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Written for James Halleran and his wife on the occasion of their Golden Wedding, at "Fernleigh", their home.

When I first saw "Fernleigh" it was comparatively new, and without the wing that ~~was~~ is now the main part of the building. In these years my brother, Hugh, was playing cress with the then owner, Mr. Tom Halleran, and ^{his son} James was a very little boy. My father's uncle owned "Mundowie" on the Murrumbidgee, and also another place, the name of which I have forgotten, while my ^{my father and} mother's father, Hugh Beattie, had "Brooklyn", then the show place of WaggaWagga, because of its rose hedges, vineyards, orchards, and distant pinery.

These early days people and places are gone, but "Fernleigh" still remains. And in it are James Halleran and his wife, his children, and his grandchildren to the fourth generation. And they are all as much the children of "Fernleigh" as if they had ~~not~~ been born there.

"
" Say Fernleigh and you say Halleran. And ~~for me~~, in that name, friendship, history, and the beautiful still live for me. ~~For few~~ ^{few} places have the view "Fernleigh" has, as it looks across the river, ~~the~~ the city, and the distant hills of the old Malebe Range, where once the wild cattle hid, and, at branding time, the rival bulls reared from hill to hill, half the night, so that, in these years of quiet ^{and} world quiet, ^{alone} it used to seem as if pandemonium had broken ~~out~~. Today the bulls are gone, the hills are fenced, the town billabong is a lake (though it still carries the name, "lagoon", that so many years ago my mother gave it, when, in about 1867, the Rev. Richard Sellers bearded with us at "The old Vineyard", and Grandfather Bettie's ~~xxxxxxkixkixkixkix~~ cousin was Mrs. Devlin of "Fair Lawn". Then Mr. Lavender, of Lavender and Wilkinson, had his waistcoats made of the same lavender silk his wife had in crinoline dresses, and ladies,

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to be like Queen Victoria, ~~then~~ drank elegantly out of their saucers, held on the tips of three fingers, and called it "tay".

Would I call ~~them~~ these days back? Not to displace Jim Halloran, his wife, their children and their grandchildren. The old are scattered and their descendants have forgotten the once great Cattle Town that is now a green city. But ~~the~~ the Hallorans remain. They are a tree, root, branches and blossom; a tree of "Fernleigh", of Wagga Wagga, and of Australia.

May there still be Hallorans of "Fernleigh" as long as an Australian tree stands on the banks of the Murrumbidgee; and may these descendants of a thousand years hence remember the Hallorans of today.

MARY GILMORE

Dear Jim & all the family, here in this writing am I; and in this writing I will be one of or with you on the 12th of August: (Four days later I shall be 85.)

My typing is not very good, & my machine wants cleaning. So will you have this properly typed & send it to the Editor of the "Daily Advertiser" — Send me ~~me~~ some copies of the paper. (Have this in a few days early, as editors are busy men.)
With the friendship & affection of years
to one & all — Mary Gilmore
King's Cross, Sydney. 17. 7. 1950