

# The Roaring Days

Henry Lawson

The night too quickly passes

And we are growing old,

So let us fill our glasses

And toast the Days of Gold;

When finds of wondrous treasure

Set all the South ablaze,

And you and I were faithful mates

All through the roaring days!

Then stately ships came sailing

From every harbour's mouth,

And sought the land of promise

That beacons in the South;

Then southward streamed their streamers

And swelled their canvas full

To speed the wildest dreamers

E'er borne in vessel's hull.

Their shining Eldorado,

Beneath the southern skies,  
Was day and night for ever  
Before their eager eyes.  
The brooding bush, awakened,  
Was stirred in wild unrest,  
And all the year a human stream  
Went pouring to the West.

The rough bush roads re-echoed  
The bar-room's noisy din,  
When troops of stalwart horsemen  
Dismounted at the inn.  
And oft the hearty greetings  
And hearty clasp of hands  
Would tell of sudden meetings  
Of friends from other lands;  
When, puzzled long, the new-chum  
Would recognise at last,  
Behind a bronzed and bearded skin,  
A comrade of the past.

And when the cheery camp-fire  
Explored the bush with gleams,  
The camping-grounds were crowded  
With caravans of teams;  
Then home the jests were driven,  
And good old songs were sung,  
And choruses were given  
The strength of heart and lung.  
Oh, they were lion-hearted  
Who gave our country birth!  
Oh, they were of the stoutest sons  
From all the lands on earth!

Oft when the camps were dreaming,  
And fires began to pale,  
Through rugged ranges gleaming  
Would come the Royal Mail.  
Behind six foaming horses,  
And lit by flashing lamps,  
Old 'Cobb and Co.'s', in royal state,  
Went dashing past the camps.

Oh, who would paint a goldfield,  
And limn the picture right,  
As we have often seen it  
In early morning's light;  
The yellow mounds of mullock  
With spots of red and white,  
The scattered quartz that glistened  
Like diamonds in light;  
The azure line of ridges,  
The bush of darkest green,  
The little homes of calico  
That dotted all the scene.

I hear the fall of timber  
From distant flats and fells,  
The pealing of the anvils  
As clear as little bells,  
The rattle of the cradle,  
The clack of windlass-boles,  
The flutter of the crimson flags

Above the golden holes.

. . . . .

Ah, then our hearts were bolder,

And if Dame Fortune frowned

Our swags we'd lightly shoulder

And tramp to other ground.

But golden days are vanished,

And altered is the scene;

The diggings are deserted,

The camping-grounds are green;

The flaunting flag of progress

Is in the West unfurled,

The mighty bush with iron rails

Is tethered to the world.

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