



POETRY.

Pat's Philosophy.

When the winter is cold,
I keep myself warm;
When the summer is hot
I keep myself cool;
It's mebbe I'm bold,
And it's mebbe I'm not;
But a go-soon's a fool
When he goes into harm;
Sez my old Uncle Dan—
A wise one, and stiddy—
"What's the world to a man
When his wife is a widdy?"

When the soldier struts by
With the sword at his side,
And the rattle, rattle drums
Beat the roll and the call,
He may go or may fly—
I stay here 'till death comes,
And mind me of all
That in battle have died!
I am like Uncle Dan,
For he said—troth and did he—
"What's the world to a man
When his wife is a widdy?"

When the sailor hoists sail,
And stands out on the deep,
Leaving sweetheart or wife
And the childer behind,
He timps the wild gale,
And he trifles wid life,
And he siaks, d'ye mind,
Where the mermaidens sleep!
"Pat," sez old Uncle Dan,
"Stay at home with your Biddy;
What's the world to a man
When his wife is a widdy?"

Let the scholar sit up
And write late and long,
To insure him a name—
He may sit up for me;
Give me but a full cup,
He may have all his Fame,
For it's stuff, d'ye see,
And not worth an old song;
Let us live, sez Uncle Dan,
Let us live and love, Biddy;
What's the world to a man,
When his wife is a widdy?"

Did He Deserve It?

Billy Merriam was a "cattle boy" at a stock farm in the "bush" in South Australia. He was a happy-go-lucky sort of a lad, and from all accounts, a rather graceless one.

It was his business, in company with half-a-dozen other stockmen, to watch over a herd of eleven thousand cattle, that had their pasturage in the valley of a small river called the "Wirrum," flowing into the Murray.

The pasture, or "run," extended for many miles along the South bank of the stream. No fences inclosed it. To the Southward it stretched off to the almost boundless deserts of sand and "scrub," where roam the wild black tribes, the aborigines of this strange Southern Continent. The stockmen are in the saddle all day long, and lead a rough life, full of adventure and peril.

One day a wild young bullock belonging to Billy's "division" made a "bolt;" that is to say, he put up head and tail

uttered a vicious bellow, and dashed off over the hills toward the scrub. In a moment Billy was following him with a whoop and a hallo, his long whip coiled, ready for a stinging cast.

But the wily brute gained covert in a ravine full of tangled grass-trees, which led out of the valley on to the desert. To turn him back, Billy was obliged to make a long detour over the hills. In the meantime the bullock returned to the plain, and ran from thicket to thicket, darting in and out of the tangled scrub, where it was impossible to follow him on horseback.

Half a score of miles are soon gone over in such a chase. The half-wild Australian cattle are very fleet, and have remarkable endurance; but Billy overtook the runaway at last. Tired out and breathless, the steer stumbled and fell heavily. There he lay palpitating, with the whites of his wicked little eyes glaring at his pursuer.

"I'll teach you a lesson!" cried Billy, galloping alongside and leaping off his horse. "I'll take the quirks out of you, sir!" and the heavy lash came cruelly down with a sounding crack, which made the hair fly up in a long line, and drew a wild bellow of pain from the prostrate animal.

The wild, rough boy had no pity in his heart. One stroke by no means satisfied his temper. A score of lashes fell fast and heavy, and when his arm ached, he rested a few moments, then commenced afresh; and, to tell the truth, kept flogging the poor animal till the hair was nearly all off its back, and not only the hair, but the hide with it.

Just at this stage of the performance, an unexpected event happened. Billy's horse—a native bred and rather wild creature, named Blinker—finding his master's attention occupied, concluded to forage for himself, and so trotted briskly away. No very good understanding existed between Billy and Blinker. There frequently arose antagonism betwixt them which Billy generally settled with a few sound cuts of his whip.

The horse took no notice of Billy's angry shout of "Whoa, Blinker!" other than to display both his hind hoofs and move away at increased speed.

Billy threw down his whip and set off after his faithless steed, exhorting him to stop, in very strong terms. But Blinker, having got the start, kept it, and the boy soon lost sight of him amidst the thickets and sand-knolls.

To add to the lad's discomfort, a "scud" had arisen. It began to rain furiously. To escape a drenching, he crept under a grass-tree, the long drooping leaves of which depended nearly to the ground.

It continued to rain—as it rains only in Australia—for an hour or two. A violent wind drove the blinding sheets of water. Billy could only remain where he was, and wait for the shower to pass. When at length the tornado slackened, it was late in the afternoon, and owing to

the black, rolling clouds, it was rapidly growing dark. The boy crept out from his shelter, however, and set off at a round pace, knowing that if he would reach the ranche that night, he had no time to lose.

