

SONGS OF CHILDHOOD

By MOLLY HOWDEN

MISS HOWDEN IS ONE OF NEW ZEALAND'S MOST GIFTED POETS
AND THESE VERSES DESERVE A WIDER APPRECIATION

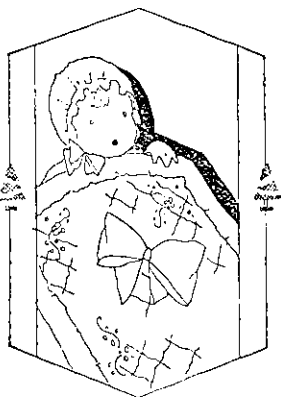
HAVEN'T YOU HEARD

HAVEN'T you heard he rustling
sway
Of a field of golden corn,
Which comes as the darkness steals
away
To make room for a streak of pearly
grey
Which heralds the break of dawn;
And the skylark soars to sing once
more
Of the glorious day just born?
Haven't you heard?

Haven't you heard on a balmy day
The echo of distant song,
As a boat load of children wends its
way
Down a rippling river towards the
bay—
A-fishing the whole day long—
With the steady beat of the dipping
oars,
Or the engine throbbing strong?
Haven't you heard?

Haven't you heard when the sun's
gone west
The beat of many a wing,
As homeward each birdie flies to its
nest
'Neath a Heaven in golden splendour
dressed,
While the clouds to the mountains
cling—
And the chatter they make in their
homes so high,
And the twittering notes they sing?
Haven't you heard?

Haven't you heard the silver bells
That the aspens ring at night,
When out from the green and flow-
ery dells
And out from the leaves with their
myriad cells
Come the fairies, dressed in white,
To play with the pixies and gnomes
and elves
In the pale moon's silvery light?
Surely you've heard!



"PATRICIA"

BUBBLING joy
And nothing more
Just on four!
See how every silv'ry word
Makes this weary world absurd!
Not as other children she—
Our Patricia,
Over three!

Merry laughter
Lights her eyes. . .
Twinkle there
The sunny skies—
And the raindrops are but few
In those orbs of heav'nly blue. . .
Ever happy—full of glee—
Is Patricia,
Over three!

Golden ringlets
Softly curl
To her shoulders. . .
White as pearl.
How her dear arms, tired of play,
"Love" us at the close of day!
Never child so sweet as she—
Our Patricia,
Over three!

A NEW JUDGE



*His Honour Judge Ostler, who has recently
been elevated to the Bench.*

*S. P. Andrew Studios, photo.
Auckland and Wellington*



BILLIKIN, JOHN AND ME

THE sun was sparkling bright and
clear
And the waves were tumbling free,
When, laughing, down to the water's
edge
Came Billikin, John and me.
Our suits were white—and oh! so
clean!
With pockets—one, two, three!
While shining mops of well-brushed
curls
Crowned Billikin, John and me.
We rushed to the rippling water's
edge
And jumped o'er the waves in glee;
We searched for crabs in deep
green pools,
And dug little holes for the sea;
And tried to catch the great white
birds
That swooped to find their tea,
But none of them waited long
enough
For Billikin, John and me.

* * *
Full of shells are our tunics soiled,
As home we go from the sea,
And tousled are the golden locks
Of Billikin, John and me.

PARTED

WHAT shall I write?
We live our lives so far apart
That, though I think of you, dear
heart,
There seems not much that I can
say
To interest you—so far away.
What shall you write?
Oh!—just the little, trivial things
That make your life; of her who
brings

Your tea to you, and cleans your
shoes,
And lights the fire, and scrapes the
flues,
And dusts your room and keeps it
bright;
And welcomes you to "home" each
night—
Of these, dear heart, I'd have you
write.
And many more—

Of whom you visit day by day;
Of what you do, and what you say;
And what, beneath that crown of
gold,
You think: and whether you have
sold
The bookcase (as you said you
might)
With volumes bound in blue and
white—
Of these, dear, heart, I'd have you
write.

Nay! More than these!
Do you remember how we told
Our hopes and fears in days of old?
Our sorrows and our woes laid bare
That each the other's pain might
share?
(Ah, how you wept because my
kite
Had shattered in its fall one night!)
Of themes like these I'd have you
write!