



## **ADAM LINDSAY GORDON COTTAGE** **(Crafts Council of Ballarat)**

Poet Adam Lindsay Gordon (1833-1870) was born in Fayal in the Azores on October 19<sup>th</sup>, 1833. He was educated in England, where he was good at sports but not studiously inclined and certainly undisciplined.

His father sent him to Australia to, hopefully, start a new and more useful life. He arrived in Adelaide in November of 1854. His many pursuits included being a police officer, poet, boxer, horse breaker and steeplechase jockey (all of which he was capable of carrying out), parliamentarian, manager, investor, businessman (all of which he displayed a considerable lack of talent in).

At the age of 29 he married Margaret Park, 17, and used an inheritance of 7000pounds from his mother's estate to help publish his own writing. His first published verse was a ballad entitled *The Feud* in 1864. In 1867 he published *Ashtaroath, A Dramatic Lyric, Sea Spray and Smoke Drift*.

His interest in steeplechase racing brought him to Ballarat. During one visit he received an offer from Walter Craig to take up the leasehold of the livery stables that were attached to Craig's Hotel in Bath Street. He arrived to take up the leasehold in 1867 with his wife and daughter.

During his time in Ballarat he was secretary of the local hunt club and became a senior sergeant in the Ballarat troop of light horse. Both of these activities were associated with money and position and Gordon was living beyond his means.

Whilst in Ballarat, his daughter Annie died from an infection and was buried in the Ballarat Old Cemetery.

She was eleven months of age. In 1919, her body was exhumed and moved to the cemetery in Brighton.

In October 1868, the Gordons left Ballarat after the failure of the livery stables.

In Melbourne, Gordon made a little money out of his racing, but in March 1870 he had a bad fall in a steeplechase at Flemington, and suffered a head injury, from which he never fully recovered. On 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1870 his last book, *Bush Ballads and Galloping Rhymes*, was published. Also on this day he learnt that his claim to the Esslemont Estate in Scotland was unsuccessful. Realising that he had not enough money left to pay the printer, he became severely depressed. The following morning he shot himself near his house in Brighton. He is buried in Brighton Cemetery.

Gordon's ballads, with their swinging rhythms and love of the open air life and horses, have a permanent place in Australian Literature.

In 1933, the centenary of his birth, F.J. Martell, former Principal of Ballarat School of Mines, began moves to have the cottage of Gordon's residence moved from Bath Street to the Ballarat Botanical Gardens. Mar. R. A. Crouch advanced the money for the cottage project.

The building firm of A and G Quayle won the tender to dismantle the cottage in numbered sections and then fitted them back together next to the fernery at the gardens. The Ballarat Courier refers to this project several times between March and August of 1934. The cottage was formally opened by State Governor Lord Huntingfield on August 15, 1934.

The cottage stood in the gardens for many years, but during the 1980's fell into disrepair. In the early 1990's the Ballarat Ys-Men undertook a restoration programme, using donated materials from local businesses.

In March of 1992, the Ballarat Crafts Council opened the cottage as an outlet for locally produced crafts. This venture is staffed by members on a voluntary basis and allows members of the Crafts Council to sell their products. All Crafts Council profits go to the running of the cottage.

*Question not, but live and labour*

*Till yon goal be won,*

*Helping every feeble neighbour,*

*Seeking help from none:*

*Life is mostly froth and bubble,*

*Two things stand like stone,*

*Kindness in another's trouble,*

*Courage in your own.*

*From : Ye Wearie Wayfarer*

## Gone

by Adam Lindsay Gordon

IN Collins Street standeth a statute tall,  
A statue tall, on a pillar of stone,  
Telling its story, to great and small,  
Of the dust reclaimed from the sand waste lone;  
Weary and wasted, and worn and wan,  
Feeble and faint, and languid and low,  
He lay on the desert a dying man;  
Who has gone, my friends, where we all must go.

