

# An Exile of Erin

## The Plains of Emu

Words written by Rev John McGarvie, who provided articles to the Sydney Gazette until 1831. Proof of this is in his papers held in the Mitchell Library, which predate the arrival of Frank the Poet who is sometimes given credit for writing it.

capo 2

Oh fare - well my coun - try, my kin \_\_\_\_ dred, my lov \_\_\_\_ er,

Each morn \_\_\_\_ ing and ev \_\_\_\_ 'ning is sa - cred to you.

While I toil the long day \_\_\_\_ with - out shel \_\_\_\_ ter or cov \_\_\_\_ er

And fell the tall \_\_\_\_ gums \_\_\_\_ the black but - ted and blue.

Full of - - ten I think of and talk \_\_\_\_ of thee, Er \_\_\_\_ in,

Thy heath \_\_\_\_ cov - ered moun - tains are fresh \_\_\_\_ in my view, \_\_\_\_

Thy glens, \_\_\_\_ lakes and riv - ers Loch Con \_\_\_\_ and Kil - - jer \_\_\_\_ rin,

Whilst chain'd \_\_\_\_ to the soil \_\_\_\_ on the Plains of E - - mu.

The ironbark wattle and gum-trees extending  
 Their shades under which rests the shy kangaroo  
 May be felled by the bless'd who have hope o'er them bending  
 To cheer their rude toil though far exiled from you  
 But, alas! without hope peace or honour to grace me  
 Each feeling was crushed in the bud as it grew  
 Whilst "never" is stamped on the chains that embrace me  
 And endless my thrall on the Plains of Emu

Hard hard was my fate far from thee to be driven  
Unstained unconvicted as sure was my due  
I loved to dispense of the freedom of Heaven  
But force gained the day and I suffer for you  
For this land never broke what by promise was plighted  
Deep treason this tongue to my country ne'er knew  
No base-earned coin in my coffer e'er lighted  
Yet enchained I remain on the Plains of Emu.

Dearest mother, thy love from my bosom shall never depart  
But shall flourish, untainted and true.  
For hard was my fate, far from thee to be driven  
But force gained the day, and now I suffer for you  
Oh, spare her the tear, and no charge lay upon her  
And weep not, my Nora, her tears to renew  
But cherish her age, until night closes on her  
And think of the swain who still thinks but of you.

Our names shall still live, though like writing in water  
Confined to the call of the wild cockatoo  
As each wattle-scrub echo repeats to the other our names,  
Then each breeze will hear me sighing anew.  
But dumb be my tongue if my heart should cease its motion  
Or if the isle I forget where my first breath I drew  
Each affection is warmed with sincerest devotion  
And the tie it is unbroken on the Plains of Emu.