

Over the Range

Banjo Paterson

Little bush maiden, wondering-eyed,
Playing alone in the creek-bed dry,
In the small green flat on every side
Walled in by the Moonbi ranges high;
Tell us the tale of your lonely life,
‘Mid the great grey forests that know no change.
‘I never have left my home,’ she said,
‘I have never been over the Moonbi Range.

‘Father and mother are both long dead,
‘And I live with granny in yon wee place.’
‘Where are your father and mother?’ we said.
She puzzled awhile with thoughtful face,
Then a light came into the shy brown eye,
And she smiled, for she thought the question strange
On a thing so certain — ‘When people die
‘They go to the country over the range.’

‘And what is this country like, my lass?’

‘There are blossoming trees and pretty flowers,
‘And shining creeks where the golden grass
‘Is fresh and sweet from the summer showers.
‘They never need work, nor want, nor weep;
‘No troubles can come their hearts to estrange.
‘Some summer night I shall fall asleep,
‘And wake in the country over the range.’

Child, you are wise in your simple trust,
For the wisest man knows no more than you
Ashes to ashes, and dust to dust:
Our views by a range are bounded too;
But we know that God hath this gift in store,
That when we come to the final change,
We shall meet with our loved ones gone before
To the beautiful country over the range.

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