

THE DEAR OLD SLAB SCHOOL ON THE STRINGYBARK HILL

Oh! yes, we remember the years that have gone,
When Hartley the Great o'er Instruction did rule;
And wisely and well then tuition went on;
And Fry, and his daughter still taught in our School.

The sawyers and splitters were then in the Tiers,
And gardens were few and the orchards were small,
And seldom in homes of those brave pioneers,
Was seen in these hills either parlour or hall.

But men were contented, and women were kind,
And joyed in the daytime to clear and to till,
And there on the ranges the children could find
The little slab school on the stringybark hill.

That Fry, the good toiler had raised with his hand,
And covered with shingles, and furnished with stool,
And desks that the same willing artist had planned,
As strong as the kind that are now in the school.

There gathered the children from cottages round;
And some a few pence for their schooling would pay!
But all a true friend in their kind teacher found,
And never neglected went any away.

And there on the Sabbath the old and the young
Would gather together to worship the Lord,
While praise to the God of their fathers was sung
And the voice of His servant expounded His Word.

And thus while the changes were coming about
The young from the cottages merrily still
Would press for Instruction, till quite crowded out
Of the little slab school on the Stringybark Hill.

Ere long a new building was raised by the way,
And Hartley – who still o'er Instruction did rule
Determined whatever Reformers might say
That Fry, and his daughter should teach in the School.

But, though the new place was more strong, and more large;
And the rooms of the structure were fair to behold,
In time the good teacher surrendered his charge,
The joy of his heart seemed as still in the hold.

For, though he might value the changes of time,
And the age of improvement, his memory still
Returned to those days when the hopes were sublime
In that dear old slab school on the Stringybark Hill.

And dear to the hearts of his old pupils still
Their guide will continue whatever may change,
As they think of the school on the Stringybark Hill,
And the pioneer teacher of Grand Forest Range.



John Brock Fry with his
wife, Harriett.