There are perils by land, and perils by water,  
Short, I ween, are the obsequies  
Of the landsman lost, but they may be shorter  
With the mariner lost in the trackless seas;  
And well for him, when the timbers start,  
And the stout ship reels and settles below,  
Who goes to his doom with as bold a heart,  
As that dead man gone where we all must go.

Man is stubborn his rights to yield,  
And redder than dews at eventide  
Are the dews of battle, shed on the field,  
By a nation's wrath or a despot's pride;  
But few who have heard their death-knell roll,  
From the cannon's lips where they faced the foe,  
Have fallen as stout and steady of soul,  
As that dead man gone where we all must go.

Traverse yon spacious burial ground,  
Many are sleeping soundly there,  
Who pass'd with mourners standing around,  
Kindred, and friends, and children fair;  
Did he envy such ending? 'twere hard to say;  
Had he cause to envy such ending? no;  
Can the spirit feel for the senseless clay,  
When it once has gone where we all must go?

What matters the sand or the whitening chalk,  
The blighted herbage, the black'ning log,  
The crooked beak of the eagle-hawk,  
Or the hot red tongue of the native dog?

That couch was rugged, those sextons rude,  
Yet, in spite of a leaden shroud, we know  
That the bravest and fairest are earth-worms' food,  
When once they've gone where we all must go.

With the pistol clenched in his failing hand,  
With the death mist spread o'er his fading eyes,  
He saw the sun go down on the sand,  
And he slept, and never saw it rise;  
'Twas well; he toil'd till his task was done,  
Constant and calm in his latest throe,  
The storm was weathered, the battle was won,  
When he went, my friends, where we all must go.

God grant that whenever, soon or late,  
Our course is run and our goal is reach'd,  
We may meet our fate as steady and straight  
As he whose bones in yon desert bleach'd;  
No tears are needed—our cheeks are dry,  
We have none to waste upon living woe;  
Shall we sigh for one who has ceased to sigh,  
Having gone, my friends, where we all must go?

We tarry yet, we are toiling still,  
He is gone and he fares the best,  
He fought against odds, he struggled up hill,  
He has fairly earned his season of rest;  
No tears are needed—fill our the wine,  
Let the goblets clash, and the grape juice flow,  
Ho! pledge me a death-drink, comrade mine,  
To a brave man gone where we all must go.

## The Last Leap

by Adam Lindsay Gordon

ALL is over! fleet career,  
Dash of greyhound slipping thongs,  
Flight of falcon, bound of deer,  
Mad hoof-thunder in our rear,  
Cold air rushing up our lungs,  
Din of many tongues.

Once again, one struggle good,  
One vain effort;—he must dwell  
Near the shifted post, that stood  
Where the splinters of the wood,  
Lying in the torn tracks, tell  
How he struck and fell.

Crest where cold drops beaded cling,  
Small ear drooping, nostril full,  
Glazing to a scarlet ring,  
Flanks and haunches quivering,  
Sinews stiffening, void and null,  
Dumb eyes sorrowful.

Satin coat that seems to shine  
Duller now, black braided tress  
That a softer hand than mine  
Far away was wont to twine,  
That in meadows far from this  
Softer lips might kiss.

All is over! this is death,  
And I stand to watch thee die,  
Brave old horse! with bated breath  
Hardly drawn through tight-clenched teeth,  
Lip indented deep, but eye  
Only dull and dry.

Musing on the husk and chaff  
Gathered where life's tares are sown,  
Thus I speak, and force a laugh,  
That is half a sneer and half  
An involuntary groan,  
In a stifled tone—

'Rest, old friend! thy day, though rife  
With its toil, hath ended soon;  
We have had our share of strife,  
Tumblers in the masque of life,  
In the pantomime of noon  
Clown and pantaloon.

'With a flash that ends thy pain,  
Respite and oblivion blest  
Come to greet thee. I in vain  
Fall: I rise to fall again:  
Thou hast fallen to thy rest—  
And thy fall is best