

The Complimentary letter of Mr J.G. Riley reminds me of a little circumstance in connection with the poem of "How we beat the favourite" which may not be uninteresting to some admirers of Gordon & the poem.

~~Some years ago~~
 One winter's evening, I met Gordon at the Melbourne Hospital where my brother the late Dr. Moloney was a resident surgeon, and who was one of a literary flare and ~~was~~ on very friendly with Gordon, Kendall, Marcus Clarke, & George Gordon McCrae who were often his companions. Gordon produced & read the manuscript of the poem and I with ~~a~~ the fine assertiveness of a young Australian expressed, I am afraid, somewhat rudely, my objection to ~~the~~ Gordon's reading of ~~the poem~~ it. I may say Gordon was, I think, one of the worst readers of poetry I ever heard. Gordon took my censure in good part & asked me to read it for him which I did - and he presented me with the manuscript. Some time after this, I ~~read seeing the~~ ~~be~~ being strongly impressed with the beauty of the poem and its fitness for recitation I recited it on the occasion referred to by your correspondent. I had the manuscript for some years but in the course of a long bachelor life with more than one moving I lost trail of it ~~and with poems~~ as I did also of the manuscript of "Rose Lorraine" "Passing away" & "Rodophis" ~~by Hen~~ presented to me by Henry Kendall.

I hope this communication will not be taken as a desire to thrust myself upon the notice of your readers through the accident of an incident connected with a ~~great~~ the poet but I often think that ~~being~~ having my melancholy privilege of ~~been~~ being one of the few now living who had personal knowledge & ~~very intimate knowledge indeed of one of them~~ of Marcus Clarke Gordon & Kendall & who knew the men in their habit as they lived it might be interesting by ransacking my memory to tell of what manner of men they were as they came under my observation.

I may say of one of them Marcus Clarke was one of the most interesting & fascinating men I ever met. As a talker of his kind, he stood alone and as a companion - and I had many trips with him - he was without a rival. All day long his conversation would flow and what redeemed it from boredom was - it was never egotistical. It may not be without interest to say that I was the means of killing Rufus Dawes in "The term of his natural Life" When Clarke was rewriting "His Natural Life" and enlarging it into ~~book~~ ~~f~~ form, from the story as it appeared in "The Australian Monthly" published by the late Mr A H Massina he called at my brother's house as his habit was almost daily who was then in practice in Lonsdale St opposite the Melb. Hospital & some time after dinner Marcus & I set out for a stroll. It was a beautiful moonlight night and we got up and our walk took us past the Melb jail & up & down there with occasional incursions into the Carlton Gardens for several hours. Marcus discussed with me the closing chapter of his book in which he had determined to take Rufus Dawes back to

England. I was strongly opposed to this correction & ending & I argued with Clarke that he would kill. Art & nature - ~~what~~ should demand the death of Dawes. I said that the close of his life could not but be ~~tragic~~ sad with those awful memories but though he was no party willingly to the degradation he had suffered yet it would stain his memory of the past and that as a sensitive man he would be dragging a long chain of misery. These & other arguments I advanced which Clarke at first would not entertain and as it is said Charles Dickens killed Little Nell only after much turmoil of thought & sorrow so Clarke wished to save Rufus Dawes.

Finally my words had much effect on him. We returned to my brother's house at dawn & Clarke putting the question before him - he took my part, and so Clarke agreed to kill Rufus Dawes. ~~There was an epoch~~ As there is a tide in the affairs of men which taken at the flood leads to fortune so I cannot help thinking that ~~the~~ a cup ~~was of promise~~ of great promise which ~~presented~~ & Marcus Clarke's lips was ~~recommended~~ presented ~~but~~ he ~~put it by~~ - was unfortunately put it aside. I refer to a letter which Lawson I think it was who had started a paper The Daily Telegraph or Daily News which was ~~being~~ ~~pr~~ then making great headway in London. He wrote to Clarke offering him \$1000 a year to commence if he would go over and be one of the staff. Clarke had done some writing for him and from his letter Lawson appeared to have a very high opinion of Clarke's literary ability. Indeed it was a very strongly worded letter of invitation to him. If Clarke had taken that, I think in the literary atmosphere of London and the stimulous he would have found there to his various literary aspects I think he would have been a great success and have done high class work. London is the literary market of the world and in those times anything coming from Australia in the way of literary work would have been looked at askance by the literary lawgivers of the time.

It has often surprised me that no publication since his death has appeared, for I know that he left some unfinished stories and a half finished novel. I had the pleasure of seeing this last and I thought the literary workmanship of it was superior to anything he had written. I remember well how we of an older generation long passed waited for weekly peripatetic philosopher as we did the ~~weekly~~ dramatic criticism of Dr. Neild and Mr. Jas Smith the one working for the Australasian the other for the Argus. What fine food for thought and discussion they afforded their admirers. Dramatic criticism has unfortunately passed as the food for it is no longer with us or if occasionally with us is but slightly noticed. You will find now a column or two of our best papers devoted to display of theatrical art and the dresses of the ladies occupies the largest part. The lady, the actress who can say she has 80 dresses & makes 20 changes in a part is the one the public now takes to its heart instead of the actress who robbed us of our tears, and stirred our deepest emotions fifty years ago.