

# Andrew Barton 'Banjo' Paterson



*The Man from Snowy River and Other Verses*



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### **The Man from Snowy River**

There was movement at the station, for the word had passed around

That the colt from old Regret had got away,  
And had joined the wild bush horses—he was worth a thousand pound,

So all the cracks had gathered to the fray.  
All the tried and noted riders from the stations near and far  
Had mustered at the homestead overnight,  
For the bushmen love hard riding where the wild bush horses are,

And the stock-horse snuffs the battle with delight.

There was Harrison, who made his pile when Pardon won the cup,  
The old man with his hair as white as snow;  
But few could ride beside him when his blood was fairly up—  
He would go wherever horse and man could go.

And Clancy of the Overflow came down to lend a hand,  
No better horseman ever held the reins;  
For never horse could throw him while the saddle-girths would stand,

He learnt to ride while droving on the plains.

And one was there, a stripling on a small and weedy beast,  
He was something like a racehorse undersized,  
With a touch of Timor pony—three parts thoroughbred at least—  
And such as are by mountain horsemen prized.  
He was hard and tough and wiry—just the sort that won't say die

—

There was courage in his quick impatient tread;  
And he bore the badge of gameness in his bright and fiery eye,  
And the proud and lofty carriage of his head.

But still so slight and weedy, one would doubt his power to stay,

And the old man said, 'That horse will never do  
For a long and tiring gallop—lad, you'd better stop away,  
Those hills are far too rough for such as you.'  
So he waited sad and wistful—only Clancy stood his friend—  
'I think we ought to let him come,' he said;  
'I warrant he'll be with us when he's wanted at the end,  
For both his horse and he are mountain bred.

'He hails from Snowy River, up by Kosciusko's side,  
Where the hills are twice as steep and twice as rough,  
Where a horse's hoofs strike firelight from the flint stones  
every stride,  
The man that holds his own is good enough.  
And the Snowy River riders on the mountains make their home,  
Where the river runs those giant hills between;  
I have seen full many horsemen since I first commenced to roam,  
But nowhere yet such horsemen have I seen.'

So he went—they found the horses by the big mimosa clump—  
They raced away towards the mountain's brow,  
And the old man gave his orders, 'Boys, go at them from the  
jump,  
No use to try for fancy riding now.  
And, Clancy, you must wheel them, try and wheel them to the  
right.  
Ride boldly, lad, and never fear the spills,  
For never yet was rider that could keep the mob in sight,  
If once they gain the shelter of those hills.'

So Clancy rode to wheel them—he was racing on the wing  
Where the best and boldest riders take their place,  
And he raced his stock-horse past them, and he made the ranges  
ring  
With the stockwhip, as he met them face to face.  
Then they halted for a moment, while he swung the dreaded lash,  
But they saw their well-loved mountain full in view,  
And they charged beneath the stockwhip with a sharp and sudden  
dash,  
And off into the mountain scrub they flew.

Then fast the horsemen followed, where the gorges deep and  
black  
Resounded to the thunder of their tread,  
And the stockwhips woke the echoes, and they fiercely answered  
back  
From cliffs and crags that beetled overhead.  
And upward, ever upward, the wild horses held their way,  
Where mountain ash and kurrajong grew wide;  
And the old man muttered fiercely, 'We may bid the mob good  
day,  
No man can hold them down the other side.'

When they reached the mountain's summit, even Clancy took a pull,

It well might make the boldest hold their breath,  
The wild hop scrub grew thickly, and the hidden ground was full  
Of wombat holes, and any slip was death.  
But the man from Snowy River let the pony have his head,  
And he swung his stockwhip round and gave a cheer,  
And he raced him down the mountain like a torrent down its bed,  
While the others stood and watched in very fear.

He sent the flint stones flying, but the pony kept his feet,  
He cleared the fallen timber in his stride,  
And the man from Snowy River never shifted in his seat—  
It was grand to see that mountain horseman ride.  
Through the stringy barks and saplings, on the rough and broken ground,  
Down the hillside at a racing pace he went;  
And he never drew the bridle till he landed safe and sound,  
At the bottom of that terrible descent.

