on the hill
Standing statue-still
At the top of the old oak spinney
A rough-haired hack
With a girl on his back-
And 'Hounds!' I said- 'for a guinea!'

The wind blew chill
Over Larchey Hill,
And it couldn't have blown much colder;
Her nose was blue,
And her pigtails two
Hung damply over her shoulder;
She might have been ten,
Or - guessing again -
She might have been twelve months older.

To a tight pink lip
She pressed her whip
By way of imposing quiet;
I bowed my head
To the word unsaid,
Accepting the lady's fiat,
And noted the while
Her Belvoir style
As she rated a hound for riot.

A lean form leapt
O'er the fence and crept
Through the ditch with his thief's heart quaking,
But the face of the maid
No hint betrayed
That she noticed the brambles shaking,
Till she saw him clear
Of her one wild fear-
The chance of his backward breaking.

Then dainty and neat
She rose in her seat
That the better her eyes might follow
Where a shadow of brown
Over Larchley Down
Launched out like a driving swallow;
And she quickened his speed
Through bracken and weed
With a regular Pytchley holloa!

Raging they came
Like a torrent of flame-
There where nineteen couple and over,
And a huntsman grey
Who blew them away
With the note of a true hound-lover,
While his Whip sat back
On her rough old hack
And called to the last in covert.

Then cramming down flat
Her quaint little hat,
And shaking the old horse together,
She was off like a bird,
And the last that I heard
Was a 'For'ard!' that died in the heather
As she took up her place
At the tail of the chase
Like a ten-season lord of the leather.

William Henry Ogilvie

As They Come

Right and left the leaders wheel,
Seeking gap and gate,
Catch his head and give him heel!
Ride your country straight!
Fences are by fortune made,
Not by rule of thumb.
Lash him at them unafraid!
Take 'em as they come!
Hedges may be rough and rank,
Thick and three feet through,
Doubled with a ditch or bank-
What's the odds to you!
Some are standing six feet high,
Twined and twisted some.
Never mind 'em! Have a fly !
Take 'em as they come!
Walls and stiles and cattle-gates,
Ash and oaken rails-
These as fashioned by the fates
Slack the slacker's sails,
Turn the laggard from his line,
Turn the timid numb-
All the better chance to shine!
Take 'em as they come!
When our paltry years are past,
Triumphs and regrets,
Whether we went slow or fast
Soon the world forgets.
Lucky if some friend should tell,
Handing on your fame,
'Good 'un! Always went like Hell !
Took 'em as they came!

William Henry Ogilvie

Biddy, Be Kind!

Now what do you want to be playing about for,
Reefing and reaching your head for the bit?
This is the gentlest of canters you're out for,
And neither yourself nor your rider is fit ;
I, who have lazed .
While the summer sun blazed,
At ease in a hammock with cool things to drink;
You, late a rover
In cocksfoot and clover,
With mud on your mane-locks and loose shoes a-clink.
This is too soon to be prancing and sidling;
The elm is still green and the ditches are blind;
The sun is still strong and suggestive of idling-
So, Biddy, be kind!
Time and enough when they're drawing the gorses
To put up your back with those ominous squeals,
To plunge when they pass you on cantering horses,
To flaunt your red ribbon and fling up your heels.
Slippy and tarred
Is the highway, and hard;
A fall is the last thing on earth I desire;
By all means be sprightly, But do it politely
With not too much fervour and not too much fire.
The season's too young yet for trying a tussle;
Rough-riding at present is not to my mind;
Just wait a few weeks till we work up our muscle-
Come, Biddy, be kind!

William Henry Ogilvie

Canadians

With arrows on their quarters and with numbers on their hoofs,
With the trampling sound of twenty that re-echoes in the roofs,
Low of crest and dull of coat, wan and wild of eye,
Through our English village the Canadians go by.

Shying at a passing cart, swerving from a car,
Tossing up an anxious head to flaunt a snowy star,
Racking at a Yankee gait, reaching at the rein,
Twenty raw Canadians are tasting life again!

Hollow-necked and hollow-flanked, lean of rib and hip,
Strained and sick and weary with the wallow of the ship,
Glad to smell the turf again, hear the robin's call,
Tread again the country road they lost at Montreal!

Fate may bring them dule and woe; better steeds than they
Sleep beside the English guns a hundred leagues away;
But till war hath need of them, lightly lie their reins,
Softly fall the feet of them along the English lanes.

William Henry Ogilvie

Colour

There's colour in the woodlands as far as eye can reach,
Pale gold upon the elm-tree and bronze upon the beech;
To witch the world with beauty a hundred hues ally -
But bonniest is the scarlet when a Whip rides by.
On towers of brown and crimson, on roofs of royal gold
The banners of the autumn their splendid tints unfold,
And no one will their wonder, their magic lure deny -
Yet dearer is the scarlet when a Whip rides by.
Ah! Bright September woodlands, your magic only means
That summer's life is ebbing on the bed your beauty screens;
Not all your painted pennons on all your towers so high
Can match one patch of scarlet when a whip rides by!

William Henry Ogilvie

Comrades O' Mine

If I call, will you hear me, O comrades of mine,
When the sky in the East holds the grey of the dawn,
When the soft wind is stirring the plumes of the pine
And the shadow goes gliding beneath like a fawn?
If I call, will you hear me, O long-ago friends,
As you pass to the stockyard with bridle on arm,
Where the song of the magpie to Heaven ascends
And the buddah-bush blooms with its delicate charm?
If I call, will you hear me? Heart calling to heart
Across the wide water, across the long years.
In the life that you live have I, too, not a part?
Do I share not its laughter, its hopes and its fears?
If my saddle hangs idle, if no more I bind
The spurs of adventure to gleam on the heel,
Along Memory's paths may I stray not and find
The beat of bare hoofs and the jingle of steel?
Where we rode shall I ride not? Through scrubs where we raced
With the rein lying loose as some favourite flew
Through the ragged grey stems, through the boughs interlaced
Have ye ridden one ride where I rode not with you?
If I call, will you hear ? - Nay; for Time will be king,
And the wind on wide water bears voices away.
The spurs as they glisten, the hoofs where they ring,
Are the servants of Youth at the dawn of the day.

William Henry Ogilvie

Daffodils

Ho! You there, selling daffodils along the windy street,
Poor drooping, dusty daffodils - but oh! so Summer sweet!
Green stems that stab with loveliness, rich petal-cups to hold
The wine of Spring to lips that cling like bees about their gold!

What price to you for daffodils? I'll give what price you please,
For light and love and memory lie leaf by leaf with these!
And if I bought all Sydney Town I could not hope to buy
The wealth you bring of everything that goes with open sky!

My money for your daffodils: why do you thank me so?
If I have paid a reckless price, take up my gift and go,
And from the golden garden beds where gold the sunbeams shine
Bring in more flowers to light the hours for lover-hearts like mine!

William Henry Ogilvie

Drought

My road is fenced with the bleached, white bones
And strewn with the blind, white sand,
Beside me a suffering, dumb world moans
On the breast of a lonely land.
On the rim of the world the lightnings play,
The heat-waves quiver and dance,
And the breath of the wind is a sword to slay
And the sunbeams each a lance.

I have withered the grass where my hot hoofs tread,
I have whitened the sapless trees,
I have driven the faint-heart rains ahead
To hide in their soft green seas.

I have bound the plains with an iron band,
I have stricken the slow streams dumb!
To the charge of my vanguards who shall stand?
Who stay when my cohorts come?

The dust-storms follow and wrap me round;
The hot winds ride as a guard;
Before me the fret of the swamps is bound
And the way of the wild-fowl barred.

I drop the whips on the loose-flanked steers;
I burnt their necks with the bow;
And the green-hide rips and the iron sears
Where the staggering, lean beasts go.

I lure the swagman out of the road
To the gleam of a phantom lake;
I have laid him down, I have taken his load,
And he sleeps till the dead men wake.

My hurrying hoofs in the night go by,
And the great flocks bleat their fear
And follow the curve of the creeks burnt dry
And the plains scorched brown and sere.

The worn men start from their sleepless rest
With faces haggard and drawn;
They cursed the red Sun into the west
And they curse him out of the dawn.

They have carried their outposts far, far out,
But - blade of my sword for a sign! -
I am the Master, the dread King Drought,
And the great West Land is mine!

William Henry Ogilvie

English Grass

Come, horsemen all, from every field
And taste this rare delight,
And see what English pastures yield
To those whose hearts beat right!
Come, haste and quaff the stirrup-cup!
Turn down the empty glass!
The horn is blown, the hunt is up,
And here's our English grass!
And here are foxes swift to find
And fences strong to break,
And here are doubles steep and blind
That try the best to take,
And dappled hounds to keep in sight
And rivals you must pass
Before the long December night
Enshrouds the English grass!
And think it not a lightsome thing
Or feat to wake your scorn
To follow where the Pytchley swing
Or lead them with the Quorn ;
For men have hacked the mulga trail
And packed the mountain pass,
Yet found the boldest heart may fail
To ride the English grass.
The meadows stretch from stream to stream,
Close-bitten, firm, and sound;
No stubble stands, no plough man's team
Rips up the ravaged ground;
But level far as eye can see
Like smooth green-tinted glass,
A battle-ground for bravery,
Is spread the English grass.
Though thorns be thick, though binders lace,
Though stout be stile and rail,
Though nought but blood can live the pace,
And nought but pluck prevail,
The call's to all, the field is fair
To every creed and class;
So draw your girths, all ye who dare,

And ride the English grass!

