

# In Defence of the Bush

Banjo Paterson

So you're back from up the country, Mister Townsman, where you went,

And you're cursing all the business in a bitter discontent;

Well, we grieve to disappoint you, and it makes us sad to hear

That it wasn't cool and shady—and there wasn't plenty beer,

And the loony bullock snorted when you first came into view;

Well, you know it's not so often that he sees a swell like you;

And the roads were hot and dusty, and the plains were burnt and brown,

And no doubt you're better suited drinking lemon-squash in town.

Yet, perchance, if you should journey down the very track you went

In a month or two at furthest you would wonder what it meant,

Where the sunbaked earth was gasping like a creature in its pain

You would find the grasses waving like a field of summer grain,

And the miles of thirsty gutters blocked with sand and choked with mud,

You would find them mighty rivers with a turbid, sweeping flood;

For the rain and drought and sunshine make no changes in the street,

In the sullen line of buildings and the ceaseless tramp of feet;

But the bush hath moods and changes, as the seasons rise and fall,

And the men who know the bush-land—they are loyal through it all.

But you found the bush was dismal and a land of no delight,  
Did you chance to hear a chorus in the shearers' huts at night?  
Did they 'rise up, William Riley' by the camp-fire's cheery blaze?  
Did they rise him as we rose him in the good old droving days?  
And the women of the homesteads and the men you chanced to meet—  
Were their faces sour and saddened like the 'faces in the street',  
And the 'shy selector children'—were they better now or worse  
Than the little city urchins who would greet you with a curse?  
Is not such a life much better than the squalid street and square  
Where the fallen women flaunt it in the fierce electric glare,  
Where the sempstress plies her sewing till her eyes are sore and red  
In a filthy, dirty attic toiling on for daily bread?  
Did you hear no sweeter voices in the music of the bush  
Than the roar of trams and 'buses, and the war-whoop of 'the push'?  
Did the magpies rouse your slumbers with their carol sweet and strange?  
Did you hear the silver chiming of the bell-birds on the range?  
But, perchance, the wild birds' music by your senses was despised,  
For you say you'll stay in townships till the bush is civilised.  
Would you make it a tea-garden and on Sundays have a band  
Where the 'blokes' might take their 'donahs', with a 'public' close at hand?  
You had better stick to Sydney and make merry with the 'push',

For the bush will never suit you, and you'll never suit the bush.

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