He was right among the horses as they climbed the further hill,  
And the watchers on the mountain standing mute,  
Saw him ply the stockwhip fiercely, he was right among them still,  
As he raced across the clearing in pursuit.  
Then they lost him for a moment, where two mountain gullies met  
In the ranges, but a final glimpse reveals  
On a dim and distant hillside the wild horses racing yet,  
With the man from Snowy River at their heels.

And he ran them single-handed till their sides were white with foam.

He followed like a bloodhound on their track,  
Till they halted cowed and beaten, then he turned their heads for home,

And alone and unassisted brought them back.  
But his hardy mountain pony he could scarcely raise a trot,  
He was blood from hip to shoulder from the spur;  
But his pluck was still undaunted, and his courage fiery hot,  
For never yet was mountain horse a cur.

And down by Kosciusko, where the pine-clad ridges raise  
Their torn and rugged battlements on high,  
Where the air is clear as crystal, and the white stars fairly blaze

At midnight in the cold and frosty sky,  
And where around the Overflow the reedbeds sweep and sway  
To the breezes, and the rolling plains are wide,  
The man from Snowy River is a household word to-day,  
And the stockmen tell the story of his ride.

### **Old Pardon, the Son of Reprieve**

You never heard tell of the story?  
Well, now, I can hardly believe!  
Never heard of the honour and glory  
Of Pardon, the son of Reprieve?  
But maybe you're only a Johnnie  
And don't know a horse from a hoe?  
Well, well, don't get angry, my sonny,  
But, really, a young un should know.

They bred him out back on the 'Never',  
His mother was Mameluke breed.  
To the front—and then stay there—was ever  
The root of the Mameluke creed.  
He seemed to inherit their wiry  
Strong frames—and their pluck to receive—  
As hard as a flint and as fiery  
Was Pardon, the son of Reprieve.

We ran him at many a meeting  
At crossing and gully and town,  
And nothing could give him a beating—  
At least when our money was down.  
For weight wouldn't stop him, nor distance,  
Nor odds, though the others were fast,  
He'd race with a dogged persistence,  
And wear them all down at the last.

At the Turon the Yattendon filly  
Led by lengths at the mile-and-a-half,  
And we all began to look silly,  
While *her* crowd were starting to laugh;  
But the old horse came faster and faster,  
His pluck told its tale, and his strength,  
He gained on her, caught her, and passed her,  
And won it, hands-down, by a length.

And then we swooped down on Menindie

To run for the President's Cup—  
Oh! that's a sweet township—a shindy  
To them is board, lodging, and sup.  
Eye-openers they are, and their system  
Is never to suffer defeat;  
It's 'win, tie, or wrangle'—to best 'em  
You must lose 'em, or else it's 'dead heat'.

We strolled down the township and found 'em  
At drinking and gaming and play;  
If sorrows they had, why they drowned 'em,  
And betting was soon under way.  
Their horses were good 'uns and fit 'uns,  
There was plenty of cash in the town;  
They backed their own horses like Britons,  
And, Lord! how we rattled it down!

With gladness we thought of the morrow,  
We counted our wagers with glee,  
A simile homely to borrow—  
'There was plenty of milk in our tea.'  
You see we were green; and we never  
Had even a thought of foul play,  
Though we well might have known that the clever  
Division would 'put us away'.

Experience 'docet', they tell us,  
At least so I've frequently heard,  
But, 'dosing' or 'stuffing', those fellows  
Were up to each move on the board:  
They got to his stall—it is sinful  
To think what such villains would do—  
And they gave him a regular skinful  
Of barley—green barley—to chew.

He munched it all night, and we found him  
Next morning as full as a hog—  
The girths wouldn't nearly meet round him;  
He looked like an overfed frog.  
We saw we were done like a dinner—  
The odds were a thousand to one  
Against Pardon turning up winner,  
'Twas cruel to ask him to run.

We got to the course with our troubles,