

The Ardboe Poet

The Poetry Of John Coleman
(1855 – 1938)
For John Coleman's descendants
both near and far

John Coleman's poetry as published in the weekly Mid Ulster Mail between 1927 and 1938. This book consists of 137 poems, 5 of the poems included are replies to John by Daniel Treanor from the USA.

Researched and compiled

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Introduction

The Journey of a Lifetime

As a child growing up in Belfast in the 1970s, ‘family’ meant mum, dad and one sister, 2 sets of grandparents, and those who would be at my grandparents house on a Saturday.

My dad’s parents’ house was an interesting place to be on a Saturday. I never knew who would appear. Dad was one of 6 children, which I thought was a big family, so the constant stream of aunts, uncles and cousins seemed never-ending. There was a loud and busy atmosphere in the house, the smells and the noise of a big family. I loved it!

It never entered my head, growing up, or even as I got married and had my own children, that family went beyond those that I had met along the way. The furthest back generation that I knew anything about were my grandparents. Dad didn’t seem to know much more than me. Mum was different she knew where both sets of her family tree were from, and had the stories and the names to back it up!

Dad has vague memories of his grandparents on his father’s side – and this was where we were drawn to. The Adair family (as far as we had ever known) were Belfast people. But as we gathered birth certificates and photographs we started to put together a story going back to a tiny place called Ardboe, in County Tyrone, at the far side of Lough Neagh.

Dad now retired, and I at home looking after my growing family. Together we spent hours doing searches as so much information is available online, and yet more hours at the Public Records office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) and the General Registry Office of Northern Ireland (GRONI).

Dad's grandmother is Kate Coleman from Ardboe. She came to Belfast and married John Henry Orr Adair in 1911, and although my grandparents' generation spoke of spending summers in Ardboe when they were very young children, that family connection was lost to us.

Kate was born on the 8th November 1882 to John and Mary Coleman. On her birth certificate we found out that her parents lived in Mullinahoe, that her father, John, listed his profession as fisherman, and that her mother's maiden name was Trainor. (Also appears in different places as Trainer, Traynor and Treanor). Wonderfully, that led us to the marriage certificate of John and Mary Coleman – on the 3rd August 1875 they were married in Derrymacash, Lurgan. They were 17 and 16 years old respectively.

A while later, when I had been put in contact with local historian, Pat Grimes, I asked his thoughts on why John and Mary hadn't got married in Ardboe, as they both lived in the area. Pat told me, that at that time, because John was a fisherman it would be very handy to take the boat down the Lough to Lurgan and that it was quite a romantic gesture in that era, to 'kidnap' your wife-to-be and sail her away to get married! 17 year-old John must have been quite the romantic!

John and Mary had around 13 children, whose descendents are spread far and wide. I've had contact with some in California, Canada, England and Ireland. Through some of them, we found out that John was well known as a poet and story-teller.

That was when my dad got hooked! He found out that John's poetry was published in his own life-time by the Mid-Ulster Mail. Mum and dad spent numerous hours in Magherafelt Library, searching the micro-fiches, as John's poetry covered ten years, from 1927 until his death in 1938.

A few months ago, Pat Grimes very kindly took us to what is believed to be John Coleman's grave. We knew from one of his poems that he hadn't wanted a gravestone or for his grave to be marked in any way. He's buried overlooking his beloved Lough Neagh, a short distance from his childhood home, and from Cove Lodge, where he lived with his ever-expanding family. John's poems are wonderful tales of daily encounters, pondering and questioning. His love for Ireland seeps through the words and touches my heart nearly a century later. His grief for Ireland's trouble could be written today and not be out of time.

Ireland's loss of those who went to North America and never came home caused me to cry more than any history book I've ever read on any school syllabus. John doesn't give statistics; he tells the story of the heart and the yearning for the connection that has been lost across the ocean both for those who have gone, and those who have been left behind.

The Mid-Ulster Mail must have been sent to the States in the 1920s and 30s – for it also prints some replies to John’s poetry from a relative – Daniel Treanor – who was living in New York, giving us a different perspective of the time.

John bought Cove Lodge in Ardboe, and farmed for much of his adult life. His poetry is alive with his connection to the land. His life was steeped in traditions, in the Celtic way of living off the land, in community and shared celebrations and sorrows. He tells us tales of beautiful summers and harsh winters, and paints pictures of the ever-changing scenery through the seasons. As John gets older (he lived into his 80s) he reminisces of his own childhood and wonders at how much has changed since he was a boy! Without the benefit of the internet, or as far as we know, travelling far, John is well-read and philosophical. He asks questions and ponders the meaning of life. Death does not seem to scare him, in fact, it is very much part of the circle of life. His faith has been passed down from his mother from an early age, and this comes to his mind more and more as he gets older. All of his life was lived on the shores of Lough Neagh – from the Coleman homestead to Cove Lodge – he was never far from his beloved Lough.

John has written a record of a distant past that survives only through the Celtic tradition of story-telling. I am grateful John took time to write down much of what he has, or it would be lost forever. This poetry is for my children and their future generations - that they would never forget where they have come

from, no matter where they go. It is also for the many, and especially the many descendents of John and Mary Coleman, that no matter the distance, they would truly understand their heart's connection to Ireland; and for those of us still in Ireland, that we would not be strangers.

I am also grateful to my Dad for investing so much of his time to ensure John's work will not be lost.

Ardboe and Lough Neagh

The Writer's Farewell to Lough Neagh

I write not of our lovely land, but of our inland sea,
Confined between five counties, yet flowing fast and
free.

Not bound by any legal ties, it flows from day to day
As if 'twould dry its bed and soil, but still remain
Lough Neagh.

Oh! dear old Lough Neagh, I know you well, though
many years we're parted

I think I made a grave mistake when first with you I
started.

But let that pass; if most of us our lives lived o'er
again,

We'd guide our steps by other ways, from former paths
refrain.

From shore to shore I sailed you o'er, and every bay
and nook,

And rock and flat, from north to south, was like an
open book.

Be it ever so dark, in my tiny barque I always found
my way

To glean the scaly harvest from your waters, dear old
Lough Neagh.

I was young and strong, and ne'er thought long; my
mates were good and true

And always did confide in me; they ne'er had cause to
rue.

And many a night we felt delight, when company we
had none

In seeking our objective, to bring the harvest home.

When we rose and fell on the billow's swell, we felt no sense of dread;
We felt secure on that watery floor, as if we were in bed.
When the spray would fly, and the sea bird cry, it seemed to us but play;
You thought us naughty children then; I thank you dear old Neagh.
Another time that I bear in mind, – I'll not forget it soon –
With a roaring wind coming up behind we'd scud away to Toome,
To trap the silver-bellied eels on their passage going away
To seek the briny waters from your freshets, – dear old Neagh.
And o'er Toome bay, till the break of day, the slippery eels we'd snare;
While waves mast high, were rolling bye, and nought but darkness there,
No dread had we of the howling sea, nor did we for safety pray.
Oh! you never took us seriously, I freshlets, – dear old Neagh.
But those days are past, and behind the mast I will never steer again;
Nor furl my sail when the wintery gales come scudding on amain,
For your fisher's peace and your crops increase, a prayer I'll ever pray,
I love you still, with a right good will, a long farewell,
Old Neagh.

Old Tyrone Among the Bushes (Daniel Treanor)

Oh! would that God would guide me back, once more
across the foam,
For long years I've been yearning, to revisit old
Tyrone.

Tyrone my natural county I ever think of thee,
Your fertile glens and valleys, are rich in history.

Sweet Tyrone among the bushes, how proud your folks
must be,

When nature's been so bountiful, with shrubs and
forest tree.

With your golden crested landscape, there's no place
can compare,

And the beauty of your lakes and streams, can't be
equalled anywhere.

Didn't Kearns write how he travelled Flanders, and
every spot along the Rine,

But in all his rankings and undertakings, Ardboe's
equal he ne'er could find.

Of your forts and ancient castles, no pen or bard can
e'er portray,

Their beauty and magnificence, on the banks of sweet
Lough Neagh.

Could I only drift o'er its placid waters, just like I used
to when a boy,
And watch the sun in the evening sinking behind the
Castle of Mountjoy.
And then Dungannon on the hill, how majestically it
stands,
A monument of former days, to the brave old Tyrone
clans.

I sigh when I think of dear old Cookstown, as it lies in
the valley still.
On one side is Adair's factory, on the other Gunning's
mill.
And oh, for the days of Rankin's dam, not far from the
Oldtown Hill,
When the girls and boys went skating beside the water
mill.

Then after school on Gortalowry, how we'd roam
around Killymoon,
And then come home by way of Clare, just to pass
M'Nally's mill.
God be with you old Slievegallion, and the happy days
of yore,
Days when you had your peaks well stocked with
grouse and quail galore.

You'd a welcome for the hunter, shure they came from
far and near,
And you never disappointed them in that season of the
year.
If I ever have the opportunity, and Father Time
permits,
I'll visit each town and village, and every little hamlet.

I will go from Coagh to Stewartstown, Coalisland and
the Moy,
And stop awhile at old Benburb, then I'll visit famed
Pomeroy.
From there, through Clogher Valley, and the town of
Aughnacloy,
Yes, and I'd roam through the bogs of Beragh, like a
carefree Irish boy.

I'd travel along on the Lissan Road, and drink from
McGeagh's spring well,
But later on I'd lubricate at McGurk's Kildress Hotel.
Then back once more to long Cookstown, the place I
once called home,
Even though there'd be no fatted calf or kin to welcome
my return.
There I'd cheerfully wait for death to come, then for
the past atone,
If I thought my bones would be laid to rest, somewhere
in Old Tyrone.

