

‘Sez You’

Henry Lawson

When the heavy sand is yielding backward from your blistered feet,
And across the distant timber you can *see* the flowing heat;
When your head is hot and aching, and the shadeless plain is wide,
And it's fifteen miles to water in the scrub the other side—
Don't give up, don't be down-hearted, to a man's strong heart be true!
Take the air in through your nostrils, set your lips and see it through—
For it can't go on for ever, and — 'I'll have my day!' says you.

When you're camping in the mulga, and the rain is falling slow,
While you nurse your rheumatism 'neath a patch of calico;
Short of tucker or tobacco, short of sugar or of tea,
And the scrubs are dark and dismal, and the plains are like a sea;
Don't give up and be down-hearted — to the soul of man be true!
Grin! if you've a mate to grin for, grin and jest and don't look blue;
For it can't go on for ever, and — 'I'll rise some day,' says you.

When you've tramped the Sydney pavements till you've counted all the flags,
And your flapping boot-soles trip you, and your clothes are mostly rags,
When you're called a city loafer, shunned, abused, moved on, despised—

Fifty hungry beggars after every job that's advertised—
Don't be beaten! Hold your head up! To your wretched self be true;
Set your pride to fight your hunger! Be a *man* in all you do!
For it cannot last for ever — 'I will rise again!' says you.

When you're dossing out in winter, in the darkness and the rain,
Crouching, cramped, and cold and hungry 'neath a seat in The Domain,
And a cloaked policeman stirs you with that mighty foot of his—
'Phwat d'ye mane? Phwat's this? Who are ye? Come, move on — git out av this!'
Don't get mad; 'twere only foolish; there is nought that you can do,
Save to mark his beat and time him — find another hole or two;
But it can't go on for ever — 'I'll have money yet!' says you.

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Bother not about the morrow, for sufficient to the day
Is the evil (rather more so). Put your trust in God and pray!
Study well the ant, thou sluggard. Blessed are the meek and low.
Ponder calmly on the lilies — how they idle, how they grow.
A man's a man! Obey your masters! Do not blame the proud and fat,
For the poor are always with them, and they cannot alter that.

Lay your treasures up in Heaven — cling to life and see it through!

For it cannot last for ever — 'I shall die some day,' says you.

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