William Henry Ogilvie

Foxhound Puppies

Great big lolloping lovable things!
Rolling and tumbling on every lawn,
Tearing at slippers and bones and wings-
Wonderful loot from the ash-heap drawn:
Foxhound puppies
Contented puppies
Dipping your ears in the dews of dawn!
Lapping your porridge at farm-house doors,
Cracking a biscuit, robbing a nest
Printing your tracks upon kitchen floors,
Dodging a broom when the cooks protest;
Foxhound puppies,
Delinquent puppies,
Cursed for a moment and then caressed!
Wandering out where the spaniels walk,
Following slow when the guns go by,
Streaking for home when the twelve-bores talk,
Clumsy and puzzled and suddenly shy;
Foxhound puppies
Bewildered puppies
Lone and unwanted and wondering why!
Never mind puppies, your day will come;
By distant coverts your kingdoms wait,
When the spaniels doze and the guns are dumb
And hoofs are loud by the bridle gate;
Foxhound puppies,
Yet scarcely puppies,
Raised as you are to a hound's estate.
Lost will your lolloping ways be then,
Your timid glance and your shrinking pose,
As you shoulder the gorse in glade and glen,
Lifting the line that your tongues disclose;
Foxhound puppies,
No longer puppies,
But trusted names that the huntsman knows!

William Henry Ogilvie

From The Gulf

Store cattle from Nelanjie! The mob goes feeding past,
With half-a-mile of sandhill 'twixt the leaders and the last;
The nags that move behind them are the good old Queensland stamp-
Short backs and perfect shoulders that are priceless on a camp;
And these are men that ride them, broad-cheated, tanned, and tall,
The bravest hearts amongst us and the lightest hands of all:
Oh, let them wade in Wonga grass and taste the Wonga dew,
And let them spread, those thousand head-for we've been droving too!

Store cattle from Nelanjie! By half-a-hundred towns,
By northern ranges rough and red, by rolling open downs
By stock-routes brown and burnt and bare, by floodwrapped river-bends,
They've hunted them from gate to gate-the drover has no friends!
But idly they may ride to-day beneath the scorching sun
And let the hungry bullocks try the grass on Wonga run;
No overseer will dog them here to "see the cattle through,"
But they may spread their thousand head-for we've been droving too!

Store cattle from Nelanjie! They've a naked track to steer;
The stockyards at Wodonga are a long way down from here;
The creeks won't run till God knows when, and half the holes are dry;
The tanks are few and far between and water's dear to buy:
There's plenty at the Brolga bore for all his stock and mine-
We'll pass him with a brave God-speed across the Border Line;
And if he goes a five-mile stage and loiters slowly through,
We'll only think the more of him-for we've been droving too!

Store cattle from Nelanjie! They're mute as milkers now;
But yonder grizzled drover, with the care-lines on his brow,
Could tell of merry musters on the big Nelanjie plains,
With blood upon the chestnut's flanks and foam upon the reins;
Could tell of nights upon the road when those same mild-eyed steers
Went ringing round the river bend and through the scrub like spears;
And if his words are rude and rough, we know his words are true,
We know what wild Nelanjies are-and we've been droving too !

Store cattle from Nelanjie! Around the fire at night
They've watched the pine-tree shadows lift before the dancing light;
They've lain awake to listen when the weird bushvoices speak,

And heard the lilting bells go by along the empty creek;
They've spun the yarns of hut and camp, the tales of play and work,
The wondrous tales that gild the road from Normanton to Bourke;
They've told of fortunes foul and fair, of women false and true,
And well we know the songs they've sung-for we've been droving too!

Store cattle from Nelanjie! Their breath is on the breeze;
You hear them tread, a thousand head, in blue-grass to the knees;
The lead is on the netting-fence, the wings are spreading wide,
The lame and laggard scarcely move so slow the drovers ride!
But let them stay and feed to-day for sake of Auld Lang Syne;
They'll never get a chance like this below the Border Iodine;
And if they tread our frontage down, what's that to me or you?
What's ours to fare, by God they'll shared for we've been droving tool

William Henry Ogilvie

Gone Away

' He's away ! '- With a quickened wild beat of the heart
Every horseman responds, riding hard for a start,
While back on the breeze with insistence is borne
The clamour of hounds and the call of the horn.
What crowding and crossing! What foaming and fret!
'Don't pull, you old duffer,' we'll get to them yet I '-
' Confound that slow tailor up there on the bay!
Does the fellow not know that a fox is away? '
Hark! Something like music! Ye gods, how they chime !
'Excuse me ! '_ ' Go on, then ! ' 'Oh, dash it, take time ! '
Don't cross me, confound you I '-' They're running some clip ! '-
'Look out for that pony ! '-' Way, there, for the Whip ! '
There's some one got kicked, and he's stopping to curse;
But we're clear of the crowd and it might have been worse.
The pick of the vale is the line he has gone.
' Gar'r away on to him ! Gar' away on !'

William Henry Ogilvie

Hands!

Hands! Gentle Hands!

When the Field at covert stands,
When your four-rear-old is sweating,
Foamed and fidgety and fretting
As a stray hound jumps the netting -
You can steady him and soothe him with your Hands!

Hands! Clever Hands!

When your tiring hunter lands
Over wall or ditch or double
With his noseband in the stubble,
That's the moment you're in trouble
If you have not got the saving gift of Hands!

Hands! Steady Hands!

When your reins seem useless bands,
With a mad brute going faster
And a toss-up which is master,
You may still avoid disaster
If Providence has given to you Hands!

Hands! Talking Hands!

At the fence below the Stands,
When you call on him to lead them,
That's the moment when you need them,
That's the time a horse will heed them
As you bring him up and help him with your Hands!

Hands! Horseman's Hands!

When the stooping fairy stands
At the cradle of a baby,
She has richer gifts, it may be,
But she never brought a better one than Hands!

William Henry Ogilvie

Harry Morant

Harry Morant was a friend I had
In the years long passed away,
A chivalrous, wild and reckless lad,
A knight born out of his day.

Full of romance and void of fears,
With a love of the world's applause,
He should have been one of the cavaliers
Who fought in King Charles's cause.

He loved a girl, and he loved a horse,
And he never let down a friend,
And reckless he was, but he rode his course
With courage up to the end.

"Breaker Morant" was the name he earned,
For no bucking horse could throw
This Englishman who had lived and learned
As much as the bushmen know.

Many a mile have we crossed together,
Out where the great plains lie,
To the clink of bit and the creak of leather –
Harry Morant and I.

Time and again we would challenge Fate
With some wild and reckless "dare",
Shoving some green colt over a gate
As though with a neck to spare.

At times in a wilder mood than most
We would face them at naked wire,
Trusting the sight of a gidyea post
Would lift them a half-foot higher.

And once we galloped a steeplechase
For a bet – 'twas a short half-mile
While one jump only, the stiffest place
In a fence of the old bush style.

A barrier built of blue-gum rails
As thick as a big man's thigh,
And mortised into the posts – no nails –
Unbreakable, four foot high.

Since both our horses were young and green
And had never jumped or raced,
Were we men who had tired of this earthly scene
We could scarce have been better placed.

"Off" cried "The Breaker", and off we went
And he stole a length of lead,
Over the neck of the grey I bent
And we charged the fence full speed.

The brown horse slowed and tried to swerve,
But his rider with master hand
And flaming courage and iron nerve
Made him lift and leap and land.

He rapped it hard with every foot
And was nearly down on his nose;
Then I spurred the grey and followed suit
And, praise to the gods – he rose!

He carried a splinter with both his knees
And a hind-leg left some skin,
But we caught them up at the wilga trees
Sitting down for the short run-in.

They grey was game and he carried on
But the brown had a bit to spare;
The post was passed, my pound was gone,
And a laugh was all my share.

"The Breaker" is sleeping in some far place
Where the Boer War heroes lie,
And we'll meet no more in a steeplechase –
Harry Morant and I.

His Epitaph

On a little old bush racecourse at the back of No Man's Land,
Where the mulgas mark the furlongs and a dead log marks the stand,
There's a square of painted railings showing white against the loam
Where they fight for inside running as they round the bend for home;
Just a lonely grave and graveyard that are left to Nature's care,
For the wild bush-flowers that brighten it were never planted there;
No monument or marble that will speak his praise or blame,
No verse to tell his story and no mark to prove his name.
But carved upon the white rail that is weather-worn and thin
Is the simple, roug-hewn legend: HE ALWAS ROD TO WIN!

Some poor, uncared-for jockey-boy, who never earned a name –
It's the boys who "ride to orders" who can find the road to Fame;
And the flowers and marble head-stones and the wealth of gear and gold
Are the prizes of the riders who will "stop them" when they're told!
Just a whisper at the saddling; "He's the only danger, Dan,
That's the boy will try to beat you – stop him, any way you can!"
Just a crowding at the corner and a crossing in the straight,
And a plucky little horseman who is "pulling out" too late;
A heavy fall, a horse is loose – and a lightweight carried in –
A shallow grave, a railing and: "HE ALWAS ROD TO WIN!"

Some brave, brown-handed comrade who has learned the rider's worth
Has carved those rough words o'er him for the eyes of all the earth;
And though few may chance to pass him as he lies in simple state,
Those few will hold him honoured by the friendship of his mate.
And when, in Life's keen struggle, we shall fight for inside place,
When they crowd us at the corner and we drop from out the race,
When the ringing hoofs go forward and the cheering greets the best,
And the prize is for the winner, and the red spurs for the rest,
May we find some true-heart comrade, when they've filled the last clods in,
Who will carve these words above us: HE ALWAS ROD TO WIN!

William Henry Ogilvie

His Gippsland Girl

Now, money was scarce and work was slack
And love to his heart Crept in,
And he rode away on the Northern track
To war with the world and win;
And he vowed by the locket upon his breast
And its treasure, one red gold curl,
To work with with a will in the farthest West
For the sake of his Gippsland girl.

The hot wind blows on the dusty plain
And the red sun burns above,
But he sees her face at his side again,
And he strikes each blow for love.
He toils by the light of one far-off star
For the winning of one white pearl,
And the swinging pick and the driving bar
Strike home for the Gippsland girl.

With an aching wrist and a back that's bent,
With salt sweat blinding eyes,
'Tis little he'd reek if his life were spent
In the winning so grand a prize.
His shear blades flash and over his hand
The folds of the white fleece curl,
And all day long he sticks to his stand
For the love of his Gippsland girl.