Drowning Tragedy on Lough Neagh (written in 1904)

The fourth day of September, in nineteen hundred and four,
We have cause to all remember round Lough Neagh's shore;
When some of Ardboe fishermen left home to fish at Toome,
And scarcely went two hundred yards until they met their doom.

The evening was stormy as they pushed out of the quay.
But little was their notion, that the angry waves of Neagh
Were gasping to receive them as they put up the sail,
And now in old Ardboe they lie, and friends do them bewail.

Their friends and comrade fishermen will mourn for their loss,
No more they'll hear their hearty cheer around the Rock or Cross;
They left their homes and families quite happy on that day,
And little thought to loose their lives so quickly on Lough Neagh.

The wind it blew in heavy gusts, 'twas stronger than a
gale,
And death prepared to do its worst when they put up
the sail;
For barely had they done so, when their boat did
tumble o'er,
And left them struggling in the waves, convenient to
the shore.

The four got upon the boat, and held her as she rocked,
But soon were hurled off again, the waves their pity
mocked;
James Coyle and Jimmy Cassidy, they struggled hard
in vain,
And fought the raging billows to reach the boat again.

But like the wary animal, that seizes on its prey,
And takes a cruel pleasure with it to toy and play;
So did the angry waters, as with each succeeding
wave;
Their efforts grew more feeble, no human aid could
save.

And he who made this earthly ball, and formed man
from clay;
Who watches o'er the sparrows' fall, whose orders all
obey,
Did deem it wise and prudent, who knoweth all things
best,
The souls of those two men to take unto Eternal Rest.

Where toils unknown, where sorrows o'er, where all
their labour done,
To dwell with him for evermore, their Heavenly Crown
is won.
Let friends not shed regretful tears nor think it hard to
sever,
For all will meet, in a few short years, to part no more
forever.

Old Ardboe

When I see that ancient fabric standing on the banks
of Neagh,
The remains of former grandeur slowly mouldering to
decay
And ponder o'er the distant past and walk its walls
around;
Like Moses at the burning bush I seem on holy ground.
I feel as if trespassing where angels fear to tread,
It is not soil I tread upon but dust of countless dead.
They are slumbering there so peacefully within that
hallowed clay,
With nothing to disturb but the surges of Lough
Neagh.
The sun's the same that shone on it, long centuries
ago,
And Neagh's waters always lave the banks of old
Ardboe.
That ancient temple standing a memento of the past,
Defying times, destroying land almost while time doth
last;
But spoiling lords more cruel were, they came with
ruthless hands,
And reft it of its grandeur, a skeleton it stands
Like to a hoary sentinel to guard its hallowed graves,
That hold our dead now heedless of the murmur of the
waves.
Could we peer through the ages and the misty past
explore,
Ere Danes and Anglo-Normans set foot upon our
Shore,

And behold the deep devotion of our fathers in that
fane,
As the centuries kept rolling past before the spoilers
came.
We would bow our heads with reverence when
treading on that clay,
Reposing now so peacefully upon the banks of Neagh,
Until the trumpet calls them, when all of us must go;
No deserters from that army then, when leaving Old
Ardboe.
And that emblem of Redemption we in solemn
grandeur see,
Reminding of our parents fall, and the scene on
Calvary;
Its sculptured sides portraying, in no uncertain way,
Events we see recorded in Holy Writ today.
The blast shakes not its mitred top, nor bends its
hoary head;
It stands there like the temple, a sentry o'er the dead.
It reminds of Satan's jealousy, against Adam and his
wife,
And the price of our Redemption when Christ offered
up his life.
No vandal hand profaned it; it's standing there today,
A relic of the past ages upon the banks of Neagh.
And when my spirit shall take flight and leave this
shell below,
I wish it placed in kindred clay within you, Old
Ardboe.

“Stolen Waters”

Oh! dear old Neagh, for many a day I’ve wandered ‘long
thy shore;

With comrades dear long passed from here, that
wandering now is o’er.

Not o’er “Stolen Waters” then went we to fish and sail.

Oh no! ‘twas then as free as air, no wonder I bewail.

With language that I can’t express, I crush the infant
curse;

Deprived of means of livelihood, could anything be
worse?

Behold the hungry children, behold the deprived of life,

The husband gazing in despair, as well deprive of life;

As wrest the bread from out their grasp, list to the
children’s cry;

See their placid faces, list to the mother’s sigh.

The Scottish poet’s words to me with tenfold force
return;

“Mans inhumanity to man makes countless thousands
mourn.”*

Descendants of those fishermen, long ages passed away;

Who always gained their livelihood by fishing on Lough
Neagh;

Are threatened with disaster now, and some are forced
to roam

Across the broad Atlantic, to seek an alien home.

To resurrect old parchments from out the womb of time,

To make those humble fishermen amenable to crime,

For following that calling their fathers did before;

And wrest them from their birthright, all honest men
deplore,

Behold those “Stolen Waters” gaze on that inland sea.

Filched from their rightful owners, now criminals are
we;
To trespass on that property, it makes our blood to boil,
As well deprive the farmer of the product of the soil.
I little thought when life was young, when hopes were
high and bright,
They'd filch from us our inland sea before my coming
night;
For centuries past our fathers reaped their harvest
from those waves;
The bones of those ancestors will turn in their graves.
The spirits of our silent dead that hear our children's
cry,
Will join in our petition before the Throne on High;
Beseeching for our heritage, our birthright to restore
Our inland sea to make as free as it always was before.
Up 'claim your right with legal fight, no cringing don't
give in;
Your cause is just in God put trust, fight on until you
win,
You've men of might they'll for you fight, and pen or
voice won't spare;
May't again be free as it was before, will be my constant
prayer.
Who walked the sea of Galilee, your cause is in His
keeping,
He made those fishers fish for men, He'll wipe away
your weeping.

* Robert Burns quote.

Those who are lying on the banks of Lough Neagh

May the spirit of those who are turned to clay
Have rest who lie on the banks of Lough Neagh;
Their voices are hushed and the turf on their breast,
And their spirits gone hence, let us hope to the blest.
There are old here and young, there are friends here
and foes,
They are all lying together in the same clay repose,
No noise to disturb save the noise from the lake,
Of the waves coming shoreward on the rock when they
break.
Now rest in thy slumbers, and don't grudge me mine,
For I shortly will follow, I am biding my time;
And my dust will commingle, when the time comes to
stay,
With friends who are lying on the banks of Lough
Neagh.
In life they had pleasure, in life they had pain,
And I think of old comrades again and again;
And the sports that we had and the hopes and the joys,
And the running and jumping, when innocent boys.
And throwing the stone, watching others at play;
Now they are all together on the banks of Lough
Neagh,
Round that ancient old pile that we call Old Ardboe,
That was built by St Colman long centuries ago.
May their slumbers be peaceful; I will not them chide,
Now they lie 'neath the daisy, and long shall they bide,
Where posterity placed them in kindred clay;
Oh! 'twill be a long sleep on the banks of Lough Neagh.

I remember quite well when we took a delight
In teasing old women on midsummer night,
When ranged round the cross on their knees to pray,
We jostled and pushed them and thought it such play.
And such fun and such sport, and the noise that we
made;
Now they all lie together, beside where they prayed,
With nought to disturb, save the noise of Lough
Neagh,
Till the blast of the trumpet shall call them away .

A Summer Morning Along Lough Neagh

Oh! Such a lovely morning, it fills me with delight,
The air so pure and bracing, the sun so warm and
bright;
I see the trees reflected in the lake as in a glass;
And flocks of gulls are flying above me, as I pass
Along those placid waters as they gently flow to land,
Like soldiers in formation, led by a ruling hand.
I am watching them in wonder, but can see no broken
ranks,
They still come on in single file, to lave the water's
banks;
And aye recede a pace or two, when falling on the
sand,
As if they felt displeasure on arriving at the land.
But hindward ranks are pressing on, they're coming
might and main,
As if to break the battlements, but soon recede again;
I have watched the waves with crests of white come
rushing madly on,
Like warriors clad in armour bright to wreak their
wrath upon
Some hidden horde that hold the pass through which
they mean to go,
They come, they break, and then recoil the sand's the
hidden foe.
Thus onward, ever onward, those waters come and go,
I have watched them coming roaring, I have watched
them mild and slow;
But they never pass the boundary, as if opposing ranks
Withstood the charge, they scatter on coming to the
banks.

Thus it is since Creation, thus will it always be,
Who stilled the angry billows on the sea of Galilee;
He guides the flowing water, He notes the sparrow's
fall,
Then why so much ingratitude? He loves and died for
all.

A Reminder of August 4th, 1928

(Respectively addressed to Miss M.B. Johnston, Beechville,
Glenburn Park, Belfast)

Dear Miss Johnston please accept this rhyme,
Where gratitude is breathing from every line;
In meditation here I sit and write,
I would fain aspire, 'twould be my delight.
(But language fails me, my words too few),
To express the gratitude I feel for you;
With charms lovely as that lovely day,
With its brilliant sunshine 'long dear old Neagh.

And calm and placid as that glassy lake
'Long which you and yours did for pleasures seek;
And with awe and reverence contemplate the sod,
Where in long gone ages the old saints trod.
And in quest of relics of those long past ages,
Of which no mention is on history's pages;
Yet with becoming deference and kind regard,
You forgot not greetings to the aged bard.

May your years be peaceful as the lake that day,
'Long whose mirrored surface you did wend your way;
May contentment charm you, and when so inclined;
A fond Adonis lovely Venus find.
Were it in my power on that auspicious day,
To charm that audience on the banks of Neagh;
Where wealth and beauty with their attendant graces,
Were on me reflected from that crowd of faces.

