

The Broken-Down Squatter

first published in The Queenslander in 1884 under Charles Flower's pen-name "Anthos"

Verse

capo2

G
A

Em
F#m

D7
E7

Come, Stump - y, old man, we must shift while we can;
To - geth - er we'll roam from our drought - strick - en home.

G
A

C
D

G
A

All your mates in the pad - dock are dead.
It seems hard that such things have to be,

G
A

Am
Bm

Let us bid our fare - wells to Glen Ev - a's sweet dells
And it's hard on a horse when he's nought for a boss

D7
E7

G
A

And the hills where your mast - er was bred;
But a brok - en - down squat - ter like me!

Chorus

C
D

G
A

For the banks are all brok - en, they say,
And the mer - chants are all up a tree.

G
A

When the big - wigs are brought to the Bank - rupt - cy Court
What chance for a squat - ter like me?

No more shall we muster the river for fats,
Or spiel on the Fifteen-mile plain,
Or rip through the scrub by the light of the moon,
Or see the old stockyard again.
Leave the slip-panels down, it won't matter much now,
There are none but the crows left to see,
Perching gaunt on yon pine, as though longing to dine
On a broken-down squatter like me.

When the country was cursed with the drought at its worst,
And the cattle were dying in scores,
Though down on my luck, I kept up my pluck,
Thinking justice might temper the laws.
But the farce has been played, and the Government aid
Ain't extended to squatters, old son;
When my money was spent they doubled the rent,
And resumed the best half of the run.

'Twas done without reason, for leaving the season
No squatter could stand such a rub;
For it's useless to squat when the rents are so hot
That one can't save the price of one's grub;
And there's not much to choose 'twixt the banks and the screws
Once a fellow gets put up a tree;
No odds what I feel, there's no court of appeal
For a broken-down squatter like me.

They have left us our hides and but little besides,
You have all I possess on your back.
But, Stumpy, old sport, when I boil my next quart,
We'll be well on the wallaby track.
It's a mighty long ride till we cross the Divide,
With the plains stretching out like a sea.
But the chances seem best in the far away West
For a broker, down squatter like me.