When the shearing's done and the shed's cut out
On Barwon and Narran and Bree;
When the shearer mates with the rouseabout
And the Union man with the free;
When the doors of the shanty, open wide,
An uproarious welcome hurl,
He passes by on the other side
For the sake of his gippsland girl.

When summer lay brown on the Western Land
He rode once more to the South,
Athirst for the touch of a lily hand

And the kiss of a rosebud mouth;
And he sang the songs that shorten the way,
And he envied not king or earl,
And he spared not the spur in his dappled grey
For the sake of his Gippsland girl.

At the garden gate when the shadows fell
His hopes in the dusk lay dead;
'Nelli? Oh! Surely you heard that Nell
Is married a month' they said.
He spoke no word; with a dull, dumb pain
At his heart, and his brain awl
He turned his grey to the North again
For the sake of his Gippsland girl.

And he rung the board in a Paroo shed
By the sweat of his aching brow,
But he blued his cheque, for he grimly said,
'There is nothing to live for now.'
And out and away where the big floods start
And the Darling dust-showers swirl,
There's a drunken shearer who broke his heart
Over a Gippsland girl!

William H Ogilvie

William Henry Ogilvie

Hounds Going Home In The Dark

Rustle of feet in the roadside grass,
Trample of horses' hoofs, and - Hark!
Blast of an anxious horn! Hounds pass;
Hounds going home in the dark.
Bold was our huntsman galloping free
On a difficult line to the hills to-day,
But his hand is trembling against his knee
At the hint of a light on the King's Highway.

` Car!' And the gold spreads over the sky ;
` Keep to the front there! Stop them, Mark!
' Toot-toot-too-oot ! - ' Halloo, there !-Hi ! `'-
Hounds going home in the dark.
Crack of a whip as the headlights near-
Blind in the blaze they group and grope.
` Curse the feller, and can't he hear?
Put 'em across, there I-Cope, boys, cope! '

When never a star is hung in the sky,
With never a lamp or a lantern spark,
Huntsman and Whips go groping by,
Blowing them home in the dark.

William Henry Ogilvie

Hounds!

There is music on disc and on wireless,
Band-music, dance-tunes for the tireless,
Sweet music from day unto day;
But the music a man will remember
Shakes down the last leaves of November,
And speeds the wild geese in December,
And greets the first oak-bud in May.
What string with such beauty can tremble?
What bugle such raptures assemble?
What trumpet can sound such a call?
Is there ever a melody nearer
The quick-beating heart of the hearer?
Is there ever a tune that is dearer
As it chooses a dance for us all?
No song is so sweet in the setting,
No lilt so forbids all forgetting
Or lingers so long by the way;
When the shadows of night gather o'er us,
And the scarlet has faded before us,
The ring of that ravishing chorus
Dies not with the death of the day.

William Henry Ogilvie

If I Were Old

If I were old, a broken man and blind,
and one should lead me to Mid-Eildon's crest,
and leave me there a little time to rest
sharing the hilltop with the Border wind,
the whispering heather, and the curlew's cry,
I know the blind dark could not be so deep,
so cruel and clinging, but that I
should see the sunlit curve of Cheviot's steep
rise blue and friendly on the distant sky!

There is no darkness - God! there cannot be -
so heavy as to curtain from my sight
the beauty of those Border slopes that lie
far south before me, and a love-found light
would shine upon the slow Tweed loitering by
with gift of song and silver to the sea!-
No dark can ever hide this dear loved land from me

William Henry Ogilvie

My Hat!

The hats of a man may be many

In the course of a varied career,

And some have been worth not a penny

And some have been devilish dear;

But there's one hat I always remember
When sitting alone by the fire.

In the depth of a Northern November,

Because it fulfilled my desire.

It was old, it was ragged and rotten

And many years out of mode,

Like a thing that a tramp had forgotten

And left at the side of a road.

The boughs of the mulga had torn it,

It's ribbon was naught but lace,

And old swaggie would not have worn it

Without a sad smile on his face.

When I took off the hat to the ladies

It was rather with sorrow than swank,

And often I wished it in Hades

When the gesture drew only a blank;
But for swatting a fly on the tucker
Or lifting a quart from the fire
Or belting the ribs of a bucker
It was all that a man could desire.

When it ought to have gone to the cleaner's
(And stayed there, as somebody said!)
It was handy for flogging the weaners
From the drafting-yard into the shed.
And oft it has served as a dish for
A kelpie in need of a drink;
It was all that a fellow could wish for
In many more ways than you'd think.

It was spotted and stained by the weather,
There was more than one hole in the crown,
And it made little difference whether
The rim was turned up or turned down.
It kept out the rain (in a fashion)
And kept off the sun (more or less),

But it merely commanded compassion

Considered as part of one's dress.

Though it wasn't a hat you would bolt with

Or be anxious to borrow or hire,

It was useful to blindfold a colt with

Or handle a bit of barbed wire.

Though the world may have thought it improper

To wear such old rubbish as that,

I'd have scorned the best London-made topper

In exchange for my old battered hat.

William Henry Ogilvie

Once We Went Gaily

Once we went gaily with never a care,
And the bigger the fences, the bolder we were;
Once the wild wind was our spur and our lash,
Once we would laugh at the splinter and crash
As the rails broke behind us, and thrill to the call
Of twelve foot of water or five foot of wall.
Once we could cope with the bucker's demands,
Once the hard puller came back to our hands;
Once the green four-year-old, fretting and free,
Flinging the foam in white flecks to his knee,
Bent to our bidding and held us our place,
O'er the stiffest of country whatever the pace.
To blood running hotly, to hearts beating strong,
Not the longest of days was a moment too long;
'Till the evening drew over its mantle of stars
We would ride to the hoof-beat and rattle of bars.
There was song in the gale, there was kiss in the rain;
Ah! Once we went gaily-but never again!
For the harsh years have stolen that magical zest
When with confident courage we rode with the best.
Now swift and unchallenged the braver may pass
On their reefing blood horses, hard held, on the grass;
The nerve is departed, the rapture denied,
And the chase must be left to the young ones to ride.

William Henry Ogilvie

Our Heritage

This is our heritage; the far-flung grass,
The golden stubble and the dark-red moor;
Men pass and perish as the swift years pass,
But wide and wind-swept still the fields endure.
This is our heritage; the love of sport,
A fair ambition and a friendly strife,
The rivalry of farm and camp and court,
The keen endeavour of a clean, hard life.
The hoofs of horses on the trampled lea,
The crash and rattle of the broken rail
Where the first flight ride reckless, knee to knee,
And bold men face the dangers of the vale.
The cry of hounds, the holloa and the horn ;
The lean red shadows where the foxes run;
To these and all their challenge we were born,
And these we leave behind us, sire to son.
This is the heritage that none can take,
The gift we hold, the gift we give again,
And this the spirit that no Time can break,
So long as England and her fields remain.

William Henry Ogilvie

Our Pilots

You that run the reddened ditch among the drifted leaves
May set the pace to conquerors and guide the sons of kings!
You that on your stealthy feet go through the wood like thieves
May lead your troop, a hundred horse, when once a holloa rings!
You that, if you lay in death, the poorest churl would pass-
You whose brush and mask and pads there's not a tramp would take-
Can set the pride of England riding jealous on the grass
And captains, earls, and countesses contending in your wake!
You're vermin to a vast of folk, but glory to a few.
What is it in your creeping stride that calls and calls and calls?
What is it, when the racing pack runs on from scent to view,
That rallies us to ride our best - dead straight - and chance the falls?

William Henry Ogilvie

Queensland Opal

Opal, little opal, with the red fire glancing,
Set my blood a-spinning, set my pulse a-stir,
Strike the harp of memory, set my dull heart dancing
Southward to the Sunny Land and the love of Her!

Opal, shining opal, let them call you luckless jewel,
Let them curse or let them covet, you are still my heart's desire,
You that robbed the sun and moon and green earth for fuel
To gather to your milky breast and fill your veins with fire!

Green of fluttering gum-leaves above dim water-courses,
Red of rolling dust-clouds, blue of summer skies,
Flash of flints afire beneath the hoofs of racing horses,
Sunlight and moonlight and light of lovers' eyes

Pink clasping hands amid a Southern summer gloaming,
Green of August grasses, white of dew-sprung pearls,
Grey of winging wild geese into the Sunset homing,
Twined with all the kisses of a Queen of Queensland girls!

William Henry Ogilvie

Riderless

A broken bridle trailing,
A saddle scratched and scarred –
And Brown Bee at the railing
That rings the station yard;
No stockman sits astride her,
But, by those flanks a-foam,
Wild Terror was the rider
That lashed the good mare home!

She snorts across the moonlight
Through nostrils red and wide
The challenge of the unbacked colt
To those who dare not ride;
She snorts across the moonlight
Through nostrils wide and red
The terror of a dumb beast
That has looked upon the dead. . .

His saddle and his bridle
We've softly laid aside,
We'll leave the rough gear idle
Till he comes back to ride –
But when the daylight gathers
And when the dawning pales,
The brown mare stands and whinnies
With her lean head on the rails.

William Henry Ogilvie

Running On!

The dusk is down on the river meadows,
The moon is climbing above the fir,
The lane is crowded with creeping shadows,
The gorse is only a distant blur;
The last of the light is almost gone,
But hark! They're running!
They're running on !
The count of the years is steadily growing;
The Old give way to the eager Young;
Far on the hill is the horn still blowing,
Far on the steep are the hounds still strung.
Good men follow the good men gone;
And hark! They're running!
They're running on!

William Henry Ogilvie

Skyline Tommy

He loves all games that good men play-
And plays them clean and straight-
But most the chase of foxes
With all its turns of fate.

When far behind him in the vale
Strings out our beaten hunt
With easy grace he keeps his place,
His rightful place, in front.

He always seems to lead us
Whate'er the pace may be-
' He's always on the skyline! '

As some one said to me.

'Tis true his horses are the best,
'Tis true he steals his start,
But none could hold a line so bold
Without a gallant heart.