To obtain that power I would serve twice o'er,
As Jacob for his Rachel, long, long before;
Content when my spirit's prison 'neath that hallowed
turf,
Shall rest unconscious of the roaring surf.
Where no polished marble shall above me rise,
To tell traveller where the past lies;
And no vain glory, no false worldly pride,
But the simple phrase: 'He has lived, he died,
His joys were few, and his troubles many,
In the Great Beyond may he not have any.'

Reflection on Lough Neagh

'Tis met that I again should stand where first I saw
the light,
Before my eyes for ever close unto that natal sight;
To view again not in a dream the paths I used to stray,
And see again the sights I saw along you dear old
Neagh.
Again I stand upon the strand where oft I've stood
before,
Again I see as oft before the waves roll to the shore;
To me not strange it is no change the waves roll to and
fro,
As often when a lad at school I've watched them come
and go.
And ages come and pass away and still no change we
see,
You rest within your mother's lap our lovely inland
sea;
Time wears no furrows on thy face, no wrinkles on thy
brow,
The Danes and Druids drank from thee when just the
same as now.
No paths across thy breast we see although so often
cleft,
How oft did man thy waters plough and still no trace is
left;
How oft did man in careless mood upon thy waters go,
How oft he thoughtlessly did reap the crop he did not
sow.
And never praise, nor heartfelt thanks he to the Donor
gave,

Whose bounty fed sire, wife and child from out the
flowing wave.
As on this eminence I stand and gaze along the strand,
What thoughts arise within me as I view the works of
man,
That gave such pride in ages past the castle, church
and mill,
Now in decay they fade away but thou endures still.
Again I feel the gentle breeze that often fanned my
hair,
'Tis filtered from surrounding hills, no baneful germs
there;
No city smoke above it rise, no messengers of death
Are wafted o'er its surface as we inhale its breath.
Again I see the islets where the coot and heron bide,
And swan in kingly splendour with his comrade by his
side,
Where wild geese in formation come from northern
haunts away,
To pay their usual visit to their favourite Lough
Neagh.
I shift my gaze unto the east where I have often been,
And viewed those lovely mansions, Shane's Castle,
Masserene;
Beside the strand in beauty stand along the Antrim
Bay,
And lend an added charm to the scenery of Lough
Neagh.
I have wantoned on thy bosom when thy waters were a
joy,
When like a sleeping baby you would not a fly annoy;
I have rode upon thy waters when stormy winds did
roar,

And always guided safely the little barque to shore.
And time rolls on and still no change upon our inland
sea,
All things grow old and pass away; but like Eternity,
You still remain to us the same, no change upon thy
face;
Your waters roll from shore to shore and still maintain
their place.

Foreign Lands

There are those who boast of travel, who have crossed
the ocean wide,
Where mountains seem to reach the sky with summits
crowned with snow,
But this dear old spot has been my lot way here in Old
Ardboe.
No rivers grand like the Rio Grande or Amazon I've
seen,
No mighty lakes that would submerge this dear old
land of green,
No mighty cities travelled through where black and
white abide;
I am far removed from turmoil here along Lough
Neagh's side.
And when we stray no beasts of prey to guard against
are here,
No cobra's bite our lines to smite, their fangs we do not
fear,
No noise of bus or train we hear to chase our sleep
away,
Save that accustomed murmur the surges of Lough
Neagh.
We suffer not from earthquake shocks, no torrid heat
we know,
We need no sleigh to make our way across the winter
snow,
With packs of hungry wolves behind, like countries far
away,
And though life's near spent, still I feel content beside
you dear Old Neagh.

And when at eve our home we leave or feel inclined to
stray
Along our little rivers that flow into Lough Neagh,
No need have we in dread to be, our rivers sedgy grass
Conceals no alligators to devour us as we pass.
I've never been in that far off land, where the
Southern Cross looks down,
I have humped no swag, I have sought no shade 'neath
the gum tree bare and brown;
I have never felt the mosquito sting, nor seen the land
laid bare
By the conquering host that come on the wing, whose
passage darkens the air,
The Egyptians felt their destroying power when Moses
uttered a prayer.
I have kept aloof from the sweltering heat of those
countries far away;
Does it lessen the worth of the cooling breeze we find
along Lough Neagh?
I have trod no plains of unstable sand where the
traveller's bones be bleaching,
Where the mirage mocks, and the fancied lake of a
bitter lesson teaching;
Where the fiery winds of those burning sands that roll
like the ocean waves,
Mock the traveller's thirst like a thing accurs'd, that to
quench like a maniac raves.
And the caravans in the shifting sands o'erwhelmed
are on the way;
Our sons are brave but they find their graves in those
places far away,
And our sons have left, and the land's bereft of the
bravest and the best;

With the old behind, and the maimed and blind, our
help's gone east and west,
'Way among the stranger to risk the danger, with
mammon as the lure,
To those far off lands like conscripted bands, will we
never find a cure?

The Banks of Lough Neagh

Now seventy six years mixed with smiles and with
tears,
Since the midwife pronounced me a boy,
And my dear mother's trouble, if it had then been
doubled,
In that instant was turned to joy.
Raising hands to caress me, and saying "God bless ye,
If you live you'll see changes I know",
Now that mother's in dust, and to join her I must,
When at the length of my tether I'll go.
And the length of my tether's got frayed, and is greatly
decayed,
It can't bare a pull or a kick;
And Death's such a bully that he'll sure use that
*gully, (*butcher's knife)
And shortly may give it a nick.
Then, from my prison I'll spring, like a bird on the
wing,
To render my stewardship on high;
From those friends I have left, and those dear ones
bereft,
I will part without bidding goodbye.
O'er my prison of clay they may sigh for a day,
Until mother earth it is laid in;
It came from the dust, and return it must,
'Tis a mandate as old as is Eden.
But not far away, in a foreigner's clay,
Where the shells made the graves, it will lie in;
But its own native earth, where it first drew its
breath,
Where the breeze through the Ashes is sighing.

Nor on burning sands of the far desert lands,
Will it lie shrivelled up in the sun;
But its own homely clay, on the banks of Lough Neagh,
Where the shamrocks are growing upon.
Where the surges of Neagh, through the night and the
day,
Are keening a dirge for the dead;
And the white birds of ocean, as if with devotion,
Like angels fly over my head.
With a stone at my head, as a mark for my bed,
I will lie there in kindred clay;
When the surges are flowing, and the Zephyrs are
blowing
Through the trees, on the banks of Lough Neagh.
Were it granted me then, from that urn of men,
To rise through the clay that lies o'er me,
One last look to take at the Abbey and lake,
So far famed in song and in story.
But I will not regret, 'tis a glance I won't get,
I will lie where I'm placed in the clay,
'Mongst the dust that I love, and the blue sky above,
Till the last trumpet sounds on the banks of Lough
Neagh.
I oft think when musing, that had I the choosing,
Of some honoured place where my bones they would
lay,
Like Glasnevin in Leinster, or far off Westminster,
I would choose that old Abbey on the banks of Lough
Neagh.
Where the fishes are sporting and the waters seem
courting,

The old rugged walls of that Abbey so grey;
As I watch them come creeping, when the wind stirs
them weeping,

For those who are sleeping on the banks of Lough
Neagh.

When I stand at the gate, on my turn to wait,
And list to that murmur, I'll for benisons pray,
That my spirit be blessed, and my old bones get rest,
'Mong the dust of my fathers, on the banks of Lough
Neagh.

When the water's like glass, as along it I pass,
And the branches are bending their reflections to see,
As they stoop down their reflections to greet,
There are beauties in Nature, but few like to thee.

Now I think you won't blame if I say it again,
Till that call from on High comes, that all must obey,
The place I love best for my old bones to rest,
Is that dear ancient Abbey on the banks of Lough
Neagh.

A Night on Lough Neagh

How calm the eve, the moon is high, like silver sheen
the lake,
And not a cloud the stars to mar, we'll to the river
take;
Get ready quick, and take your tea, tie up the suppers,
Joe,
We'll try and earn a pound tonight, - the funds are
getting low.
How my mother prays, and she often says the times
are getting worse;
She says this fighting for the lake has brought with it
a curse;
She tells of the happy time when we were round her
knee,
When our fathers owned the birthright of that lonely
inland sea.
But, come away, we'll have a try, though scarce the
pollan now,
I'd love to view again, the cross and heart upon its
brow;
That emblem of Redemption, so plainly we can see,
The cross in centre of a heart, - it a blessed fish must
be.
Now tie your oilcloths on your backs, and let us to the
lake,
Bring matches and bring fuel that our suppers we can
make;
I think the old pot's in the boat in which to start the
fire,
And make the "sup" of creamless "tay" when it we do
require.

Get out the boat! Put up the sail! That breeze will
help the oar,
I think we'd better take our way towards the Antrim
shore;
To Hutton's Point, or along the parks, the pollan like
the sticks,
To hide beneath when danger comes, they are so full of
tricks.
Keep on! We're just outside the *Run, put sinkers on
the net,
I see the **Midges catching Toome, we've far to travel
yet
Before we're square of Hutton's Point, and then we'll
have a try,
We'll let her down among the sticks where pollan love
to lie.
A fresher breeze, how fast she goes, we'll soon be at
our goal,
Take down the sail, the anchor cast, I find it hard to
thole;
We'll let her out and take a draught, but first a candle
light,
Or we may miss that floating buoy, although the moon
is bright.
'Tis done, we'll pull away, I'll guide her out, as Peter
once did guide,
Directed by a God's behest to cast on the right side;
No fish they take within their net although they try
again,
But Peter and his comrades for a whole night fished in
vain.