His thoughts were occupied rather with the prodigious flogging he meant to give Blinker than with the course home ward, and it is not surprising that in a little time he found he had lost his way.

He was on an almost level plain, surrounded on all sides by scattered scrub and by bare sand-hills that looked bewilderingly alike. Along the whole dim horizon there was no mountain to serve as a landmark. Billy was puzzled and lost but not frightened. He ran on at a venture past thicket and hillock, till it had grown dark; so dark, indeed, that he could scarcely see, and had no longer the least idea toward what point of the compass he was going.

The desert is not a comfortable place to be lost in, and Billy's sensations were far from pleasant. To fall into the hands of the blacks and be kept a prisoner, or perhaps be roasted and eaten, were among the chances of remaining long in the locality in which he found himself.

On horseback there was little danger of being caught by the natives. On foot, however, few Europeans would care to try a race with these long-legged blacks, with their boomerangs whistling about his ears.

A kind of large black snake, very active, and a deadly biter, is common in the scrub. Billy dreaded the snakes almost as much as the blacks. Then, too, he was wet, and the night was chilly.

He had, however, a bit of "damper" bread in the leathern pocket of his jacket. This he ate while peering about for some nook or sheltered spot, where he might creep to escape the cold wind and to pass the night.

At the foot of one of the bare hillocks close at hand, he presently saw a large rock half hidden by the shaggy grass-trees. Pushing through the shrubbery, he found that the rock overhung on the lower side, offering a partial shelter.

Here he sat down and determined to remain till daylight. It was a dreary evening, and the slow hours dragged on a still drearier night.

At first Billy was not inclined to sleep. Once a kangaroo passed at a little distance, making the ground jar heavily at each of its unwieldy leaps. Later, he heard the low, shrill "pheet" of a snake close at hand, and hastily threw stones, sticks and dirt, to frighten off so undesirable a visitor.

Two or three times he fancied he heard a queer sound of snuffing further up under the rock, and concluded that there was a burrow of wombats behind the boulder, who were dissatisfied because he had taken possession of their front doorstep. But though somewhat large animals, Billy had very little fear of wombats.

Towards morning he grew drowsy, and at length fell asleep. At broad daylight

he awoke. Starting hastily, a sudden rumble caught his ear, and turning, he espied a big mottled tail disappearing in a rather large black hole, that seemed to lead back under the rock. He concluded the animal was a wombat that had probably been observing him curiously.

"I'll dig you out of here some day," was Billy's mental comment. Then he bethought himself of his situation, and sat up to consider it. He felt hungry, and by careful search he found a few dirty crumbs of "damper" in his leather pouch, and ate them one by one.

While thus engaged, a sharp snapping of twigs drew his attention. It came nearer, and a moment later there burst through the trailing leaves the lean, black paws, and gray, wolfish head of a native dog.

At sight of him, Billy jumped up in sudden apprehension. The dog snarled, then barked noisily. Immediately there arose a low, peculiar cry, apparently not a hundred yards off. It was answered from all about—"Cooe! cooe!"

The blacks were abroad on a hunt. Billy's heart almost came through his ribs. If he ran, the dog would follow him, and the whole pack of natives would soon be at his heels.

He glanced helplessly around. The wombat hole met his eye. The blacks were coming. There was no time to think twice. Billy instantly resolved to take his chances with the wombats, and dived into the hole.

The dog snapped and tore at his boots, but he wormed his way in. The hole led straight back under the rock eight or ten feet, into the very heart of the hillock, where it expanded into a sort of den as big as a baker's oven.

Seeing him coming the wombats sniffed noisily, and went scrambling further back under the hillock. Here Billy had the satisfaction of being able to turn over.

The dog was still worrying his heels; but taking a stone, he struck at the brute's head with such effect that it backed hastily out, howling with pain.

Meanwhile, he heard a jabbering outside. The blacks had come up. Several other dogs rushed successively into the hole, but on getting within range of Billy's heavy boot heel, beat a speedy retreat.

There is no need to remark that he listened intently to hear what the savages were about. They were chattering eagerly, but in a jargon quite unintelligible.

Presently the hole darkened. Something had been pushed up into the mouth of it. At first Billy thought that the blacks were stopping it up; but a moment after an ominous crackling, accompanied by a smothered roaring, began. The natives had placed a fire at the entrance of the burrow.

It flashed to Billy's mind that he had heard that the natives captured wombats by smoking them out. An agony of terror seized upon him. Ten times

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