

# On Kiley's Run

Banjo Paterson

The roving breezes come and go

On Kiley's Run,

The sleepy river murmurs low,

And far away one dimly sees

Beyond the stretch of forest trees —

Beyond the foothills dusk and dun —

The ranges sleeping in the sun

On Kiley's Run.

'Tis many years since first I came

To Kiley's Run,

More years than I would care to name

Since I, a stripling, used to ride

For miles and miles at Kiley's side,

The while in stirring tones he told

The stories of the days of old

On Kiley's Run.

I see the old bush homestead now

On Kiley's Run,  
Just nestled down beneath the brow  
Of one small ridge above the sweep  
Of river-flat, where willows weep  
And jasmine flowers and roses bloom,  
The air was laden with perfume  
On Kiley's Run.

We lived the good old station life  
On Kiley's Run,  
With little thought of care or strife.  
Old Kiley seldom used to roam,  
He liked to make the Run his home,  
The swagman never turned away  
With empty hand at close of day  
From Kiley's Run.

We kept a racehorse now and then  
On Kiley's Run,  
And neighb'ring stations brought their men  
To meetings where the sport was free,

And dainty ladies came to see  
Their champions ride; with laugh and song  
The old house rang the whole night long  
On Kiley's Run.

The station hands were friends I wot  
On Kiley's Run,  
A reckless, merry-hearted lot —  
All splendid riders, and they knew  
The 'boss' was kindness through and through.  
Old Kiley always stood their friend,  
And so they served him to the end  
On Kiley's Run.

But droughts and losses came apace  
To Kiley's Run,  
Till ruin stared him in the face;  
He toiled and toiled while lived the light,  
He dreamed of overdrafts at night:  
At length, because he could not pay,  
His bankers took the stock away

From Kiley's Run.

Old Kiley stood and saw them go

From Kiley's Run.

The well-bred cattle marching slow;

His stockmen, mates for many a day,

They wrung his hand and went away.

Too old to make another start,

Old Kiley died — of broken heart,

On Kiley's Run.

The owner lives in England now

Of Kiley's Run.

He knows a racehorse from a cow;

But that is all he knows of stock:

His chiefest care is how to dock

Expenses, and he sends from town

To cut the shearers' wages down

On Kiley's Run.

There are no neighbours anywhere

Near Kiley's Run.

The hospitable homes are bare,

The gardens gone; for no pretence

Must hinder cutting down expense:

The homestead that we held so dear

Contains a half-paid overseer

On Kiley's Run.

All life and sport and hope have died

On Kiley's Run.

No longer there the stockmen ride;

For sour-faced boundary riders creep

On mongrel horses after sheep,

Through ranges where, at racing speed,

Old Kiley used to 'wheel the lead'

On Kiley's Run.

There runs a lane for thirty miles

Through Kiley's Run.

On either side the herbage smiles,

But wretched trav'ling sheep must pass  
Without a drink or blade of grass  
Thro' that long lane of death and shame:  
The weary drovers curse the name  
Of Kiley's Run.

The name itself is changed of late  
Of Kiley's Run.

They call it 'Chandos Park Estate'.  
The lonely swagman through the dark  
Must hump his swag past Chandos Park.  
The name is English, don't you see,  
The old name sweeter sounds to me  
Of 'Kiley's Run'.

I cannot guess what fate will bring  
To Kiley's Run —  
For chances come and changes ring —  
I scarcely think 'twill always be  
Locked up to suit an absentee;  
And if he lets it out in farms

His tenants soon will carry arms

On Kiley's Run.

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