They try again, but failure still, - the skipper says to Joe,
“Raise up the anchor with all speed, and farther east we’ll go;
The young moon’s sinking in the west, it shortly will be dark,
Do not delay, we’ll take our way along the Antrim park.”
Along the park they try again, the fishes are but few,
But now they work with might and main, what can the fishers do!
The moon is set, the sky o’ercast, the wind begins to moan,
An open boat, just six yards long, and far from old Tyrone.
The skipper shouts, “The supper, Joe,” that sup of creamless tay,
No margarine, no butter, but God’s pure air have they;
The tea is boiled, and tannin too, to take it do prepare,
In Neagh’s dish they wash the tins, their seat not cushion chair.
There is shelter here, the wind has veered, ‘tis nearby south I know,
“We’ll work away till break of day,” the skipper says to Joe;
“And then for home, to old Tyrone, if Andrew King’s in bed,
If not, a tussle on the way, - oh! What my mother said.”
“The birthright of their fathers, since the Danes held sway,”
and now they’re hunted o’er it as if they’re beasts of prey;

Another Pharaoh in Egypt, but the worm will
sometimes turn,
“Man’s inhumanity to man makes countless thousands
mourn;”
No burning bush, no Moses yet, to lead them through
the sea,
They’re making bricks without the straw, but yet they
will be free.

*The Run – A direct line from the Upper Bann to the Lower
Bann in which the water is considerably deeper.

**Midges – Three hills far north in Londonderry that seem
to move eastward as the boat moves, and are used as a
mark.

Pollan; type of white fish found in Irish lakes

+Her – The net

#Sticks – Driftwood from Antrim parks that sink when
waterlogged.

“The Maid of Cushendall”

I sing of Colonel Caulfield’s yacht that cruised upon
Lough Neagh,
Of a tragedy not yet forgot, though long since passed
away.

To sing again this mournful strain I’ve got a wireless
call,
How three gallant seamen lost their lives
With the maid of Cushendall.

And now I’ll rake their ashes up that are lying on the
pond.

Alackaday* I’ll take my way again across that pond,
(*expressing sorrow)

And I’ll strew their ashes o’er the waves, tell wind and
waves and all,

Of that awful strife on that night, for life,
And the maid of Cushendall.

I will tell the naiad* of the lake, she other hearts did
break, (*nymph)

Besides the four long since deplored she to her arms
did take;

I will her that no pity, or no ruth* had she at all,
(*compassion)

When she took those gallant sailor lads
And the maid of Cushendall.

The wind was high, overcast the sky, on a dark
October day,
When that ill fated pleasure boat I speak of took her
way;
Not fear did scare, not wind did mar, the captain heard
the call,
And through wind so high, strove to comply
With the maid of Cushendall.

Though a noble's guest she the captain press'd to sail
her back again,
But never more on Antrim's shore stood Willie
M'Erlean;
A seaman skilled in pleasure craft, he felt no fear at
all,
He and his comrades found their graves
With the maid of Cushendall.

Ah! Sad this lay,* and sad the day they left the
Armagh shore, (*ballad)
To take their way to Antrim bay when stormy winds
did roar.
M'Cullagh and M'Connell and their captain M'Erlean,
To please that guest, they did their best, their efforts
were in vain;
They for life did fight on that awful night in response
to duty's call,
Until they did lie, where the waves roll by,
With the maid of Cushendall.

On that fateful eve they did Maghery leave, Southeast
by East the wind;
No thoughts that day farewell to say to the friends
they left behind;
But the clouds did lower, and a mighty power from on
high did seem to say;
“Now the die is cast, and this is the last of your
journeys o’er Lough Neagh”.
Through the might and main they did strive, ‘twas
vain, whene’er they got that call,
Till in the watery deep did those trio sleep,
With the maid of Cushendall.

As in that gale their craft did sail, with canvas trim
and taut,
With choose reefed sails, to fit the gale, their captain
little thought,
He little thought to ne’er again see Antrim or Toome,
In spite of skilful seamanship that death would come
soon;
So confident his comrades felt there was no fear at all,
Until they beneath the waves did lie
With the maid of Cushendall.

The adverse wind proved so unkind, they could not
reach the bar;
They thought ‘twas vain to luff* again, the distance
was too far; (*set sails)
They gave her freedom on her path and thought how
very soon,
With the help of Him who rules the waves, she’d reach
the bridge of Toome;

But no beacon light to guide her right, whilst darkness
did enthral,
And beneath the waves they found their graves
With the maid of Cushendall.

A Lament

Oh! dear old Neagh, that oft before
Did chase the hunger from the door,
That fain would enter in;
Now strife and spleen have done their worst;
Thou seemest like the fig tree, - cursed,
And we atone the sin.

Old Neagh; thou'lt never see again,
The little fishes, thick as rain,
Upon thy surface play;
For strife, that aims the venom'd dart,
Has pierced the depths; we feel the smart,
They've from us passed away.

The sun to-day looks down on Neagh,
And what a change he sees;
No tiny sails, for work or play,
Now flaunting in the breeze;
We hear no horn on foggy morn,
To act as beacon light,
And guide to rest, off Neagh's breast,
The workers of the night.

As on the bank I stand today,
Beside where fishes oft did play,
My friends beneath my feet,
The daisied turf upon their breast,
I inward breathe Eternal Rest,
For those I soon shall meet.

The old, old trees that long have stood,
And braved the ire of storm and flood,
In mournful cadence wave;
With funeral dirge, and arms outspread
Imploring pity for the dead,
Now lying in the grave.

How many here beneath the turf,
Have braved those waves, until enough,
They gleaned from out the roaring surf
To stop the children's wail?
Who now have stepped into the breach,
To ply the trade they did them teach,
Whilst others now their rights impeach,
Oh! why does wrong prevail!

We seek no boon, we ask no ruth
For crime committed, such untruth;
We only ask our own;
Since when the Danes on it held sway,
And Justice can't those rights gainsay,
All others we disown.

Kearn's "Old Ardboe"

(As given from Buckingham Village, Lower Canada,
December 17, 1866)

Let poets sing fair Italia's bowers,
And happy isles in the Grecian sea,
The spicy groves and the Summer's flowers.
The banks of Conner and Galilee.

Nor classic streams, nor fabled mountains,
Nor weeping amber on banks of Po,
Nor honeyed brows on the Syrian mountains,
Can vie in beauty with you, "Old Ardboe."

No serpent lurks in thy hallowed arbours,
No adders poison infects the breeze,
The hills are green like Erin's harbours,
With friendly tears from wailing seas.

A thousand winters thy temple lingers,
And lofty emblems of Calvary,
But spoiling hands and Time's cruel fingers,
Have changed thy glories and destiny.

Its mitred height, and its sculptured pages,
Its aged furrows and mantle hoar,
Suggest the faith of ten hundred ages,
To those who tread the romantic shore.

The fasting lark that on high is praying,
With pilgrim sings at the rosy dawn,
Who round the ivy-clasped church is straying,
Of East Tyrone on the daisied lawn.

Where climbing incense in clouded glory,
Swung round the altar in censer bourne,
Unchanging songsters tell Heaven's story,
From blossomed spray where the surges mourne.

The modest forms of mild virtue daughters,
With bosoms pure as the mountain snow,
Walk pearly strand, where Lough Neagh waters flow,
Bestow cornelians on "Old Ardboe."

On verdant graves of their sleeping fathers
For souls imprisoned they pleading sigh,
Their Christian hearts no new fervour gathers,
In this communing with Courts on High.

The bounding salmon in beauty wander,
Through fairy towers, o'er golden throne,
Near mystic beach where the strangers ponder,
O'er woody fragments, changed into stone.

Still "Old Ardboe" though in scenes of rarest,
The muse for Kearns one short prayer demands,
From sages kind, and thy daughter's fairest,
To him as dear as thy jewell'd sands.

Lough Neagh Tragedy in 1880

Now gather round all watermen and listen unto me,
And those who are unacquainted with the dangers of
the sea,

Until I relate the tragic fate of those who sailed away
That evening from the Ardboe shore to fish upon
Toome Bay.

Oh! Lough Neagh thou art treacherous thy victims are
not few;

How oft the wife, the mother, do thy cruel tantrums
rue!

But the mother's cries, the widow's sighs will rise from
them in vain,

They fought the waves to lull the children's wails, but
never will again.

In 1880, in November of that year,

On the morning of the 26th when danger did appear
And seemed to be approaching fast,

Death stared at every man,

Right fervently they wished that day to be upon dry
land.

The wind raved in its fury, and the waves did heave
and swell

As rolling on, like mountains, our doom they seemed to
tell.

The terrors of a watery grave appeared in every form,
And gaped at full 200 souls upon that fatal morn.

The wind increased in violence, our boats were small
and frail,

But most of us that day, thank God, survived that
cruel gale.

But alas! A few amongst us, the rest were doomed to
leave
To stand before the Judgement Seat, their sentence to
receive.
I trust these men were well prepared, their number is
four,
And o'er Lough Neagh's angry waves they'll steer their
course no more.
On many a stormy evening they left their fireside,
For their mothers, wives and children subsistence to
provide.
James Campbell struggled manfully upon that fatal
morn,
And battled hard against his fate to brave the angry
storm.
But dreadful hour, his time was come, fate whispered
in his ear;
"You will never return home again to your wife and
children dear".
Oh! Sad must be the hour and sorrowful the heart,
And dread the separation from all we love to part;
To launch into Eternity without a warning sign,
To help prepare the poor soul to meet the Lord Divine.
I hope this will a warning be in future days to come;
Still think of Francis Connolly, James Campbell and
his son,
And likewise Edward Beatson, those four we'll never
see,
Good Christians pray for their souls repose, for all
Eternity.

