



Due

for

Commonwealth Day



Commonwealth of Australia.

Inaugural Celebrations.



THE PRIZE ODE.

The prize of fifty guineas given by the New South Wales Government for the best Commonwealth Day Ode has been secured by Mr. G. Essex Evans, of Queensland. The judges were Mr. Justice Owen, Mr. Alexander Oliver (President of the Land Appeal Court), and Mr. E. Du Faur (President of the Art Gallery).

Ode for Commonwealth Day.

AWAKE! ARISE! The wings of dawn
Are beating at the Gates of Day!
The morning star has been withdrawn,
The silver vapours melt away!
Rise royally, O Sun, and crown
The shoreward billow, streaming white,
The forelands, and the mountains brown,
With crested light;
Flood with soft beams the valleys wide,
The mighty plains, the desert sand,
Till the New Day has won for bride
This Austral land!

Free-born of Nations, Virgin white,
Not won by blood, nor ringed with steel,
Thy throne is on a loftier height,
Deep-rooted in the Commonweal!
O Thou, for whom the strong have wrought,
And poets sung with souls aflame,
Born of long hope and patient thought,
A mighty name—
We pledge thee faith that shall not swerve,
Our Land, Our Lady, breathing high
The thought that makes it love to serve
And life to die!

Now are thy maidens linked in love
Who erst have striven for pride of place ;
Lifted all meaner thoughts above,
They greet thee, one in heart and race ;
She, in whose sunlit coves of peace
The navies of the World may rest,
And bear her wealth of snowy fleece,
Northward and West.
And She, whose corn and rock-hewn gold
Built that Queen City of the South,
Where the lone billow swept of old
Her harbour-mouth.

Come, too, thou Sun-maid, in whose veins
Forever burns the tropic fire—
Whose cattle roam a thousand plains—
Come, with thy gold and pearls for fire ;
And that sweet Harvester who twines
The tender vine and binds the sheaf—
And She, the Western Queen, who mines
The desert reef—
And Thou, against whose flowery throne
And orchards green the wave is hurled—
Australia claims you ; Ye are one
Before the World !

Crown Her—most worthy to be praised—
 With eyes uplifted to the morn ;
For on this day a flag is raised,
 A triumph won, a nation born !
And Ye, vast Army of the Dead,
 From mine and city, plain and sea,
Who fought, and dared, who toiled and bled,
 That this might be—
Draw round us in this hour of fate—
 This golden harvest of your hand—
With unseen lips, O consecrate
 And bless the land !

Eternal Power, Benign, Supreme,
 Who weigh'st the nations upon earth ;
Without whose aid the Empire-dream
 And pride of States is nothing worth—
From shameless speech, and vengeful deed,
 From license veiled in freedom's name,
From greed of gold, and scorn of creed,
 Guard Thou our fame !
In stress of days, that yet may be,
 When hope shall rest upon the sword,
In Welfare and Adversity,
 Be with us, Lord !

GEO. ESSEX EVANS.