

The Sheep-Washer's Lament

Compiled from a number of informants by John Manifold. Multiple informants implies that the sentiments expressed struck a chord.

When first I took the West-ern track, 'twas man-y years a - - go,
No mast-er then stood up so high, no ser-vant stood so low;
But now the squat - ters, puffed with pride, do treat us with dis - dain.
La - ment with me the by-gone days that will not come a - - gain.

I had a pair of ponies once, to bear me on my road;
I earned a decent cheque at times, and blued it like a lord.
But lonely now I hump my drum in sunshine and in rain,
Lamenting on the bygone days that will not come again.

Let bushmen all in unity combine with heart and hand
Till bloody cringing poverty is driven from our land;
Let never Queensland come to know the tyrant's ball and chain,
And workers all in time to come their vanished rights regain.

With perfect health, a mine of wealth, the bushman stout and strong,
Would smoke his pipe and hum his tune, and sing his cheerful song,
But now we toil from morn till night, though much against the grain,
Lamenting on the bygone days that will not come again.

I once could boast two noble prads, to bear me on my way;
My good revolver in my belt, I never knew dismay.
But lonely now I hump my drum in sunshine and in rain,
Lamenting on the bygone days that will not come again.

I earned a decent cheque at times, and blued it like a lord.
My dress a prince's form would grace, and sprees I could afford.
But now in tattered rags arrayed, my limbs they ache with pain,
Lamenting on the bygone days that will not come again.