How McDougal Topped the Score.

A peaceful spot is Piper's Flat. The folk that live around,
They keep themselves by keeping sheep and turning up the ground.
But the climate is erratic, and the consequences are
The struggle with the elements is everlasting war.
We plough, and sow, and harrow—then sit down and pray for rain;
And then we all get flooded out and have to start again.
But the folk are now rejoicing as they ne'er rejoiced before,
For we've played Molongo cricket, and McDougal topped the score!

Molongo had a head on it, and challenged us to play
A single-innings match for lunch—the losing team to pay.
We were not great guns at cricket, but we couldn't well say No,
So we all began to practice, and we let the reaping go.
We scoured the Flat for ten miles round to muster up our men,
But when the list was totaled we could only number ten.
Then up spoke big Tim Brady, he was always slow to speak,
And he said — "What price McDougal, who lives down at Cooper's Creek?"

So we sent for old McDougal, and he stated in reply
That "he'd never played at cricket, but he'd half a mind to try.
He couldn't come to practice—he was getting in his hay,
But he guessed he'd show the beggars from Molongo how to play."
Now, McDougal was a Scotchman, and a canny one at that,
So he started in to practice with a paling for a bat.
He got Mrs. Mac. to bowl him, but she couldn't run at all,
So he trained his sheep dog, Pincher, how to scout and fetch the ball.

Now, Pincher was no puppy; he was old, and worn, and grey;
But he understood McDougal, and—accustomed to obey —
When McDougal cried out "Fetch it!" he would fetch it in a trice;
But until the word was "Drop it!" he would grip it like a vice.
And each succeeding night they played until the light grew dim;
Sometimes McDougal struck the ball—sometimes the ball struck him!
Each time he struck, the ball would plough a furrow in the ground,
And when he missed, the impetus would turn him three times round.

The fatal day at length arrived—the day that was to see
Molongo bite the dust, or Piper's Flat knocked up a tree!
Molongo's captain won the toss, and sent his men to bat,
And they gave some leather-hunting to the men of Piper's Flat.
When the ball sped where McDougal stood, firm planted in his track,
He shut his eyes, and turned him round, and stopped it—with his back!
The highest score was twenty-two, the total sixty-six,
When Brady sent a Yorker down that scattered Johnson's sticks.

Then Piper's Flat went in to bat, for glory and renown,

But, like the grass before the scythe, our wickets tumbled down.
"Nine wickets down for seventeen, with fifty more to win!"
Our captain heaved a heavy sigh—and sent McDougal in.
"Ten pounds to one you lose it!" cried a barracker from town;
But McDougal said "I'll take' it, mon!" and planked the money down.
Then he girded up his moleskins in a self-reliant style,
Threw off his hat and boots, and faced the bowler with a smile.

He held the bat the wrong side out, and Johnson with a grin,
Stepped lightly to the bowling crease, and sent a "wobbler" in;
McDougal spooned it softly back, and Johnson waited there,
But McDougal, cryin. "Fetch it!" started running like a hare.
Molongo shouted "Victory! He's out as sure as eggs."
When Pincher started through the crowd, and ran through Johnson's legs.
He seized the ball like lightning; then he ran behind a log,
And McDougal kept on running, while Molongo chased the dog.

They chased him up, they chased him down, they chased him round, and then
He darted through a slip-rail as the scorer shouted "Ten!"
McDougal puffed; Molongo swore; excitement was intense;
As the scorer marked down "Twenty," Pincher cleared a barbed-wire fence.
"Let us head him!" shrieked Molongo. "Brain the mongrel with a bat!"
"Run it out! Good old McDougal!" yelled the men of Piper's Flat.
And McDougal kept on jogging, and then Pincher doubled back,
And the scorer counted "Forty" as they raced across the track.

McDougal's legs were going fast, Molongo's breath was gone—
But still Molongo chased the dog—McDougal struggled on.
When the scorer shouted "Fifty!" then they knew the chase could cease;
And McDougal gasped out "Drop it!" as he dropped within his crease.
Then Pincher dropped the ball, and, as instinctively he knew
Discretion was the wiser plan, he disappeared from view.
And as Molongo's beaten men exhausted lay around.
We raised McDougal shoulder-high, and bore him from the ground.

We bore him to M'Ginniss's, where lunch was ready laid,
And filled him up with whisky-punch, for which Molongo paid.
We drank his health in bumpers, and we cheered him three times three,
And when Molongo got its breath, Molongo joined the spree.
And the critics say they never saw a cricket match like that,
When McDougal broke the record in the game at Piper's Flat.
And the folk are jubilating as they never did before;
For we played Molongo cricket—and McDougal topped the score!