So here's to Skyline Tommy,
The bravest of our guides!
In all the scattered counties
No finer horseman rides;
Not soon shall we, the laggards,
The cheering sight forget
Of Tommy high against the sky
In splendid silhouette!

William Henry Ogilvie

The Artist

He stands at no easel, he mixes no paint,
He colours no canvas to gladden the eye,
Yet the picture he makes will not fade or grow faint
Till our love of the chase shall desert us and die.
He's an artist of parts
Who appeals to the hearts
That can thrill to good hunting and hounds in full cry.
By his seat in the saddle, his touch on the reins,
His skill and his mastery, who can gainsay
That here is an artist in all that pertains
To the horse and his handling - a real R.A. ?
An artist 'twould irk
Not to cut out the work
When the hats are crammed down and a fox is away.
You will find him no centre of salon or crush,
No letters attached to his name may he sign,
But there's no one so eager to handle the Brush
And there's none so consistently found on the Line.
If an artist you ask,
Here's the man for the task,
Making pictures where keenness and courage combine.

William Henry Ogilvie

The Australian

The skies that arched his land were blue,
His bush-born winds were warm and sweet,
And yet from earliest hours he knew
The tides of victory and defeat;
From fierce floods thundering at his birth,
From red droughts ravaging while he played,
He learned to fear no foes on earth –
“The bravest thing God ever made!”

The bugles of the motherland
Rang ceaselessly across the sea,
To call him and his lean brown band
To shape imperial destiny;
He went, by youth's grave purpose willed,
The goal unknown, the cost unweighed,
The promise of his blood fulfilled –
“The bravest thing God ever made!”

We know - it is our deathless pride! –
The splendour of his first fierce blows,

How, reckless, glorious, undenied,
He stormed those steel-lined cliffs we know.
And none who saw him scale the height
Behind his reeking bayonet blade
Would rob him of his title-right –
“The bravest thing God ever made!”

Bravest, where half the world of men
Are brave beyond all earth’s rewards,
So stoutly none shall charge again
Till the last breaking of the swords;
Wounded or hale, won home from the war,
Or yonder by the Lone Pine laid,
Give him his due forever more –
“The bravest thing God ever made!”

William Henry Ogilvie

The Battered Brigade

The mark of a stake in the shoulder,
The brand of a wall on the knee,
Are scars to the careless beholder
And blemishes. So it may be ;
But every such blemish endorses
The pluck of a steed unafraid,
And the heart of a lover of horses
Goes out to the Battered Brigade.
Their knocks have been gathered in duty,
Their scars in the front of the fray;
It isn't your cleanest-legged beauty
That's first at the end of the day.
When five foot of timber before us
Has half of the pretty ones stayed,
If you want to catch up to the chorus
Come on with the Battered Brigade!
Turned out in the finest of fettle
'Tis sometimes the soundest that fails
And would rather hear hoofs on the metal
Than follow the rattle of rails;
But out on the grass with hounds racing
And fences as big as they're made
The cream of the gay steeple-chasing
Is left to the Battered Brigade.
Their line is the line of the foxes,
Their pace is the pace of the pack,
Though to-morrow they stand in their boxes
As stiff as the props of a stack;
And I 'll lay you my cheque at the banker's
They're forward next week undismayed.
Good luck to the blemished front-rankers!
Hats off to the Battered Brigade!

William Henry Ogilvie

The Bush, My Lover

The camp-fire gleams resistance
To every twinkling star;
The horse-bells in the distance
Are jangling faint and far;
Through gum-boughs torn and lonely
The passing breezes sigh;
In all the world are only
My star-crowned Gove and I.

The still night wraps Macquarie;
The white moon, drifting slow,
Takes back her silver glory
From watching waves below;
To dalliance I give over
Though half the world may chide,
And clasp my one true Lover
Here on Macquarie side.

The loves of earth grow olden
Or kneel at some new shrine;
Her locks are always golden-
This brave Bush-Love of mine;
And for her star-lit beauty,
And for her dawns dew-pearled,
Her name in love and duty
I guard against the world.

They curse her desert places!
How can they understand
Who know not what her face is
And never held her handy-
Who may have heard the meeting
Of boughs the wind has stirred,
Yet missed the whispered greeting
Our listening hearts have heard.

For some have travelled over
The long miles at her side,
Yet claimed her not as Lover

Nor thought of her as Bride:
And some have followed after
Through sun and mist for years,
Nor held the sunshine laughter,
Nor guessed the raindrops tears.

And if her droughts are bitter,
Her dancing mirage vain-
Are all things gold that glitter?
What pleasure but hath pain?
And since among Love's blisses
Love's penalties must live,
Shall we not take her kisses,
And, taking them, forgive?

The winds of Dawn are roving
The river-oaks astir . . .
What heart were torn of loving
That had no I've but her?
Till last red stars are lighted
And last winds wander West,
Her troth and mine are plighted-
The lover I love best!

William Henry Ogilvie

The Call

Gold and green the elm leaves lean and interlace,
All the coloured woodlands are calling to the Chase.
Dew is on the stubble field, ruddy grows the thorn,
All the withered meadowland is listening for the horn.
Lures of lawn and hammock, rod and bat and ball,
Fade before the coming of a stronger lure than all,
Faint before the whisper of the padding feet that pass,
Fail before the witchery of hoof-beats on the grass.
England in her summer sleep turns about and stirs,
Hears the click of bridle rings, hears the clink of spurs,
Sees the gleam of spotted flanks moving in the gorse,
Sees the flashing scarlet of a Whip upon his horse.
Rippling water charms no more, nor the lazy noon,
Spent among the lime trees where a wild bee makes the tune;
Something fiercer tugs the heart, fans the Wood to fire,
Sets the pulses galloping, and wakes the old desire.
Girths are buckled, reins are drawn, stirrups caught again;
Women turn to sterner play, men go forth like men.
Where the storm-clouds gather, where the strong winds stride,
Autumn calls to England and bids her bravest ride.

William Henry Ogilvie

The Death Of Ben Hall

Ben Hall was out on Lachlans side
With a thousand pounds on his head;
A score of troopers were scattered wide
And a hundred more were ready to ride
Wherever a rumour led.

They had followed his track from the
Weddin Heights And north by the Weelong yards;
Through dazzling days and moonlit nights
They had sought him over their rifle-sights,
With their hands on their trigger guards.

The outlaw stole like a hunted fox
Through the scrub and stunted heath,
And peered like a hawk from his eyrie rocks
Through the waving boughs of the sapling box
On the troopers riding beneath.

His clothes were rent by the clutching thorn
And his blistered feet were bare;
Ragged and torn, with his beard unshorn,
He hid like a beast forlorn,
With a padded path to his lair.

But every night when the white stars rose
He crossed by the Gunning Plain
To a stockman's hut where the Gunning flows,
And struck on the door three swift light blows,
And a hand unhooked the chain -

And the outlaw followed the lone path back
With food for another day;
And the kindly darkness covered his track
And the shadows swallowed him deep and black
Where the starlight melted away.

But his friend had read of the big reward,
And his soul was stirred with greed;
He fastened his door and window board,

He saddled his horse and crossed the ford,
And spurred to the town at speed.

You may ride at a man's or maid's behest
When honour or true love call
And steel your heart to the worst or the best,
But the ride that is ta'en on a traitor's quest
Is the bitterest ride of all.

A hot wind blew from the Lachlan bank
And a curse on its shoulder came;
The pine-trees frowned at him, rank on rank,
The sun on a gathering storm-cloud sank
And flushed his cheek with shame.

He reigned at the Court; and the tale began
That the rifles alone should end;
Sergeant and trooper laid their plan
To draw the net on a hunted man
At the treacherous word of a friend.

False was the hand that raised the chain
And false was the whispered word:
'The troopers have turned to the south again,
You may dare to camp on the Gunning Plain.'
And the weary outlaw heard.

He walked from the hut but a quarter mile
Where a clump of saplings stood
In a sea of grass like a lonely isle;
And the moon came up in a little while
Like silver steeped in blood.

Ben Hall lay down on the dew-wet ground
By the side of his tiny fire;
And a night breeze woke, and he heard no sound
As the troopers drew their cordon round -
And the traitor earned his hire.

And nothing they saw in the dim grey light,
But the little glow in the trees;
And they crouched in the tall cold grass all night,

Each one ready to shoot at sight,
With his rifle cocked on his knees.

When the shadows broke and the dawn's white sword
Swung over the mountain wall,
And a little wind blew over the ford,
A sargeant sprang to his feet and roared:
'In the name of the Queen, Ben Hall!'

Haggard, the outlaw leapt from his bed
With his lean arms held on high,
'Fire!' And the word was scarcely said
When the mountains rang to rain of lead -
And the dawn went drifting by.

They kept their word and they paid his pay
Where a clean man's hand would shrink;
And that was the traitor's master day
As he stood by the bar on his homeward way
And called on the crowd to drink.

He banned no creed and he barred no class,
And he called to his friends by name;
But the worst would shake his head and pass
And none would drink from the bloodstained glass
And the goblet red with shame.

And I know when I hear the last grim call
And my mortal hour is spent,
When the light is hid and the curtains fall
I would rather sleep with the dead Ben Hall
Than go where that traitor went.

William Henry Ogilvie

The Filling Of The Swamps

Hurrah for the storm-clouds sweeping!

Hurrah for the driving rain!

The dull earth out of her sleeping

Is wakened to life again.

There are mirrors of crystal shining

Whenever the cloud-wrack breaks,

And grass-clad banks are twining

A wreath for the fairy lakes - - -

Lakes that are links in an endless chain

For the water is out in the swamps again!

Hurrah for the red-gums standing

So high on the range above!

Hurrah for the she-oaks bending

So low to the wave they love!

Hurrah for the reed-stems slender!

Hurrah for the shade they fling,

For the curve of the cygnet's splendour,

The sheen of the black duck's wing!

Hurrah for the clouds and the glorious rain - - -

The water is out in the swamps again!

Hurrah for the laughing water,

The songs that the streamlets sing!

Whish! The teal duck's mate has sought her

With a stroke of his mottled wing!

