

The Two Devines

Banjo Paterson

It was shearing-time at the Myall Lake,
And there rose the sound thro' the livelong day
Of the constant clash that the shear-blades make
When the fastest shearers are making play,
But there wasn't a man in the shearers' lines
That could shear a sheep with the two Devines.
They had rung the sheds of the east and west,
Had beaten the cracks of the Walgett side,
And the Cooma shearers had giv'n them best —
When they saw them shear, they were satisfied.
From the southern slopes to the western pines
They were noted men, were the two Devines.

'twas a wether flock that had come to hand,
Great struggling brutes, that the shearers shirk,
For the fleece was filled with the grass and sand,
And seventy sheep was a big day's work.
'At a pound a hundred it's dashed hard lines
To shear such sheep,' said the two Devines.

But the shearers knew that they'd make a cheque
When they came to deal with the station ewes;
They were bare of belly and bare of neck
With a fleece as light as a kangaroo's.
'We will show the boss how a shear-blade shines
'When we reach those ewes,' said the two Devines.

But it chanced next day when the stunted pines
Were swayed and stirred with the dawn-wind's breath,
That a message came for the two Devines
That their father lay at the point of death.
So away at speed through the whispering pines
Down the bridle track rode the two Devines.

It was fifty miles to their father's hut,
And the dawn was bright when they rode away;
At the fall of night when the shed was shut
And the men had rest from the toilsome day,
To the shed once more through the dark'ning pines
On their weary steeds came the two Devines.

‘Well, you’re back right sudden,’ the super. said;

‘Is the old man dead and the funeral done?’

‘Well, no, sir, he ain’t not exactly dead,

But as good as dead,’ said the eldest son —

‘And we couldn’t bear such a chance to lose,

‘So we came straight back to tackle the ewes.’

They are shearing ewes at the Myall Lake,

And the shed is merry the livelong day

With the clashing sound that the shear-blades make

When the fastest shearers are making play,

And a couple of ‘hundred and ninety-nines’

Are the tallies made by the two Devines.

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