

WHEN JOHNNY GOT HIS GUN.

(BUSH TRAGEDY.)

The forest ways were peaceful
Till Johnny got his gun,
For Johnny, from the city,
Thought killing birds was fun.
He knew not tit from tui,
Nor kereru from game—
To simple, city Johnny
All wild birds looked the same.

The little wrens were happy
Till Johnny came along,
They flirted round the bushmen
And sang them all a song;
The bell-birds never worried
From early dawn till dark—
The saddle-backs called gaily,
The swamplands loved the lark.

'Twas in the morning's glory
That Johnny started in
To make the bush-ways gory
And brand his soul with sin.
The kakas saw him coming,
For wary birds are they;
The wild hawks saw in Johnny
A kindred bird of prey.

He shot a shining cuckoo
Which came from overseas;
He killed a bush-canary
That wooed him from the trees,
And Johnny's heart was joyful,
And Johnny's soul was glad.
He loved the pretty, trustful,
And friendly ways they had.

It made the shooting easy—
He never had to try
To stalk them or be clever,
He simply made them die.
Gay kingfishers and robins,
Bright parrakeets and quail;
The wekas were dead easy,
He never knew them fail.