Hurrah for the deepening shadows,

The ibis's eagle-eyed,

The dash of the purple swallows,

To bury their breasts in the tide!

Woe! It is woe to the Drought-King's reign!

The water is out in the swamps again!

William Henry Ogilvie

The First Flight

While there's one on his feet with a tale to repeat
And another is sampling a drink,
The eager First Flight have a girth to draw tight
Or a chain to let out by a link;
While the boisterous laugh in that circle of chaff
The opening music has drowned,
You will hear the First Flight as they whisper 'That's right!'
To the note of a favourite hound.
When a holloa makes sure that his start is secure
And dispels every doubt of a run,
When the crowd gallops straight to the obvious gate
With the latch that is never undone,
You will see the First Flight cram a topper on tight,
Catch a willing old nag by the head
And clapping on sail at the blackthorn or rail,
Take the line of the robber in red.
They thunder away over stubble and clay,
Over roots or the level o' lea,
The gallant First Flight that are soon out of sight
While the slow ones are sadly at sea.
The crash of a rail in the cream of the vale
Is to them but a matter of mirth,
And the avalanche fall of a hoof-rattled wall
But the merriest music on earth.
There are gaps, there are gates for the coward who waits,
There are roads for the fellow who fears;
To left nor to right go the gallant First Flight
Save to veer with the chase as it veers.
No field has a fence so dark-looming and dense
Or a rail so unyielding and stout
But if once the First Flight have got in it all right
You may trust them to find a way out.
Now the men who ride first may be frequently cursed
As they press on the faltering pack,
But we're all of us loth to pull up for an oath
When it comes from a field or two back;
And the Master may blame and the jealous declaim
But the weakest must go to the wall,
And it's plain the First Flight have the premier right

If the hounds may be hustled at all.
Come drink with me, then, to the big-hearted men
Who have pluck to sit down and go straight!
Whether farmer or squire may they keep out of wire
And be spared a lift home on a gate!
Fill your glasses tonight to the gallant First Flight,
Let us wish them the luck of the line
And tomorrow's recall to the best game of all,
And the wind that is better than wine!

William Henry Ogilvie

The Game Of Our Hearts

This is the game of our hearts!
Foot to the stirrup! Away!
Care with the night departs,
Joy comes in with the day.
A good horse tossing his rings,
A light rime decking the thorn:
And the heart of the horseman sings
For love of a hunting morn.
This is the game of our hearts!
Mottled flanks in the fern;
Rate where a rabbit starts,
Cheer to a waving stern;
Call that we rush to obey
From a Whip at his post outside:
Gone away! Gone aw-a-a-ay!
And we sit down to ride.
This is the game of our hearts!
Crash and rattle of rail;
Lean hounds driving like darts
Into the breast of the vale.
Tried Age taking the lead,
Rash Youth coated with clay;
Glory and glamour of speed,
And a right fox away.
This is the game of our hearts,
Whatever luck may ensue-
This, where a Master of Arts
May fail and a dunce get through!
This, where the confident thrust;
This, where the cowardly crane;
This, where there's nothing to trust
But fate and the feel of the rein.
This is the game of our hearts!
Squire and lawyer and lord,
Men of the farms and the marts,
Men of the pen and the sword;
Comrades we jog to the meet,
Rivals we ride the line,
And the sound of the hoofs is sweet

And the taste of the wind is wine.

William Henry Ogilvie

The Happiest Man In England

The happiest man in England rose an hour before the dawn;
The stars were in the purple and the dew was on the lawn;
He sang from bed to bathroom-he could only sing 'John Peel' ;
He donned his boots and breeches and he buckled on his steel.
He chose his brightest waistcoat and his stock with care he tied,
Though scarce a soul would see him in his early morning ride.
He hurried to the stable through the dim light of the stars,
And there his good horse waited, clicking rings and bridle-bars.
The happiest man in England took a grey lock in his hand
And settled in his saddle like a seagull on the sand.
Then from the shadowy kennel all the eager pack outpoured,
And the happiest man in England saw them scatter on the sward.
He trotted through the beeches long before the east was red,
Then he turned across the pasture and he gave the grey his head;
And the hounds swept on beside him in a merry mottled crowd,
And he blew them down the valley with a horn-blast, good and loud.
The happiest man in England turned down the stony lane,
The heart of him was singing as he heard the hoofs again;
And where the blind ditch narrows and the deep-set gorse begins
He waved his pack to covert, and he cheered them through the whins.
He heard old Gladstone whimper, then Merryman give tongue;
He saw the green gorse shaking as the whole pack checked and swung;
Then through the ditch came creeping a shy cub lithe and lean,
And nothing but a cocked grey ear betrayed that he was seen.
But once beyond the brambles and across the heath and clear
With half a league of open ground and not a whinbush near,
The happiest man in England blew the freedom of the pass,
And two-and-twenty couple backed his music on the grass.
He holds no brief for slaughter, but the cubs must take their chance;
The weak must first go under that the strong may lead the dance;
And when the grey strides out and shakes the foam- flecks from his rings
The happiest man in England would not change his place with kings.

William Henry Ogilvie

The Horse Of Your Heart

When you've ridden a four-year-old half of the day
And, foam to the fetlock, they lead him away,
With a sigh of contentment you watch him depart
While you tighten the girths on the horse of your heart.
There is something between you that both understand
As it thrills an old message from bit-bar to hand.
As he changes his feet in that plunge of desire
To the thud of his hoofs all your courage takes fire.
When an afternoon fox is away, when begins
The rush down the headland that edges the whins,
When you challenge the Field, making sure of a start,
Would you ask any horse but this horse of your heart?
There's the rasping big double a green one would shirk,
But the old fellow knows it as part of his work;
He has shortened his stride, he has measured the task,
He is up, on, and over as clean as you'd ask.
There's the water before you-no novice's test,
But a jump to try deeply the boldest and best;
Just a tug at the leather, a lift of the ear,
And the old horse is over it-twenty foot clear.
There is four foot of wall and a take-off in plough,
And you're glad you are riding no tenderfoot now
But a seasoned campaigner, a master of art,
The perfect performer-the horse of your heart.
For here's where the raw one will falter and baulk,
And here's where the tyro is pulled to a walk,
But the horse of your heart never dwells or demurs
And is over the top to a touch of the spurs.
To you who ride young ones half-schooled and half-broke,
What joy to find freedom a while from your yoke!
What bliss to be launched with the luck of the start
On the old one, the proved one, the horse of your heart !

William Henry Ogilvie

The Huntsman's Horse

The galloping seasons have slackened his pace,
And stone wall and timber have battered his knees
It is many a year since he gave up his place
To live out his life in comparative ease.
No more does he stand with his scarlet and white
Like a statue of marble girth deep in the gorse;
No more does he carry the Horn of Delight
That called us to follow the huntsman's old horse.
How many will pass him and not understand,
As he trots down the road going cramped in his stride,
That he once set the pace to the best in the land
Ere they tightened his curb for a lady to ride!
When the music begins and a right one's away,
When hoof-strokes are thudding like drums on the ground,
The old spirit wakes in the worn-looking grey
And the pride of his youth comes to life at a bound.
He leans on the bit and he lays to his speed,
To the winds of the open his stiffness he throws,
And if spirit were all he'd be up with the lead
Where the horse that supplants him so easily goes.
No double can daunt him, no ditch can deceive,
No bank can beguile him to set a foot wrong,
But the years that have passed him no power can retrieve-
To the swift is their swiftness, their strength to the strong!
To the best of us all comes a day and a day
When the pace of the leaders shall leave us forlorn,
So we'll give him a cheer - the old galloping grey -
As he labours along to the lure of the Horn.

William Henry Ogilvie

The Last Fence

When the last fence looms up, I am ready
And I hope when the rails of it crack
There'll be nothing in front but the Master,
The huntsman, the fox, and the pack;
And I hope when fate bids me go under
In this last of my manifold spills,
That we're riding the line of a hill fox
With half a mile start to his hills.
I hope that last fence is a stiff one;
I hope, for the sake of our name,
They may say, ' If the task was beyond them
They both of them went at it game! '
And when the white girths flash above me,
And darkness comes down on the field,
Let them carry me home on a hurdle
As the Spartan went home on his shield.
And when I am out of the running
Let the good men go on with the pack;
I would not one comrade should falter,
I would not one friend should turn back;
And whether it be on the grass-land,
The hill-side, the heath or the loam,
Let the gallant ones keep going for'ard-
The slow ones can carry me home.
Let them bury me down in the churchyard,
But lay my good horse where he fell;
When the ditches are blind in the autumn
Some friend may remember and tell,
While under the thong of the west wind
The day-nettle trembles and stirs:
'Twas from here that a horseman undaunted
Went Home in his boots and his spurs.'

William Henry Ogilvie

The Last Muster

All day we had driven the starving sheep to the scrub where the axes ply,
And the weakest had lagged upon weary feet and dropped from the ranks to die;

And the crows Hew up from the rotting heaps and the ewes too weak to stand,
And the fences Haunted red skins like flags, and the dour drought held the land.
And at night as I lay a-dreaming, I woke, and a silver moon
Shone fair on a dancing river and laughed to a broad lagoon,
And the grass turned over the fences and rippled like ripening grain,
And clouds hung low on the hilltops, and earth smelt sweet with the rain.

And in at the open window the lowing of cattle came -
A mob that had never a laggard and never a beast that was lame;
And wethers, a thousand thousand, and ewes with their lambs beside,
Moved over the green flats feeding, spread river to ranges wide.

And horses whinnied below me, and leaning I watched them pass,
Lusty and strong and playful like horses on spring-tide grass
When they whinny one to another, strong-voiced, and a gallop brings
Foam to the Hank, be it only from paddock to stockyard wings.

Slowly they moved in the moon-mist, heads low in the cool night-dew,
Snatching the long bush grasses, breast-high as they wandered through;
Slowly they moved in the moon-mist, and never a horse on the plains
Was red with the gall of the collar or marked with a chafe of the chains.