Ireland and The Exiles

Lines written in 1920

I am sorry to say I am going away
From the land wherein I was born,
From my old Irish home in the County Tyrone,
To seek a home to me foreign.

It grieves me to roam from the dear old home,
And the scenes around Lough Neagh's shore,
Alas, that's the cause of my country's state,
She is bleeding from every pore.

And when crossing the main with a heart full of pain,
I will think of the days that are fled,
And of my lifetime now so long past my prime,
And approaching my earthly bed.

And oh! for old Ireland for she is my Sireland,
With a heart full of pity I'll pray.
Where killing is rife with rifle and knife
And the murderer seeking his prey.

Where the fires blaze bright from the homesteads at
night,
And raiders are prowling for loot.
And the faces of all ordered round to the wall,
While a ruffian stands ready to shoot.

Oh! lovely land by disunion banned,
Though absent I'll fervently pray
That the day will soon come when the knife and gun
Won't be used one and other to slay.

That wise heads may rule and the rogue and the fool,
In this island be heard of no more;
That fair play to all, for the great and the small,
Be the order from shore to shore.

When Ireland again shall resume her fair name,
Take her place 'mongst the nations of earth;
Then, like Jacob of old, as the scriptures unfold,
Lay my bones in the land of my birth.

The Exodus from Ardboe

The giant ships are wafting them across the ocean's
foam;
Away from home and kindred, in other lands to roam.
They will not stay, they must away, they feel it in their
hearts;
Then weep and wail, as off they sail, away to foreign
parts.

I see them mount the buses, their friends are standing
round;
“They’re leaving us, they’re leaving us,” I hear their
cries resound.
With a fervent grasp the hands they clasp of friends
and neighbours kind,
And tears do flow, as away they go, and leave the old
behind.

Such grief and pain I can't explain; I have not words to
tell,
At parting from the fatherland, and those they love so
well,
To sweat and toil on foreign soil, and build their homes
anew;
Extremes of heat, extremes of cold, they'll suffer from
it too.

No more they'll rise 'neath Irish skies, nor see again
the sun

Sink down behind the Irish hill whene'er the day is
done.

But though far away, their thoughts will stray to that
island o'er the sea,

And they'll muse and fret, and their eyes be wet, for
that land they may never see.

No more they'll stray on the banks of Neagh, or sail
o'er its water blue,

To cast their nets, or their lines to set, as they were
once to do.

The trout will rise to the summer flies, but where will
the fishers be?

On that vast expanse of prairie land away o'er the
boundless sea.

The scenes they knew, and the comrades too, they'll
think of day and night,

And fancy'll waft them back again to where they first
saw light;

And they'll grieve and pine for the olden time, and the
cottage so far away,

And the simple ways, and the youthful days, they
passed beside Lough Neagh.

Elegy on a Dear Departed Friend

Oh! we loved her, how we loved her, our darling young
and fair,
With her cheeks as red as roses, and her lovely auburn
hair;
Diffusing joy and gladness in the sphere in which she
moved,
And bring peace and pleasure to the parents that she
loved.
With a smile upon her lips, and like roses when in
June,
Infecting the surroundings with their lovely perfume;
But the lure of lucre caught her, took possession of her
mind,
She crossed the ocean to seek it, and left us here
behind.
The wheels of time kept turning as the years went
creeping past,
Her every wish was grateful, a message came at last;
Across the broad Atlantic, that a visit she would pay,
To see again the parents and the homestead far away.
But death decided otherwise, he cast his fatal dart,
And in the summer of her life, he pierced our darling's
heart;
Oh! not with friends she loved so well, no not with us
to-day,
She lies in foreign soil among strangers, consigned to
alien clay.
That form that throbbed with warm desire to realise
its will,

Lies low beneath the Stars and Strips, that heart
forever still;
Oh! death thou comest unawares, you make the young
your prey,
Oh! why didn't thou not check thy greed and let her
have her way?
To feast her eyes once more upon that home, those
parents dear,
For which she yearned with fond desire for fourteen
weary years;
That form now low and pulseless lies, that heart and
face so chill,
God gave the gift, he's claimed it back, we bow unto
His will.
No more on earth we'll hear that voice, or see again
that face,
But in Egyptian darkness every outline I can trace;
No eagle gaze, I close my eyes, and fancies pen
portrays,
That youthful form, on that bright May morn that she
left to cross the seas.

To the Ardboe Poet

Greetings from the United States (Daniel Treanor)

John, you mayn't know your A's from B's,
But you do your P's and Q's.
When you write those weekly melodies
That drive away the Blues.

If your poetry is a failure,
Then I cannot understand
Why it's read and sung by thousands
In far off Yankee Land.

So do not mind what critics say,
Or how they rant and rave,
Just simply ignore all of them,
It's publicity they crave.

Though over here, in the U.S.A.,
Far, far from Mullinahoe.
I love to hear of progress made,
By the folks in Old Ardboe.

Each week I read the Mid Ulster Mail
And its pages closely scan,
To find some verse that brings me back
To my own loved River Bann.

In fancy once again I sail
Across far famed Lough Neagh,
And furl my sails down near the Cross,
Or along the Battery Quay.

To converse awhile with William's (Mick),
Or maybe Felix (More);
Then take a stroll up Kiltagh Way,
Or down through Annaghmore.

I often drift over Washing Bay,
See the Castle at Mountjoy,
And all the beauteous landscape
Between Dungannon and the Moy.

Sometimes I stand on the Crabtree Mound,
On top of Dudley's Hill,
From where we see the Glen of Derry
Which gives my heart a thrill.

Yes, I'm climbing over Churchill,
On my way to cross the Bridge,
And I'll drop into Johnny (Mac's)
Just like I oft times did.

For Johnny was a good old pal,
Who loved the dog and gun,
And when the sports would gather
'Twas he who'd start the run.

There was Eddy Willcomb and Mike Lynn,
Masters Hickey and O'Neill;
And old boy Ned MacLarnen
Who could bag the grouse and quail.

In dreams I'm home in long Cookstown
The spot where I was born
There to retrace my childhood steps
From Oldtown Pump to Derryloran.

But why go back to boyhood days,
Or the things that are no more;
Nor muse the happy days I spent
At the fairs in Moneymore.

Oh! had I to live all o'er again,
How different life might be,
I'd learn to love the Old Cross more,
And uphold its dignity.

I'd live for all it stands for.
And learn well it's history;
Then life would be much sweeter,
Though an exile I might be.

So now I'll pull the anchor up
While strong south breezes blow,
That will take me down past Sandy Rock
To Lough Neagh's overflow.

Alas, my dream is ended. John.

Return Greetings to a Friend in the U.S.A.

Save age and botheration, there is no extenuation,
And that thief procrastination with the other two
combined;
To excuse the long delay that ensued from day to day,
In replying to your verses dear Dan, though well
inclined.

From far across the sea came those verses unto me,
Like light out of darkness appearing in the MAIL;
To me and mine a boon, and we won't forget it soon,
Those kindly greetings sent to us in dear old Innisfail.

Though far from dear old Ireland, you don't forget your
Sireland,
And friends and quondam* comrades, and scenes you
left behind; (*former)
And how oft you sailed away on your yacht on dear old
Neagh,
To Lurgan, Toome or Antrim, does still run in the
mind.

And how many different places, with your greyhound
to the races,
You had confidence in "Monday" and with him would
repair* (*go)
To have your greyhound tested; he was seldom bested;
But racings changed since then, Dan, we've an electric
hare.

And the champion's from Tyrone owned by Creighton
and McKeown;
The victor over Britain, none can with him compare,
Dan! You'd travel many a mile, and think it well worth
while,
To see "Cormorant," the champion, pursue the 'lectric
hare.

I remember well the "Master" that never met disaster,
"McGrath" Lord Lurgan's champion that always
gained the bays;
Now that history is repeating, we will give a victor's
greeting
To our more immediate champion, he's worthy of our
praise.

But alack, alackaday, the champion's gone away,
He has found another owner, he has found another
home;
Not on borders of Lough Neagh was he destined to
stay,
To always bring the laurels back to Creighton and
McKeown.

And dear Dan, the lure would surprise you, I am sure,
That induced his former owners with "Cormorant" to
part.
But although he's gone away, from convenient to
Lough Neagh,
For years he'll break the record, and trouble many a
heart.

Dan, there are drastic changes here that would cause
you shed a tear,
The young and strong are leaving, an exodus from
Ardboe,
Whilst the old, the maimed, the blind are left behind,
In what have we offended, why are they doomed to go?

By the hundreds, aye and more, they leave the Irish
shore,
From the land of their nativity, as if the race were
banned,
To age before their time in a far off foreign clime;
We are never scorched or frozen in dear old Ireland.

If we are lonely, if we're poor, sure we haven't to
endure,
With the cold below zero or a hundred in the shade;
But mammon's the temptation, and the only
compensation,
That lures away our exiles, and the price is dearly
paid.

In foreign lands to roam, far from their Irish home,
Where nurtured in a climate where there are no
extremes;
Those exiles fret and pine, far from their native clime,
They see it in their waking hours, they see it in their
dreams.

When you get these verses, Dan, from dear old
Fatherlan',
Where the hills and vales are always green at all times
of the year;
But like the Jews at Jericho, just give a rousing shout
you know,
And I'll install a listener in, I'll maybe hear you here.

And that shout won't tumble down that city or that
town,
From which your poem proceeded that reached me in
the MAIL;
No, you'll reach the Promised Land, without that High
Command,
Adieu, adieu, dear Danny, from your friend in
Innisfail.

