

Classic Poetry Series

Mary E Fullerton
- poems -

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Mary E Fullerton(1868 - 1946)

Mary Fullerton was born in a bark hut in Glenmaggie, Victoria. She grew to become a strong campaigner on behalf of feminist issues and a dedicated writer. She contributed many poems and articles to journals and newspapers using the name 'Alpenstock'. She wrote volumes of poetry and fiction, descriptive work, and her childhood reminiscences.

In 1922 Fullerton sailed for England to become a permanent resident, but she maintained her friendship with Miles Franklin by correspondence. This friendship was instrumental in the publication of her poetry, in the 1940's, under the pseudonym 'E'.

There was much speculation regarding the identity of 'E' in literary circles. After Fullerton's death the 'E' was explained, she had employed it as a mark of admiration for her mother, Eliza, and for Emily Bronte and Emily Dickenson, her two chosen writers.

Fullerton also wrote two novels under the pseudonyms 'Robert Gray' (1932) and 'Gordon Manners' (1933). Another novel (1923) published anonymously, and submitted to the London publisher Philpott, made her the recipient of their prize for one of the best books of self-revelation.

Mary Fullerton died in 1946

A Man's A Sliding Mood

Ardent in love and cold in charity,
Loud in the market, timid in debate:
Scornful of foe unbuckled in the dust
At whimper of a child compassionate,
A man's a sliding mood from hour to hour,
Rage, and a singing forest of bright birds,
Laughter with lovely friends, and loneliness,
Woe with her heavy horn of unspoke words.
What is he then this heir of heart and mind?
Is this the man with his conflicting moods,
Or is there in a deeper dwelling place
Some silly shaping thing that bides and broods?

Mary E Fullerton

The Skull

O BOWL that held the hot imprisoned fire,
Cup where the sacred essence used to burn—
That fluent essence that shall ne'er return—
Old home of Aspiration and Desire:
What art thou now to honour and admire?
A thing inconsequential one might spurn,
Thou art not e'en the scattered ashes' urn;—
Husk of the spirit that shall not expire.

Thou cage and shell of ancient busy Thought,
Nurse-house of Soul, the domicile of him
Long fled thy osseous walls that Nature wrought
To please proud Time's caprice and passing whim;
'Twixt two eternities a moment caught,
He rose from thee to join the seraphim.

Mary E Fullerton