And behind them a hundred drovers rode slow on their horses white,
All brave with their trappings of silver that Hashed in the silver light;
Buckle and stirrup and bridle, and spurs for their better speed -
Singing behind the cattle like drovers on royal feed.

And I cooeed, and one came over that rode on the nearest wing,
And I called to him, "Ho, there, drover! say, whose is the mob you bring?"
Then he reined his horse by the window, all silver-bitted and shod,
And spoke, and his words rang sadly, "These are the cattle of God!"

So I said to him, "Where are they bound for?" and he raised his hand to the
West:

They are bound for the star-fenced pastures on God's own rivers, to rest."
And I asked him "Where did you muster?" and he answered me sadly again,

"From every gully and sandhill, from every valley and plain,

"From the swamps of the green kapunyah, from the reeds at the red creek-side,
From the thickets of twisted mulga, from the clay-pans furrowed and dried,
From the track to the Western goldfields, from the ruts of the Great North Road,
Where the dingoes go and the crows fly low we have gathered the beasts of
God."

And I said, "Then has God repented because that He sent no rain?
And has God looked down in His pity on the poor dumb beasts He has slain?"
But the drover turned in his saddle and answered, his eyes in mine,
"Not so; for the beasts were slaughtered by man of his greed's design:

"God gave to them feed and water and pastures so wild and wide
They had fed him a thousand million from here to the ocean side;
But man in his greed came after and fenced them on hill and plain
And cursed the God in His heaven that would not send them His rain;

"And man's be the blame of the bleaching bone and the shame of the rotting
hide,
And the pity of lorn lambs crying alone on the wind-swept mountain-side,
Of the weak horse down in his harness, of the bullock dead by the dray,
Of the moan of the thirsty cattle for ever and ever and aye!"

And he spoke to his steed and left me - moved out on the mist it seemed,
And I woke to the red burned acres, and knew that I had but dreamed.

William Henry Ogilvie

The Man To Follow

Apart from the crowd with its banter and mirth,
Sitting loose on his mare with an eye to the whins,
He has looked to his curb, he has tightened his girth,
He has marked out a place where the big double thins.
Here's a good one to follow,
To follow, to follow-
A good one to follow when business begins.
'Mid the murmur of meeting, the laugh and the joke,
'Mid the trampling of horses, the cheer and the rate,
He has caught the low whimper when Challenger spoke
And has seen the raised hat of the man by the gate.
He's the right one to follow,
To follow, to follow,
The right one to follow and trust with your fate.
When they tumble from covert, each hound giving tongue,
When they carry it, confident, over the plough,
When the hurrying Field down the headland is strung,
Here's the man for your money! You follow him now!
He's the right one to follow,
To follow, to follow,
So bundle and after him! Never mind how!
Ere the gay coffee-housers are into their stride
He is over the hedge with a trifle to spare
And down in his saddle and ready to ride,
For whoever may miss it he means to be there!
This right one to follow,
To follow, to follow,
This lean lashing lad on the bonny blood mare.
If you're riding a horse that can gallop and jump,
That can creep through a cat-hole or spread at a ditch,
If you don't mind a thorn-scratch, a bruise, or a bump,
A drain or a double and Devil care which,
Here's the right one to follow,
To follow, to follow-
The man that's a wizard, the mare that's a witch!

William Henry Ogilvie

The Men Of The Open Spaces

These are the men with the sun-tanned faces
and the keen far-sighted eyes-
the men of the open spaces,
and the land where the mirage lies.

The men who have learnt to master
the forces of fire and drought
and the demon Flood's disaster
in the fields of furthest out.

The men who have stood together
and shared in the fight with fate
and known the strength of the tether
that holds a mate to his mate.

Who ride with a gallant bearing
where every saddle's a throne,
and each is an emperor sharing
an empire enough for his own.

They are strangers to airs and graces,
and scornful of power and pride-
the Men of the Open Spaces,
who rule the world when they ride.

William Henry Ogilvie

The Music Of The Chase

I don't know any tune from any other,
I couldn't sing a song if I were paid,
I couldn't for the ransom of a brother,
Hum a single thing that anybody played.
But I know one melody
That can stir the heart of me-
It's the mad and merry challenge of the horn !
With the chime of hounds that follow,
And the cheer and rate and holloa
That can shake the very dewdrops from the thorn!
I couldn't make a fortune with a fiddle,
I scarce can sing a psalm-tune in a pew,
I couldn't lead a partner 'down the middle'
With a more than sporting chance of getting through.
I couldn't for my life
Play a cornet or a fife
And the flute was never any friend of mine;
But I do appreciate
When a yokel on a gate
Gives a holloa that can hold us to the line!
For everything is music when you hunt,
From the guttural ' Gar'r' on there!' of the Whip
To the ' Tally-ho !' of some one up in front
Or the holloa of a herdsman in the dip;
The crash of post and rail
In a sort of running scale,
The thunder as the gallopers go by,
The ringing' For'ard on ! '
That is swallowed up anon
In the chorus of the pack against the sky !
So let others swear by Melba if they will,
By Crossley, Tetrazzini, and the rest;
I 'll be happy if I hear upon the hill
The voices of the ladies I love best-
The voices of a pack
Running hot upon his track,
And the cheer of one that saw the way he went!
When they hustle him along
Is there any grander song

Than the song of sixteen couple on a scent?

William Henry Ogilvie

The Opening Run

The rain-sodden grass in the ditches is dying,
The berries are red to the crest of the thorn ;
Coronet-deep where the beech leaves are lying
The hunters stand tense to the twang of the horn ;
Where rides are re-filled with the green of the mosses,
All foam-flecked and fretful their long line is strung,
You can see the white gleam as a starred forehead tosses,
You can hear the low chink as a bit-bar is flung.
The world's full of music. Hounds rustle the rover
Through brushwood and fern to a glad 'Gone away!'
With a 'Come along, Pilot! '-one spur-touch and over-
The huntsman is clear on his galloping grey;
Before him the pack's running straight on the stubble-
Toot-toot-too-too-too-oot ! ,_, Tow-row-ow-ow-ow ! '
The leaders are clambering up through the double
And glittering away on the brown of the plough.
The front rank, hands down, have the big fence's measure;
The faint hearts are craning to left and to right;
The Master goes through with a crash on The Treasure,
The grey takes the lot like a gull in his flight.
There's a brown crumpled up, lying still as a dead one.
There 's a roan mare refusing, as stubborn as sin,
While the breaker flogs up on a green underbred one
And smashes the far-away rail with a grin.
The chase carries on over hilltop and hollow,
The life of Old England, the pluck and the fun;
And who would ask more than a stiff line to follow
With hounds running hard in the Opening Run?

William Henry Ogilvie

The Pearl Of Them All

Gaily in front of the stockwhip
The horses come galloping home,
Leaping and bucking and playing
With sides all a lather of foam;
But painfully, slowly behind them,
With head to the crack of the fall,
And trying so gamely to follow
Comes limping the pearl of them all.

He is stumbling and stiff in the shoulder,
And splints from the hoof to the knee,
But never a horse on the station
Has half such a spirit as he;
Give these all the boast of their breeding
These pets of the paddock and stall,
But ten years ago not their proudest
Could live with the pearl of them all.

No journey has ever yet beat him,
No day was too heavy or hard,
He was king of the camp and the muster
And pride of the wings of the yard;
But Time is relentless to follow;
The best of us bow to his thrall;
And death, with his scythe on his shoulder,
Is dogging the pearl of them all.

I watch him go whinnying past me,
And memories come with a whirl
Of reckless, wild rides with a comrade
And laughing, gay rides with a girl —
How she decked him with lilies and love-knots
And plaited his mane at my side,
And once in the grief of a parting
She threw her arms round him and cried.
And I promised — I gave her my promise
The night that we parted in tears,
To keep and be kind to the old horse
Till Time made a burden of years;

And then for his sake and one woman's...
So, fetch me my gun from the wall!
I have only this kindness to offer
As gift to the pearl of them all.

Here! hold him out there by the yard wing,
And don't let him know by a sign:
Turn his head to you — ever so little!
I can't bear his eyes to meet mine.
Then — stand still, old boy! for a moment ...
These tears, how they blind as they fall!
Now, God help my hand to be steady...
Good-bye! — to the pearl of them all!

William Henry Ogilvie

The Pilot

Time was when the sportsman, with chivalrous care,
Would find a safe line for his follower fair,
And clearing the double stiff-planted and strong ,
Would turn in his saddle to cheer her along.
But now we've for pilot a damsel astride
On a stud-book and blood one, determined to ride,
With an eye for a country and vowed to the van;
And the slow ones may keep her in sight if they can.
As she lashes along in the wake of the pack
Not a man need expect her to pause or look back,
And the laggards who ride on her resolute trail
Need not wait for her cheer over bullfinch or rail.
To those who may follow not hers to give heed
So long as no rival shall challenge her lead!
If she levels a gap, if she smashes a bar,
They may take it or leave it, whoever they are.
As she rips at her fences our ears she may shock
With the ' Damn you, come up !' of the steeplechase jock;
Should we choose her picked panel, avoiding a worse,
We may find ourselves warned with a suitable curse.
Yet later, at tea, she's all glamour and charm,
Low-voiced, with a laughter and smile that disarm ;
And, witched by her grace, we forget what we heard,
While we only remember
she went like a bird

.

William Henry Ogilvie

The Queen Of Yore

Slowly she hobbles past the town, grown old at heart and gray;
With misty eyes she stumbles down along the well-known way;
She sees her maiden march unrolled by billabong and bend,
And every gum's a comrade old and every oak's a friend;
But gone the smiling faces that welcomed her of yore -
They crowd her tented places and hold her hand no more.
And she, the friend they once could trust to serve their eager wish,
Shall show no more the golden dust that hides in many a dish;
And through the dismal mullock-heaps she threads her mournful way
Where here and there some gray-beard keeps his windlass-watch to-day;
Half-flood no more she looses her reins as once of old
To wash the busy sluices and whisper through the gold.
She sees no wild-eyed steers above stand spear-horned on the brink;
The brumby mobs she used to love come down no more to drink;
Where green the grasses used to twine above them, shoulder-deep,
Through the red dust - a long, slow line - crawl in the starving sheep;
She sees no crossing cattle that Western drovers bring,
No swimming steeds that battle to block them when they ring.