Bewailing the Exiles

We are sitting here in silence, but our thoughts are far
away,
We are musing o'er the exiles on this lonely Christmas
Day;
No joyous word to cheer us, we are sitting here alone,
They are far away from us today and the dear old Irish
home.

And the years have sped so quickly since that lovely
morn in May,
When the flowers were in the hedgerows and blossoms
on each spray;
Have they found such ardent lovers since they left us
here alone,
As those they left behind them in the dear old Irish
home?

And the letters come to cheer us but instead they
make us mourn,
We read between the lines and see they mean to ne'er
return;
And the years keep speeding past us and still we hope
and pray
They'll cross the main to us again to spend a
Christmas Day.

But time and tide won't for us bide, the years are on us
now,
The loitering step, hair changed to white, the furrows
on the brow;
The debt of Nature nearly paid and still we fondly
pray,
With fervent grasp, those hands to clasp, before we
pass away.

Oh, no! not all those hands we'll clasp, for some are
gone to rest,
They sleep far from their native land, strange soil
upon their breast,
We will not weep for those that sleep, 'tis better far to
pray,
I seem to see them plain as day in that land so far
away.

The brothers, more than brothers now, that word to
them so dear,
And mother, oh! that blessed word, will ne'er again see
her;
And father, strong, and full of life that day they went
away,
Behold him hobbling on a stick, behold his locks of
gray.

And visions rise before their eyes, they see us, oh so plain,
And in their sleeping hours oft are back with us again;
‘Mong haunts of early childhood, at games they used to play,
With comrades of their schooldays before they went away.

But no, they’re far from Ireland, the ocean rolls between,
The Stars and Stripes above them, they wake, and all’s a dream;
But scenes of early childhood, asleep, at work or play,
Will always haunt those exiles from the old home far away.

To John Coleman, Mullinahoe (Daniel Treanor)

John, over here, in New York City,
Far away from Innisfail,
How my heart goes palpitating,
When I get 'The Mid-Ulster Mail'.

'Twas in it I saw your answer
To the verse I sent to you
And words can't express my feelings,
When I read your missive through.

How you rehearsed a life of folly,
Through the years of long ago,
Years that no one ever told me,
We always reap the seeds we sow.

Years when the skies looked blue above us,
And the world seemed all aglow,
Years when I thought that heaven
Must be my own beloved Ardboe.

With its ancient Church and Abbey.
And Old Cross that stands close by,
What more blessed spot in Ireland
Could man choose to live or die?

You say that Erin's youth and strength
By home conditions are forced away,
With faint hope, to find a haven
In strange lands across the sea.

But don't let that depress you, John
Can't you see its God's own way?
To populate and educate the nations,
With a race that leads the way.

You can travel the whole world over,
And search each hall of fame,
There carved on every slab of honour,
You will find an Irish name.

Don't the Scripture plainly tell us, John
To go forth and multiply?
Well, that's why the Youth of Erin
Bid their kin a fond good-bye.

Then why be discontented, John,
Whether here or over there?
Don't we all hope to be reunited,
Where the climates always fair?

And for the short time we're sojourning,
Through this valley, here below,
Let us be forever thankful,
Some of it was in Ardboe.

You say the old, decrepid and blind,
Are forced to stay at home.
Don't you think that God must love them
To let them die in Sweet Tyrone?

Where their bones may turn to ashes,
In some consecrated mound;
Alongside departed loved ones
Gone in search of Heaven's Crown.

Lines in Reply to Daniel Treanor's Verses from USA

In this dear old land, with a feeble hand, again I lift
the quill,
That tiny thing that rules the world I'd wield with a
right good will;
But youth's long past, and the biting blast, old age
comes on apace,
I can see it looming, in the distant gloaming, the end of
this earthly race.
But why regret, or for existence fret, when we get the
final call?
From the eastern land came that high command 'tis
the common lot of all;
Not rich or poor, nor prince nor peer, can that final call
evade,
We earned that ban from the great I Am, when our
parents disobeyed.
But enough of that, we will have a chat about days of
long ago,
When life was young, your career unstrung in your
native Old Ardboe;
When your sun was high in Meridian sky, and thought
'twould never set;
Oh! that mistake your friend did make, though above
the horizon yet.
You have lived and loved, I can see it proved in the
lines that you sent to me,
Though you're far away from dear Old Neagh in that
land beyond the sea,
You have travelled far to the Western Star, sailed after
the setting sun;

That Yankee land may be great and grand, but there is
a little one
That you left behind, still runs in your mind, in your
breast has a warmer glow;
You may see it never, but you'll mind forever your
native Old Ardboe.
Were that landscape free you could look and see away
to the rising sun;
In our Irish sky he is shining high, with you he has
just begun.
He is shedding his beams on the land of your dreams,
the land of your age.
Where the time fled fast, and your youth went past, in
your native Old Ardboe.
Could your vision pierce through the boundless space,
how often you'd look this way,
But nothing new would come into view, along your
dear old Neagh.
The pebbly strand, where we used to land, where the
waves glide to and fro.
And the Cross in sight, with its mitred height and the
Church of Ardboe;
Where your kith and kin are all lying in, their face to
the rising sun,
In quiet rest, with the turf on their breast, till old
Time's race is run.
Where your vision free, not again you'd see some
sights that you saw before;
No fleet of sails, 'fore the autumn gales speed away to
the northern shore.
The waves to fight, through the long dark night, and
wrest from them the spoil

So eagerly sought, but dearly bought, the reward of
laborious toil.
That calling's banned not from land to land, for nine
months of the year;
Not from east to west on that water's breast would you
see a boat appear.
They must drink the chalice on the floating palace,
from the old home sail away
To sweat and toil, on a foreign soil, far, far from dear
old Neagh.
Dear cousin Dan I will stay my han', now feeble, old
and worn,
But the iron will that drives the quill throbs blithe, as
a young May morn;
I could write all day, but I must away, that pleasure I
must forego,
With fond regards from the aged bard, in your native
Old Ardboe.

Just a Dream (Daniel Treanor)

John, last night before retiring,
Even yet I don't know why,
I raised up my bedroom window,
And looked upward towards the sky.

While gazing at the moon and stars,
My thoughts wandered far away,
To an ancient spot in Ireland
On the banks of sweet Lough Neagh.

And as I lay there, enumerating
All the happy days gone by,
Old Morpheus crept into my bed,
And sung a lullaby.

He crooned a song of Erin,
Of its hills bedecked with green.
So very soon I went to sleep
And then began to dream.

Immune from earthly woes or care,
I experienced a great thrill,
When I dreamt that I was back once more,
On top of Dudley's Hill.

I saw the old familiar faces,
And the scenes of long ago,
Each lover's nook near babbling brooks,
That flows through Old Ardboe.

I passed by the Moortown Schoolhouse,
It seemed like yesterday;
I could hear Master Felix saying,
“Here comes Danny late again to-day.”

But school days late or early,
Are the happiest days of all,
Even leaving fond recollections,
Alas! oftimes gone beyond recall.

From there I went to the Battery,
And sat down upon the green,
Where I mused both long and earnestly
Of the things that might have been.

Then I walked along Ballinderry river,
Where it flows into Lough Neagh,
And looked across at Ballylifford,
Where I spent many a happy day.

When the adolescent fever caught me,
It was there I used to roam,
In search of some blue eyed Colleen,
Who some day I'd call my own.

And though other lands and cities grand,
For years have captivated me,
Still I'm ever nightly dreaming
Of days spent around Lough Neagh.

When the sound of the hunter's bugle,
Was music to my ear,
Or the hare out-gamed the greyhounds,
While the sportsmen loudly cheer.

From Mullin Bar to Cavan,
I met neighbours whom I knew,
Some looked the same, while others changed,
And then I missed a few.

Then there appeared a saintly looking woman,
Who wore neither cap nor shawl,
On her hand she held a rosary,
And pointed towards the churchyard wall.

And walking through the Ardboe graveyard
I shuddered in despair,
When I read the names of school-day pals,
Carved on the tombstones there.

Turning around I saw the Old Cross,
And it seemed to point the way,
To where Ardboe's sons and daughters
Will meet, please God, some day.

I plainly saw the young and old,
Kneeling around its base,
In prayerful supplication to obtain,
Both the faith and grace.

To labour in God's own vineyard,
Like their sires of long ago;
When the haven of saints and scholars
Was my own beloved Ardboe.

The Exile's Return

I remember well that day when the Exile went away;
Left those he loved so dearly in foreign lands to stray.
I can see so plain the tears after all those weary years,
And the handshakes hear the blessings as he tore
himself away.
It is thirty years and more since he left his native
shore,
And so long between the letters, that it seemed as
never more
To the old land he'd return, from that far away
sojourn;
But the postman's brought a letter and he's coming
back once more.
Since he crossed the western main in sunshine and in
rain,
He has toiled for foreign masters a livelihood to gain;
He has mixed with many races saw many different
faces,
But returning like the prodigal to the fatherland
again.
And that thought, and expectation has begotten great
elation,
As that homeward journey steers him back to the dear
old nation;
His sundries now he's packing and his brain with
thought is racking,
To surprise the simple Irish with his Yankeeified
oration.
Now the mammoth liner's started from her moorings
she has parted,

Her prow is turned eastward for old Erin she's
departed.
On board there's great commotion she is entering the
ocean;
There are farewell bannerettes waving and the exile so
light hearted.
And he's watching day by day as the liner ploughs her
way
Through the ocean to that island she is nearing day by
day,
Back again to dear old Ireland his own beloved
sireland;
After all those weary years to repose in kindred clay.
On the deck he's standing peering, what is that he sees
appearing?
As he gazes through the distance he cannot keep from
cheering;
He sees the hills arisin' on the far away horizon,
And onboard the exclamations hurrah for dear old
Erin.
Now that ocean journeys o'er and the liners near the
shore,
She is entering the harbour that he left so long before;
Little more than a boy, went with sorrow back with
joy,
To lay his bones in Erin now the wanderlust is o'er.
He is looking every way as he stands upon the quay;
No quondam friends to meet him no friendly voice to
greet him;
Are the brothers, sisters, comrades all buried in the
clay?

