

The Ballad of Eureka

Words by Helen Palmer and tune by Doreen Jacobs, 1951. Used on the Melbourne production of Reedy River in 1953. Helen was the daughter of Vance Palmer and was an active communist until she was expelled for challenging socialist views.

capo 5

They're leav - ing ship and sta - tion. They're leav - ing bench and fold,
 And pour - ing out from Mel - bourne to join the search for gold.
 The face of town and count - ry is chang - ing ev' - ry day,
 But _____ rul - ers keep on rul - ing the old co - lon - ial way.

They're leaving ship and station,
 They're leaving bench and fold,
 And pouring out from Melbourne
 To join the search for gold.
 The face of town and country
 Is changing ev'ry day,
 But rulers keep on ruling
 The old colonial way.

It's down with pick and shovel,
 A rifle's needed now;
 They come to raise a standard,
 They come to make a vow.
 There's not a flag in Europe
 More lovely to behold,
 Than floats above Eureka
 Where diggers work the gold.

"How can we work the diggings
 And learn how fortune feels
 If all the traps forever
 Are yelping at our heels?"
 "If you've enough!" says Lalor,
 "Of all their little games,
 Then go and get your licence
 And throw it on the flames!"

There's not a flag in Europe
 More lovely to the eye,
 Than is the "blue and silver"
 Against a southern sky
 Here in the name of freedom,
 Whatever be our loss,
 We swear to stand together
 Beneath the Southern Cross!

"The law is out to get us.
 And make us bow in fear.
 They call us foreign rebels
 Who'd plant the Charter here!
 They may be right;" says Lalor,
 "But if they show their braid,
 We'll stand our ground and hold it
 Behind a bush stockade!"

It is a Sunday morning.
 The miner's camp is still;
 Two hundred flashing redcoats
 Come marching to the hill
 Come marching up the gully
 With muskets firing low;
 And diggers wake from dreaming
 To hear the bugle blow.

The wounded and the dying
 Lie silent in the sun,
 But change will not be halted
 By any redcoat's gun.
 There's not a flag in Europe
 More rousing to the will
 Than the flag of stars that flutters
 Above Eureka's Hill.