She sees no barricaded roofs, no loop-holed station wall,
No foaming steed with flying hoofs to bring the word 'Ben Hall!'
She sees no reckless robbers stoop behind their ambush stone,
No coach-and-four, no escort troop; - but, very lorn and lone,
Watches the sunsets redden along the mountain side
Where round the spurs of Weddin the wraiths of Weddin ride.

Tho' fettered with her earthen bars and chained with bridge and weir
She goes her own way with the stars; she knows the course to steer!
And when her thousand rocky rills foam, angry, to her feet,
Rain-heavy from the Cowra hills she takes her vengeance sweet,
And leaps with roar of thunder, and buries bridge and ford,
That all the world may wonder when the Lachlan bares her sword!

Gray River! let me take your hand for all your memories old -
Your cattle-kings, your outlaw-band, your wealth of virgin gold;
For once you held, and hold it now, the sceptre of a queen,
And still upon your furrowed brow the royal wreaths are green;
Hold wide your arms, the waters! Lay bare your silver breast
To nurse the sons and daughters that spread your empire west!

William Henry Ogilvie

The Riding Of The Rebel

He was the Red Creek overseer, a trusted man and true,
Whose shoulder never left the wheel when there was work to do;
Through all the day he rode the run, and when the lights grew dim
The sweetest wife that ever loved would wait and watch for him.
She brought him dower of golden hair and eyes of laughing blue,
Stout heart and cunning bridle-hand to guide the mulga through;
And when the mob was mustered from the box flats far and wide
She loved to mount the wildest colts that no one else would ride.

And once it chanced a wayward steed, half-mouthed and roughly broke,
Denied the touch of gentle hand and gentler words she spoke,
And, plunging forward like the ship that feels the autumn gales,
He reared and lost his footing and fell backwards on the rails.
Her husband bent above her with cold terror at his heart --
The form was still he loved so well, the wan lips would not part;
And all the day in trance she lay, but when the stars smiled down
He heard his name low-whispered and he claimed her still his own.

And afterwards he spoke his fear: 'Heart's love, if you should die! . . .
Unless you take our orders from some other man than I,
You shall never finger bridle, never mount on horse's back,
Till the outlaw on Glenidol is a broken lady's hack!'
There's an outlaw on Glenidol that is known through all the West,
And three men's lives are on his head, bold riders of the best;
The station lads have heard the sneer that travelled far and wide,
And flung the answering challenge: 'Come and teach us how to ride!'

Roll up, ye merry riders all, whose honour is to guard!
We've mustered up the ranges and the Rebel's in the yard,
His open mouth and stamping foot and keen eye flashing fire
Repeat the temper of his dam, the mettle of his sire.
Roll up, ye merry riders all, from hut and camp and town!
You'll have to stick like plaster when the stockyard rails go down.
But the boss will come down handsome, as the boss is wont to come,
To the first who brings The Rebel under spurs and greenhide home.

And the stockmen heard the challenge from the Cooper to the Bree,
And rode from hut and cattle-camp by one and two and three
To keep their horseman's honour clean and play a hero's part,

To best the bold Glenidol boys and break The Rebel's heart.
And Ruddy Neil, the breaker, from the Riverine came through
With all the latest breaking-gear and all the wiles he knew,
But ere the saddle was secured, before a girth was drawn,
The Rebel's forefoot split his skull -- they buried him at dawn!

Marora Mick, the half-caste, from the Flinders River came
To give the South-the-Border boys a lesson at the game;
But he got a roguish welcome when he entered New South Wales,
For The Rebel used his blood and brains to paint the stockyard rails!
And Mulga Jack came over from the Yuinburra side --
The horse was never foaled, they say, that Mulga could not ride;
With a mouth as hard as a miser's heart, a will like the Devil's own,
The Rebel made for the Stony Range, with the man who wouldn't be thrown;

The Rebel made for the Stony Range, where the plain and the scrub-land meet,
And the dead boughs cracked at his shoulder-blade, the stones leapt under his feet,
And the ragged stems of the gidyeas cut and tore as they blundered past . . .
And Jack lay cold in the sunset gold -- he had met with his match at last.
And once again the challenge rang, the bitterer for scorn,
And spoke the bold Glenidol boys, their jackets mutlga-torn:
'A week have we been hunting him and riding fast and hard
To give you all another chance -- The Rebel's in the yard!'

And the stockmen heard the challenge from the Cooper to the Bree;
But 'I'm getting old!' 'I'm getting stiff!' or 'I've a wife, you see!'
Came whispered to the border; and the horse they could not tame
Had saved Glenidol from disgrace and cleansed a sullied name.
But ere the reddening sun went down and night on the ranges broke
A stranger youth to the slip-rails rode, and fastened his horse and spoke
Softly and low, yet none so low but that every man there heard:
'I've come to tackle your outlaw colt,' -- and he looked as good as his word.

He bridled The Rebel in failing light, and saddled the colt and drew
The straps of his gearing doubly tight, and looked that his 'length' was true.
He mounted The Rebel and gave the word, and the clattering rails went down,
And the outlaw leapt at the open gate and into the shadows brown;
But he settled himself to the soothing voice and the touch of the fondling hand,
As it followed the curve of his arching neck from wither to forehead-band;
His flanks were wet with the fresh-sprung sweat, his shoulders lathered with foam,

And he bent to the bridle and played with the bit as he came at a canter home.

And the boys were dumb with wonder, and sat, and the Red Creek overseer
Was first to drop from the stockyard fence and give him a hearty cheer.

He raised his hat in answer and --- the golden hair floated free!

And the blue eyes lit with laughter as she shouted merrily:

'You can reach me down my bridle, give my girths and saddle back,

For the outlaw of Glenidol is a broken lady's hack!'

William Henry Ogilvie

The Right Sort

We have hustled that litter in Heatherlie Whin,
Two crouch in the bracken, two dodge in the corn,
But the fifth one as swift as the shadow of sin
Was away when he heard the first note of the horn.
He skimmed the broad meadow in front of us all
With his brush in the air and his mask to the moor,
Looking back with a grin from the top of the wall
Ere he dropped to the heather cool, safe, and secure.
His brothers and sisters will fall by the way;
They'll be harried and headed and chopped in a ride;
But this one will live for a galloping day
And lead us and pound us and scatter us wide.
Let him travel! – a good one. We'll meet him again
When the fields in the dusk of December are dressed;
We shall need all our courage to follow him then,
When he steals o'er the open, a fox of the best.

William Henry Ogilvie

The Second Whip Explains

Now, gatherin' 'ounds is a job I like
W'en the winter day draws in,
W'en shadows are lyin' by every dyke
An' creepin' out o' the whin ;
W'en 'Armony 's missin' an' Houtcast too,
An' the Master 'e says to me-
'Jim, you go back to that gorse we drew,
For it's there them beggars 'll be ! '
Oh, gatherin' 'ounds is the job I love,
W'en the dark comes down on the thorn
An' the moon is 'ung in the sky above
Like a glitterin' 'untin' 'orn
W'en I ride the banks like a glidin' ghost
An' the dips like a witch o' fear-
This is the job wot I loves the most
In the darkest days o' the year.
Though it's me that knows that the cunnin' old rags
Will be 'alfway 'ome by now,
O' course if you're sent for a 'ound wot lags
You must do as you're ordered 'ow;
An' it's allus the custom, so I've found,
With a pack worth callin' a pack
That a Whip goes back for the missin' 'ound-
An' it's mostly me goes back!
Though I know the beggars is runnin' the road
On a breast-high scent o' soup,
Will I use my brains ? - No, I 'll be blowed
If I 'd ever so 'umble stoop;
If they think that a fox'ound don't have wits,
Let 'em think so, then, I say!
Some folk must gather up sense by bits
As a fed 'oss gathers 'is 'ay.
No, I don't 'alf mind keepin' long late hours,
For it's all in the day for me,
An' I know there's a glass to be 'ad at the Towers,
An' there's Oakwood Farm for tea,
With a pail o' gruel all mixed, I guess,
An' a stall that the old 'oss knows,
An' a seat by the kitchen fire wi' Bess

W'en the cook an' the 'ousemaid goes!
An' that's wy I ride so cheery back
W'en the Master says to me -
'Jim ' - wi' 'is keen heye hover the pack - ,
I am two' ounds short, or three.'
An' that's wy I 'm Houtcast's honly friend
An' 'Armony's life-long pal,
Because if they kept wi' the pack to the end,
Well - 'ow would I see my gal?

William Henry Ogilvie

The Shadow On The Blind

Last night I walked among the lamps that gleamed,
And saw a shadow on a window blind,
A moving shadow; and the picture seemed
To call some scene to mind.

I looked again; a dark form to and fro
Swayed softly as to music full of rest,
Bent low, bent lower: - Still I did not know.
And then, at last, I guessed.

And through the night came all old memories flocking,
White memories like the snowflakes round me whirled.
'All's well!' I said; 'The mothers still sit rocking
The cradles of the world!'

William Henry Ogilvie

The Stable Path

The last red rose on the arch has faded,
The border has mourned for its last white flower;
The dahlias droop where the frost has raided,
The grass is wet with an autumn shower;
Dull are the paths with their leaf-strewn gravel,
Cold is the wind as it wanders by,
Still there's a path that a man can travel
Happy at heart though the roses die.
The path to the stable!- Though summer be ended,
Though down through the garden no bird be astir,
This path has new melodies tunefully blended-
The flick of a whip with the clink of a spur!
So-on through the yew-trees where shadows strike chiller,
Across the paved courtyard, at last to the stall
Where, pawing in eagerness, chained on the pillar
Stands, champing his bit-bars, the Pearl of them All!

