

Those Names

Banjo Paterson

The shearers sat in the firelight, hearty and hale and strong,
After the hard day's shearing, passing the joke along:
The 'ringer' that shorn a hundred, as they never were shorn before,
And the novice who, toiling bravely, had tommy-hawked half a score,
The tarboy, the cook, and the slushy, the sweeper that swept the board,
The picker-up, and the penner, with the rest of the shearing horde.

There were men from the inland stations where the skies like a furnace glow,
And men from the Snowy River, the land of the frozen snow;
There were swarthy Queensland drovers who reckoned all land by miles,
And farmers' sons from the Murray, where many a vineyard smiles.
They started at telling stories when they wearied of cards and games,
And to give these stories a flavour they threw in some local names,
And a man from the bleak Monaro, away on the tableland,
He fixed his eyes on the ceiling, and he started to play his hand.

He told them of Adjintoothbong, where the pine-clad mountains freeze,
And the weight of the snow in summer breaks branches off the trees,
And, as he warmed to the business, he let them have it strong —

Nimitybelle, Conargo, Wheeo, Bongongolong;

He lingered over them fondly, because they recalled to mind

A thought of the old bush homestead, and the girl that he left behind.

Then the shearers all sat silent till a man in the corner rose;

Said he, 'I've travelled a-plenty but never heard names like those.

'Out in the western districts, out on the Castlereagh

'Most of the names are easy — short for a man to say.

'You've heard of Mungrybambone and the Gundabluey pine,

'Quobbotha, Girilambone, and Terramungamine,

'Quambone, Eunonyhareenyha, Wee Waa, and Buntijo —'

But the rest of the shearers stopped him: 'For the sake of your jaw, go slow,

'If you reckon those names are short ones out where such names prevail,

'Just try and remember some long ones before you begin the tale.'

And the man from the western district, though never a word he said,

Just winked with his dexter eyelid, and then he retired to bed.

Downloaded from www.libraryofshortstories.com

This work is in the public domain of Australia. Please check your local copyright laws if you live elsewhere.