Now he can discern traces amongst that crowd of faces,
Of friends from whom he parted, so many years before;
I have seen that friendly meeting, I have heard that
friendly greeting,
The exile now seems happy they have met to part no
more.

To John Coleman, Mullinahoe (Daniel Treanor)

John, I received your verse on Christmas Eve,
And it made me very sad,
To learn that the conditions
In Ireland are so bad.

If it's the fault of the Northern Counties,
Or the newly born Free State,
Why don't they get together
And their difference arbitrate.

If all Ireland was united
And its people ceased to agitate,
You would find much more prosperity,
And less cause to emigrate.

Why don't the Government raise the treasures
That lie underneath the clay;
There is coal in great abundance
Lying all around Lough Neagh.

There are beds of zinc and copper ore
From Dingle to Gweedore,
And many other minerals
Both sides of Shannon Shore.

I could go on enumerating,
Many other sources of supply,
That would help old Ireland raise its head,
And bid poverty good-bye.

I know it seems incredulous,

But believe me when I say
There's great demand for Irish goods
In New York stores to-day.

Don't we eat the Limerick bacon,
And we wear the Irish lace;
An overcoat of Foxford Frieze,
You'll see most any place.

We wear the tweed from Blarney,
And the serge from Donegal;
And the pretty Irish poplin ties
Are in great demand by all.

Right now in New York city
There's been a company organised,
To run ships direct to Galway,
And buy Irish merchandise.

So, let us all be optimistic,
For the day is not far away
When there will be a wave of great prosperity
Rolling all around Lough Neagh.

When we talk of Lough Neagh fishery, John,
Let us speak in accents low and reverently;
For you know Saint Peter cast his nets
Where there seemed no fish to be.

Then the voice of the Lord commanded
That he drop the nets once more,
And to the Apostle's great astonishment,
Filled his own and many more.

So don't you be discouraged John,
The day is not far I ken,
When the Lough will bring back prosperity
Back to the fishermen again.

You will see Lough Neagh without restrictions,
From Toome to Maghera Bay;
It's the fishermen's inheritance
And God speed that day I pray.

John, don't think that I'm a pessimist,
Or that heritage I blame;
But you know if I'd shown a little business acumen
I would still be in Ardain.

And how many thousand like me
Are in Ireland to-day,
Who would rather go to the race track,
Than stay at home to mow the hay?

And, now before concluding, John,
Somehow I can't refrain
From telling you that I'm resolved
To see you soon again.

If you live, and please God you will,
Until nineteen and thirty two
You will see more foreign visitors
Than Ireland ever knew.

Then prepare for the Eucharistic Congress,
Make the reception grand;
For 'twill surely bring God's blessing
To dear old Ireland.

The Lover's Parting

They have met tonight, in the pale moonlight,
At the close of a summer day,
Those youthful pair, in the balmy air,
Of lovely month of May.
'Neath a thorn they stand on her father's land,
That fragrance scents the air;
With its mantle of white, on that lovely night,
The moon shines down on them there.
In silence they stand, as he holds her hand,
Till at length his silence breaks;
In his heart is no guile, on his lips no smile,
There's a break in his voice when he speaks.
In his arms he takes her, from her reverie wakes her,
And he tells her in accents of pain –
Though he's grieved to heart, that he from her, must
part,
His path lies across the broad main.

“I am young, but I am poor, and I cannot endure
To make you my partner for life;
I will cross the broad main for my love, Mary Jane,
I will make you a happy young wife.
If God grants me health, I will labour for wealth,
I won't waste it as sometimes before;
For your sake I am going, and sure there's no knowing
The luck that is for me in store.
We stand here tonight, 'neath that Heavenly light,
And I ask, you to me, to be true
I've short time to stay, got a letter today,
And tonight I must bid you adieu.

Don't unman me by crying, dear sweetheart, for trying
My luck in that land in the west;
No one else shall enslave me, that keepsake you gave
me
Lies close to my heart, it is hugged to my breast.
When the ocean's dividing, in your fond love abiding,
That picture a mascot will be;
It will act as a charm to keep from me harm,
And encourage endeavour, when thinking of thee."

"Oh! dear John such a notion away o'er ocean
To go, and to leave me behind;
For my tears will flow, and its little you know
Of the thoughts that will run in my mind;
In that land o'er the main you'll forget Mary Jane,
That behind here in secret will mourn.
You will others admire, dressed in gaudy attire,
Whilst here I await your return."

"Dear sweetheart don't fret, I could never forget
You, so long as the tides flow between;
In my absence don't mourn until I return
With wealth for my Irish colleen.
None else shall replace thee, none else shall embraced
be
By me, unto you I'll be true;
Your photo, sweetheart, will lie close to my heart
To gaze on, when thinking of you."

"Oh I can't stop the tears, for I know 'twill be years
Before I see you again;
In that far distant nation, when you meet with
temptation,

Then think of your love, Mary Jane.
Let grandeur not blind you, let beauty not bind you,
Sweet voices but false at the heart;
With their powders and paints, you will think they are
saints,
Then remember your true love, from whom you did
part.”
“One kiss ere we part now, my darling sweetheart,
For now I must bid you adieu;
On your knees for me pray, when I’m far, far away,
And to you, I’ll be constant and true.
And dry up your tears, you need have no fears,
Our letters will bridge it between;
Sure as Luna shines down shedding brilliance around,
I’ll be true to my Irish colleen.”

The Love of Home

This little isle in the western sea,
Is the land we love the best;
No other land o'er all the earth,
In such verdant beauty dressed.
We may travel far o'er distant lands,
We may fame and fortune find;
But we never forget the dear old home,
Or the land we left behind.
Away from the land they love so well,
Her children are forced to roam;
'Mong strangers on foreign soil to dwell,
Far away from the dear old home.
But though far away those exiles may stray,
Though fortune may on them smile;
Still they never forget the dear old spot
Away in the Emerald Isle.
And when far o'er the ocean, with final devotion,
They think of the old folk at home;
Where they first saw the light, and oh! the delight
When the letter comes over the foam.
For father did write, maybe mother indite* it.
Its pages are stained with their tears;
As in their own simple way they explain their dismay,
The battle they fought through the years.
We are lonely and poor, we did hardships endure,
Since you left us we have held the old home;
But their pleadings give place to the pride of the race,
And they something conceal from their own.
That they hug to their breasts, won't let it go west,

For fear 'twould their children annoy;
Awake or asleep they will that secret keep
It would rob them of half of their joy,
And in unison there they offer a prayer
Before they retire to rest;
With such fervour they pray for their loved ones away
In that land now their home in the west.
And they there lie and ponder, for absence makes
fonder,
And visions arise in their brain;
Of those children gone west, that they clasped to their
breasts,
Will ever they see them again?
Still preserved are the toys of their girls and boys,
And when gazed on their eyes fill with tears;
Those children now stray in a land far away,
And gone are those past happy years.
But a letter arrives, shows their love still survives,
'Mong strangers, that love did not wane;
And there's something inside that will help them tide
Through the winter, 'tis Christmas again.
And so thankful they feel, on the hearth stone they
kneel
To their Father in Heaven they pray;
To those children reward, and from danger them
guard,
In that land in the west far away.

* to compose

The Emigrant's Farewell

The big ship's ready and I'm going in the morn,
Away from dear old Ireland, the land where I was
born;
And from those who love me dearly, a father and a
mother,
Whose days are nearly numbered, from a sister and a
brother.
And I feel a pang of sorrow, my heart is wrenched with
pain,
At parting from the dear ones I may never see again;
And those happy days of childhood, in my memory ever
green,
I will always treasure dearly when the ocean rolls
between.
And the little whitewashed cottage along Lough
Neagh's shore,
Where my youthful days passed quickly, I may never
see it more;
But still in fancy's gaze I'll see, and in my dreams
'twill rise,
I'll see it as I see it now, although 'neath foreign skies.
My pretty painted fishing boat, from you I'm forced
away,
No more I'll gaze with pleasure on you sailing o'er
Lough Neagh;
No more I'll watch the bounding trout and little fishes
rise,
As oft I've watched them sport and play and catch
unwary flies.

No more I'll watch the veering winds, when fishing on
the lake,
To take advantage of them when my homeward way I
take;
No more in inky darkness, when the wind begins to
roar,
I'll watch the beacon light arise and guide me to the
shore.
My lines and hooks I cast aside, our ancient calling's
banned,
By autocrats we're forced to roam into a foreign land;
To seek the means of livelihood at home to us denied,
'Neath Stars and Strips or Southern Cross we must
aye abide.
And if to east or west we sail, may fortune on us smile,
With aspect more serenely, than it did in Erin's isle;
A few short days, and I will land upon a foreign shore,
The ocean will between us roar, perhaps for ever more.
No kindly voice to give advice, no guide but God above,
Far from the lake, the cottage, and the parents that I
love;
Don't think I tremble for my chance in the wide world
alone,
For that I do not falter, but at leaving this old home.
And sever every kindred tie does almost seem a crime,
To cast my lot 'mong strangers far across the foaming
brine;
Farewell my dear old father and my darling mother
too,
My guide and stay since infancy I'm bidding you adieu.
I know your prayers will follow me when far across the
main,

And if no more on earth we meet, we'll meet in Heaven
again;
My dear brother and sister from you I now must part,
The charge I leave behind me's hanging heavy on my
heart.
Our aged father and mother to your charge I now
commend,
The care you've hitherto given them continue to the
end;
And when the life steals from them to that home
beyond the sun,
Filial love has triumphed, your duty you have done.
And now dear friends and comrades, this parting gives
me pain,
This "send off" that you're giving me, when far across
the main;
I will treasure in my bosom; I hate to see you cry;
The bus is waiting for me now, my love to all –
goodbye.

