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BY

Bequest from the late  
Percival Serle Esq.

A lifelong friend of this  
Institution.

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## JOSEPHUS RILEY

But behind him what a yell  
 Of execration fell  
 From lips that lent themselves to shapes of great  
 profanitee!

For the people of that town  
 Were done a lovely brown  
 By plain Josephus Riley, from the North Countree.

And here's the reason why:  
 The tea was simply DRY!  
 You might *eat* it, but to drink it was impossibilitée;  
 Yet, curious to state,  
 Men did not appreciate  
 This hum'rous innovation from the North Countree.

You'll understand, of course,  
 That wagger was a source  
 Of very little profit to the hapless wageree;  
 And, dating from that day,  
 I much regret to say  
 Men look askance at Riley, from the North Countree.

## A VISION OUT WEST

Far-reaching downs, a solid sea sunk everlastingly  
 to rest,  
 And yet whose billows seem to be for ever heaving  
 toward the west:  
 The tiny field-mice make their nests, the summer  
 insects buzz and hum  
 Among the hollows and the crests of this wide ocean  
 stricken dumb,  
 Whose rollers move for ever on, though sullenly, with  
 fettered wills,  
 To break in voiceless wrath upon the crumbled bases  
 of far hills,  
 Where rugged outposts meet the shock, stand fast,  
 and hurl them back again,  
 An avalanche of earth and rock, in tumbled frag-  
 ments on the plain;  
 But, never heeding the rebuff, to right and left they  
 kiss the feet  
 Of hanging cliff and bouldered bluff till on the farther  
 side they meet,  
 And once again resume their march to where the  
 afternoon sun dips  
 Toward the west, and Heaven's arch salutes the Earth  
 with ruddy lips.

Such is the scene that greets the eye : wide sweep of  
 plain to left and right :  
 In front low hills that seem to lie wrapped in a veil  
 of yellow light—  
 Low peaks that through the summer haze frown  
 from their fancied altitude,  
 As some small potentate might gaze upon a ragged  
 multitude.  
 Thus does the battlemented pile of high-built crags,  
 all weather-scarred,  
 Where grass land stretches mile on mile, keep scorn-  
 ful solitary guard ;  
 Where the sweet spell is not yet broke, while from  
 her wind-swept, sun-kissed dream  
 Man's cruel touch has not yet woke this Land where  
 silence reigns supreme :

Not the grim silence of a cave, some vaulted stalactited  
 room,  
 Where feeble candle-shadows wave fantastically  
 through the gloom—  
 But restful silence, calm repose : the spirit of these  
 sky-bound plains  
 Tempers the restless blood that flows too fiery through  
 the swelling veins ;  
 Breathes a faint message in the ear, bringing the  
 weary traveller peace ;  
 Whispers, 'Take heart and never fear, for soon the  
 pilgrimage will cease !

Beat not thy wings against the cage ! Seek not to  
 burst the padlocked door  
 That leads to depths thou canst not gauge ! Life is  
 all thine : why seek for more ?  
 Read in the slow sun's drooping disc an answer to  
 the thoughts that vex :  
 Ponder it well, and never risk the substance for its  
 dim reflex.'

Such is the silent sermon told to those who care to  
 read this page  
 Where once a mighty ocean rolled in some dim, long-  
 forgotten age.  
 Here, where the Mitchell grass waves green, the  
 never-weary ebb and flow  
 Of glassy surges once was seen a thousand thousand  
 years ago :  
 To such a sum those dead years mount that Time has  
 grown too weary for  
 The keeping of an endless count, and long ago forgot  
 their score.

But now—when, hustled by the wind, fast-flying,  
 fleecy cloud-banks drift  
 Across the sky where, silver-skinned, the pale moon  
 shines whene'er they lift,  
 And throws broad patches in strange shapes of light  
 and shade, that seem to meet  
 In dusky coastline where sharp capes jut far into a  
 winding-sheet

Of ghostly, glimmering, silver rays that struggle  
 'neath an inky ledge  
 Of driving cloud, and fill deep bays rent in the  
 shadow's ragged edge—  
 Sprung from the gloomy depths of Time, faint shapes  
 patrol the spectral sea,  
 Primeval phantom-forms that climb the lifeless  
 billows silently,  
 Trailing along their slimy length in thirst for one  
 another's blood,  
 Writhing in ponderous trials of strength, as once  
 they did before the flood.



They sink, as, driven from the North by straining oar  
 and favouring gale,  
 A misty barge repels the froth which hides her with  
 a sparkling veil :

High-curved the sharpened beak doth stand, slicing  
 the waters in the lead ;  
 The low hull follows, thickly manned by dim, dead  
 men of Asian breed :  
 Swift is her passage, short the view the wan moon's  
 restless rays reveal  
 Of dusky, fierce-eyed warrior crew, of fluttering cloth  
 and flashing steel ;  
 Of forms that mouldered ages past, ere from recesses  
 of the sea,  
 With earthquake throes this land was cast in Nature's  
 writhing agony.

As the warm airs of Spring-time chase reluctant snows  
 from off the range,  
 And plant fresh verdure in their place, so the dim-  
 visioned shadows change ;  
 And glimpses of what yet shall be bid the past fly  
 beyond all ken,  
 While rising from futurity appear vast colonies of  
 men  
 Who from the sea-coast hills have brought far-  
 quarried spoils to build proud homes  
 Of high-piled palaces, all wrought in sloping roofs  
 and arching domes,  
 Smooth-pillared hall, or cool arcade, and slenderest  
 sky-piercing spire,  
 Where the late-sinking moon has laid her tender tints  
 of mellow fire,

And golden paves the spacious ways where, o'er the  
smoothen granite flags,  
The lightning-driven car conveys its freight with  
force that never lags.

A goodly city! where no stain of engine-smoke or  
factory grime  
Blemishes walls that will retain their pristine  
pureness for all time :  
Lying as one might take a gem and set it in some  
strange device  
Of precious metal, and might hem it round with  
stones of lesser price—  
So from encircling fields doth spring this city where,  
in emerald sheen,  
Man hath taught Nature how to bring a mantle of  
perennial green—  
Hewing canals whose banks are fringed by willows  
bending deeply down  
To waters flowing yellow-tinged beneath the moon  
toward the town—  
Filling from mighty reservoirs, sunk in the hollows  
of the plain,  
That flood the fields without a pause though Summer  
should withhold her rain.  
Labour is but an empty name to those who dwell  
within this land,  
For they have boldly learnt to tame the lightning's  
flash with iron hand :

That Force, the dartings from whose eyes not even  
gods might brave and live,  
The blasting essence of the skies, proud Jupiter's  
prerogative—  
His flashing pinions closely clipt, pent in a cunning-  
fashioned cage,  
Of all his flaming glory stript—these men direct his  
tempered rage :  
A bondman, at their idlest breath with silent energy  
he speeds,  
From dawn of life to hour of death, to execute their  
slightest needs.

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Slow to her couch the moon doth creep, but, going,  
melts in sparkling tears  
Of dew, because we may not keep this vision of the  
future years :  
Swiftly, before the sunrise gleam, I watch it melting  
in the morn—  
The snowy city of my dream, the home of nations yet  
unborn !

