

THE HERMIT OF WHISPERING CREEK

THE people say I've lived so long
(A thousand year, if I'm not wrong)
In this old shack, with floor for bed,
That I've got sawdust in my head.
We'll call them fools, and let it go;
They think I'm mad; they are, I know,
For not a soul of them can hear
My water-voices, singing clear!
Their city is a passing lie,
But these stream-voices shall not die,
At least — God save me from that fear,
They've been my friends a thousand year!

Stranger, you know old Siwash Bill,
Who lives behind the Eight-Mile Hill?
Don't know old Bill? His son's your guide!
The half-breed? Yes. Bill lost his pride.
An Oxford man he says he was.
Left England for the Big Because —
No matter that! But Old Bill said,
And swore it on his father's head,
That he had heard (and was not drunk,
And was not dreaming in his bunk)
That he had heard a preacher say
This stream was being ditched away!
He said the pilot had it straight,
The whole damned project, name, and date,
To steal my water to reclaim