William Henry Ogilvie

The Stockyard Liar

If ever you're handling a rough one
There's bound to be perched on the rails
Of the Stockyard some grizzled old tough one
Whose flow of advice never fails;
There are plenty of course, who aspire
To make plain that you're only a dunce,
But the most insupportable liar
Is the man who has ridden 'em once.
He will tell you a tale and a rum one,
With never a smile on his face,
How he broke for old Somebody Some-one
At some unapproachable place;
How they bucked and they snorted and squealed,
How he spurred 'em and flogged 'em, and how
He would gallop 'em round till they reeled -
But he's 'getting too old for it now'.

How you're standing too far from her shoulder,
Or too jolly close to the same,
How he could have taught you to hold her
In the days when he 'followed the game';
He will bustle, annoy and un-nerve us
Till even our confidence fails -
O Shade of old Nimrod! preserve us
From the beggar that sits on the rails!

How your reins you are holding too tightly,
Your girths might as well be unloosed,
How 'young chaps' don't handle them rightly,
And horses don't buck 'like they used';
Till at last, in a bit of passion,
You ask him in choicest 'Barcoo'
To go and be hanged in a fashion
That turns the whole atmosphere blue!

And the chances are strong the old buffer
Has been talking for something to say,
And never rode anything rougher
Than the shaft of old Somebody's dray;

And the horses he thinks he has broken
Are clothes-horses sawn out of pine,
And his yarns to us simply betoken
The start of a senile decline.

There are laws for our proper protection
From murder and theft and the rest,
But the criminal wanting inspection
Is riding a rail in the West;
And the law that the country requires
At the hands of her statesmen of sense
Is the law that makes meat of the liars
That can sit a rough buck - on the fence!

William Henry Ogilvie

The Straight Goer

The ringing, hanging hen-roost thief-we have no use for him;
When they tear him up and eat him not a single eye grows dim;
But when a straight-necked traveller goes gallantly away
We grieve not if we lose him, for he'll run some other day.
The loafing, skirting, loud-mouthed hound that hangs about your horse
The while his bolder comrades gather thorn-wounds in the gorse-
We care not if he stops a kick or ties himself in wire,
The leader running straight and true's the hound of our desire.
Give me the fox that holds his point though fools and fate combine,
Give me the hound that follows him with nose upon the line,
The horse that never turns his head at fence or five- barred gate,
The man who has the needful nerve to cross a country straight!
And in the larger field of life let skirters stand aside,
Make way for those who want to work and those who dare to ride!
The only one who's worth a place to risk a fall with fate
Is he who steels his gallant heart and rides his country straight.

William Henry Ogilvie

The True Sportsman

The real ones, the right ones, the straight ones and the true,
The pukka, peerless sportsmen-their numbers are but few;
The men who keep on playing though the sun be in eclipse,
The men who go on losing with a laugh upon their lips.
The men who care but little for the laurels of renown;
The men who turn their horses back to help the man that's down;
The fearless and the friendly ones, the courtly and the kind;
The men whose lion courage is with gentleness combined.
My notion of a sportsman ? - I'll try, then, to define.
For preference well bred, of course, of some clean- living line;
With pride of place and ancestry whose service was the King's;
With all a noble knight's contempt for low, left- handed things.
Not the 'good sport' who burdens us with cheap and futile chat
Of the 'pedigree' of this one and the 'outside chance' of that,
But a man who loves good horses just to handle them and ride
Where the fences call to valour and the English grass lies wide.
All the best and truest sportsmen I have lived with and have known
Have a changeless faith within them which their simple hearts enthrone,
Believing in the God that made the green fields passing fair,
The God that gave good courage - and to every man his share.
And all the truest sportsmen I have met have had this gift:
A love of all the classic books that lighten and uplift;
And all have loved red woodlands, swift birds and coloured flowers;
And all have played with children and counted not the hours.
And I think when God has gathered all the men that He has made,
The perfect British sportsman may stand forward unafraid;
For, brave and kind and courtly, and clean of heart and hand,
No life than his seems nearer to the life our Maker planned.

William Henry Ogilvie

The Veteran

He asks no favour from the Field, no forward place demands
Save what he claims by fearless heart and light and dainty hands;
No man need make a way for him at ditch or gap or gate,
He rides on level terms with all, if not at equal weight

His eyes are somewhat dimmer than they were in days of yore,
A blind fence now might trap him where it never trapped before;
But when the rails stand clean and high, the walls stand big and bare,
There's no man rides so boldly as there's no man rides so fair.

There is no other in the Field so truly loved as he;
We better like to see him out than any younger three;
And yet one horseman day by day rides jealous at his rein
Old Time that smarts beneath the whip of fifty years' disdain.

He crowds him at his fences, for he envies his renown;
Some day he'll Cross him at a leap and bring a good man down,
And Time will take a long revenge for years of laughing scorn,
And fold the faded scarlet that was ne'er more nobly worn.

Here's luck! Oh! good, grey sportsman! May Time be long defied
By careful seat and Cunning hand and health and heart to ride,
And when that direful day be come that surely shall befall,
We'll know you still unbeaten, save by Time that beats us all!

William Henry Ogilvie

To One Of Our Wounded

Old Man, by your broad contented grin
And the gleam in your quiet eyes,
You are back with 'Jorrocks' and 'Binjimin'
In the land where the good fun lies;
You are riding where rifles reach you not
On a line both safe and sure
From the meet at the 'Cat and Custard Pot'
To the kill on Wandermoor.
In vain do the cannon of memory call
From the Flanders fields forlorn,
When you hear by the stacks of Barley Hall
The twang of the 'ard un's' horn;
And little you reck of a broken thigh
And a bandaged arm to boot,
When the old comedian canters by
On his 'henterpriseless brute.'
For, back to you comes each sound and sight
At a touch of the magic pen,
Till you take your place in the old first flight,
With a lead on the grass again,
And Surtees, the sage with the jester's art,
Would be proud had he lived to know
He had brightened an hour for your gallant heart
With the ring of his 'Tally-ho!'

William Henry Ogilvie

Tom Moody

Death had beckoned with grisly hand
To the finest Whip in hunting-land.
' My time is short,' Tom Moody said,
' Master, when I am done and dead,
Lay me at Barrow beneath the yew
In the dear old shire we have hunted through.
Let six earth-stoppers carry me there
With slow step and heads bare.
Bring the old horse that I used to ride,
With my whip and boots to his saddle tied.
Fasten the brush in his forehead-band
Of the last dog-fox we brought to hand.
And let a couple of old hounds come,
Fitting mourners to follow me home.
Then, when you've laid me safe down there,
Give three view-holloas will shake the air,
And you'll know, if I do not lift my head,
There is no mistake-Tom Moody's dead!'

William Henry Ogilvie

War Heel!

Thrusters are steadying; hounds at a loss,
Checked at the stile leading into the lane,
Feel for it forward and feather across,
Keen to recover their quarry again.
Horsemen sit silently watching the pack;
Nothing is heard but the clinking of steel,
Then a low whimper-one hound running back-
'War' heel, there! 'War' heel!
Life's but a heart-stirring hunt at the best.
Checked by old memories, bid them begone!
Fling to the front with a laugh and a jest,
All that you seek for is for'ard and on !
Never look backward and never repine,
Keep with the pack as they scatter and wheel,
Turn from the years that have trampled the line!

'War' heel, there! 'War' heel!

William Henry Ogilvie

Wind O' The Autumn

I love you, wind o' the Autumn, that came from I know not where,
To lead me out of the toiling world to a ballroom fresh and fair,
Where the poplars tall and golden and the beeches rosy and red
Are setting to woodland partners and dancing the stars to bed!

Oh! say, wild wind o' the Autumn, may I dance this dance with you
Decked out in your gown of moonmist and jewelled with drops of dew?
For I know no waiting lover with arms that so softly twine,
And I know no dancing partner whose step is so made for mine!

William Henry Ogilvie

Witchery Knows!

Witchery knows what it means

When the oats and the barley, the wheat and the beans,
Have been built into stacks and the stubbles are bare;
When the woodlands are flaming in russet and rose,
When there's rime on the grass and a nip in the air,
Witchery knows!

Witchery knows very well

When the gorse-tops are shaking down there in the dell,
And a Whip like a statue waits under a tree,
That the moment has come to be up on her toes
And reaching her lean little head to her knee-
Witchery knows!

Witchery knows how to creep

When the banks are still blind and the ditches are deep,
When a double looms up scarce a cat could get through,
While his true tongue beyond it old Ruffian throws,
Little Witchery knows how to take it in two-
Witchery knows!

Witchery knows how to race

When the hard-riding leaders are cramming on pace
And the dog-hounds are lifting it over the plough;
She hears the glad horn and the challenge it blows,
And she knows how to answer that merry tow-row-
Witchery knows!

Witchery knows the whole game

From the find of a fox to the death of the same;
And she knows when the woods in full splendour are dressed,
And the berries hang black where the elder-bush grows,
That it's time for a good mare to gallop her best-

Witchery knows

!

William Henry Ogilvie

Yonder He Goes!

Always our fathers were hunters, lords of the pitiless spear,
Chasing in English woodlands the wild white ox and the deer,
Feeling the edge of their knife-blades, trying the pull of their bows,
At a sudden foot in the forest thrilling to ' Yonder he goes ! '
Safe for the space of a summer the cubs may tumble and play,
Boldly from April to August the dog-fox chooses his way;
But soon as the beech leaf reddens, soon as the chill wind blows,
He must steal, cat-foot, listening, ready for' Yonder he goes ! '
The sound of a horn in the bracken, the sound of a cheer in the ride;
Fourteen couple running for blood as though to the I brush of him tied!
Fourteen couple screaming for blood, and every hound of them knows
This is his right from the ages - the heart-stirring ` Yonder he goes!'
Not for the lust of killing, not for the places of pride,
Not for the hate of the hunted we English saddle and ride,
But because in the gift of our fathers the blood in our veins that flows
Must answer for ever and ever the challenge of `Yonder he goes ! '

William Henry Ogilvie