Moreton Bay

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One Sunday morning, as I went walking,
By Brisbane waters I chanced to stray.
I heard a pris'ner his fate bewailing
While on the sunny river bank he lay.
"I am a native of Erin's island,
But banished now from my native shore;
They stole me from my aged parents
And from the maiden whom I do adore.

"I've been a prisoner at Port Macquarie,
At Norfolk Island and Emu Plains,
At Castle Hill and at cursed Toongabbie,
At all these settlements I've been in chains.
But of all the places of condemnation
And penal stations in New South Wales,
To Moreton Bay I have found no equal;
Excessive tyranny each day prevails.

"For three long years I was beastly treated
And heavy irons on my legs I wore.
My back with flogging was lacerated
And oft-times painted with my crimson gore.
And many a man from downright starvation
Lies mouldering now underneath the clay,
And Captain Logan he had us mangled
All on the triangles of Moreton Bay.

"Like the Egyptians and ancient Hebrews,
We were oppressed under Logan's yoke,
Till a native black lying there in ambush
Did deal this tyrant his mortal stroke.
My fellow pris'ners be exhilarated
That all such tyrants like death may find,
And when from bondage we are liberated
Our former sufferings will fade from mind."

This text approximates the version printed in Will Lawson's "Australian Bush Songs and Ballads (Sydney, 1944). Captain Patrick Logan was slain by an Aborigine's spear in 1830. By all accounts his fate was deserved; the death rate in his camp exceeded ten percent each year. Moreton Bay, in southern Queensland, was a

penal colony from 1824 to 1842. RW

RW

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