The Old Oak Tree, or her reply to John's letter.

Dear John I've got your letter, and my heart is
breaking,
In every line I hear your voice as plainly to me
speaking,
And here I'm sitting writing an answer back to thee.
Always thinking of our parting at the old oak tree.
And you tell me that you want me to go away to you,
And leave the dear old cabin, and the places that we
knew;
The path unto the trysting place beside the old oak
tree.
Oh Johnnie! Do come back again, I cannot go to thee,
For my mammy has no other, her aged heart to cheer,
And you know she idolizes me, I cannot leave her here.
Although I love you dearly, oh! don't stay away from
me,
Don't you mind the night we parted at the old oak tree
When you gave me your hand, and you said I had your
heart,
That parting was a pain to me, I've often felt the
smart;
You could chase away that pain, John, if you'd come
back to me
And tell me that you love me, then I will happy be,
When the amorous snipe is calling in the pretty
months of spring,
And the pewits in the meadows rise on startled wing,
My thoughts fly o'er the ocean, I think I do you see,
And hear again your signal at the old oak tree.

But if I were to tell my mammy that you wanted me to
go,
And leave her here lonely, oh! how the tears would
flow;
And you know I'd be ungrateful to start her aged tears,
That fended me, and tended me through all my
youthful years.
Dear Johnnie there's another who wants to take your
place,
But I will not break my promise, the promise I gave
thee
On the evening that we parted, at the old oak tree.
And often in the twilight, when my daily task is done,
When the dew is on the meadow, and the hill has hid
the sun,
I throw the old cape around me, the cape you oft did
see,
And I steal across the meadow to the old oak tree.
But that place now feels so lonely, when the night is
chasing day,
And the evening star keeps pointing, to that country
far away,
Where the ocean rolls between us, o'er which you
sailed from me,
That I feel as if deserted, at the old oak tree.
And thoughts arise unbidden, as I stand and gaze
around,
And were that ocean twice as broad, they'd cross it at a
bound,
And I ask myself the question, are you as true to me
As the evening we parted, at the old oak tree.

And, dear John, each night and morning I say a prayer
for you
That to me you will be faithful, as I to you am true,
And that foreign smiles won't lure you to break your
troth to me
That you plighted on that evening at the old oak tree.

Home

'Tis a lovely September; if on holiday you've been,
The weather's clerk has favoured you, some lovely
sights you've seen.
And you've, maybe, crossed the ocean to spend your
little pile;
Let the florins slip away from you, you'd need in Erin's
isle.
You have been behind the counter, or you've been
behind the desk,
Or you've left behind the typewriter – a weary,
wearing task;
And your finger tips were aching as away you did
roam;
But did you find contentment, like that you find at
home?
And they go away from Erin, as they say, to make
their pile, -
Away across the ocean where those far-off lands
beguile;
And there's often too much sunshine in those places
where they stray,
Or the glass down to zero in those countries far away.
And there's sunstroke, and there's frostbite, and that
land is not so green,
And a vision looms before them, the loveliest they have
seen;
'tis the vision of their childhood in that cottage, far
away,
and the dear folk behind them, maybe lying in the
clay.

Is that infant prayer forgotten, as they sit and muse
alone?
Have they ever found contentment since they left the
dear old home?
They were poor, here in Ireland, and they seemed to
feel it sore,
And they left their homes and sireland; now the
padlock's on the door,
And we are sorry here to know it, that we do not stand
alone,
Ah! That money was salvation unto many an Irish
home.
But home! That is a sacred name, no matter where
they go,
If to the Arctic border 'mong the everlasting snow,
Or the sunbaked plains of Africa, where gold and
diamonds grow,
Where the miners dig and delve for it a thousand feet
below.
There is always something wanting, though he may be
wealthy grown;
He's an exile in a foreign land, he's far away from
home.
When his hard day's work is over, with his kit upon his
back,
And the searching past behind him as he trudges to
his shack,
To satisfy the craving for a frugal meal alone.
Still a hunger that he can't appease, - he's hungering
for home.
And he eats his meal in silence as he sits upon the
chair,

And seems to scan the distance, but that is a vacant
stare;
Save the hills of Connemara, or the beauties of Tyrone
That seem to rise before him, he's a stranger far from
home.
Now that far-off gaze is shifted, and is gone that
vacant stare,
And his eyes are now attracted to a picture hanging
there,
On the wooden wall beside him, that he framed with
loving care
'Tis the picture of the cottage, on that lovely morn in
June,
That he left to seek his fortune when the roses were in
bloom;
And he sees them standing round him – the mother,
white-haired sire
And he gazes on the picture till his eyes begin to tire:
But the call of Nature conquers and he lays his weary
head,
And Morpheus embraces him, the diamond mines have
fled.
No jackal's howl to frighten now, he hears no lion's
roar,
He is back again in Erin's isle, along the Lough Neagh
shore,
In the cottage that he loves so well, to part from it no
more.

Oh! He wakes and sees the wooden walls, the couch,
then such surprise
The truth has dawned upon him now, he's still 'neath
foreign skies;
He's pondering o'er that vision now as there he lies
alone,
And thinks that dream will yet come true, though far
away from home.

The Seasons and The Times

Our Pension Day

The times are changed, indeed they are, I'm very glad to say;

I hope you'll all rejoice with the old wife and I to-day,
It is not as it used to be, when want at us did stare,
Now we can live in comfort, a happy loving pair.

CHORUS

For Pension Day's to-morrow, and we will merry be,
We'll chase dull care and sorrow and have a jolly spree;
Since the old wife and I were wed 'tis fifty years next May,
So I hope you'll all rejoice upon our Golden Jubilee.

We'll ask our neighbour Nancy in, she's very fond of fun,
And Paddy Jones across the way, I think he'd like to come;
Don't let the young M'Swiggans know, there're very naughty boys,
They would creep around the windows and make a lot of noise.

For fifty dreary winters we have battled side by side,
In youth she was a bonnie lass, when I made her my bride.
But time's a great despoiler, our youthful days are o'er,
But we will aye be merry, there are happy days in store.

The boys and girls have left, with us they would not
stay,
Across the briny ocean they all have gone away,
To seek for wealth in other lands and left us here
alone.
But we'll not let sorrow enter, since we can live at
home.

On Spring

Now winter's getting weak, and I feel that I should
speak
And offer salutations to the spring.
Now that winter's paved the way to a longer, brighter
day,
That to each and all of us will pleasure bring.

For the biting wintry wind to the old seems so unkind,
The land being sometimes capped with ice and snow;
But the sturdy boy and lad, when they see it feel so
glad,
When sliding or shunting they do go.

As I wend the way along, I can hear the ploughboy's
song,
As he moves with measured paces, behind his gentle
team,
With his horses ever ready, and their gate so slow and
steady,
If it wasn't for the singing you would fancy it's a
dream.

And I see the little lambs, in the meadow with their
dams;
They are living quite oblivious, not worried like their
master,
But if hungry dogs would stray, or from leaches break
away,
It is ten to one their owners would suffer great
disaster.

Now the sunny air of spring will on trees and bushes
bring
A mantle we have very often seen;
And the birds will build their nests, with the very
greatest zest,
For they know they will be hidden with the green.

And the time is drawing nigh, when we'll hear the
cuckoo's cry,
And see the little swallows gliding past us on the wing;
If we could them understand, coming from a foreign
land,
How many wonder stories would the little wanders
bring?

They could tell us of the times, and the people, and the
climes,
And of another language, and the skies of blue,
And about the great big size of the insects, and the
flies
They hunt when feeling hungry, if all they say are
true.

I often be awake, when the day begins to break,
Alistening to the blackbird in the bush,
For his notes come in so plain, through the broken
window pane,
And are very often mingled with the thrush.

But the thrush is very shy, for he sings away up high,
In the very topmost branches of the tree;
Whilst the blackbird down below, o'er his morning
matins go-
It always seems a lesson unto me.

If we have recourse to prayer, that God will for us care,
And never let our footsteps go astray;
With little self denials, He has brought me through my
trials;
I thank Him in my own humble way.

The Beauties of Summer

The land has donned its summer garb, it's with us
once again;
Our spirits rise when we behold the beauties of the
plain,
And the flowers in the garden, the fruit upon the trees,
The lovely scented woodbine, and the humming of the
bees,
As they flit from flower to flower to gather in the spoil,
Then yield it to the master, after all their weary toil.
Oh! busy, busy little bees, you work the summer o'er,
And then the burglar enters in and robs your little
store-
And all things look so lovely at this time of year.
The fields of flax in blossom, and the corn is in the ear;
Potatoes, spreading out their leaves, we see from day
to day,
Delight us, and the fragrance of the new mown hay.
The little birds are joyous, as they flit from bush to
bush;
I am listening to their greeting; the blackbird and the
thrush
Are peeling forth their music, although I don't them
see,
And I hear a starling twitter from the branches of a
tree,
And everything in nature seems to revel in delight
But man; the sullen creature, he is ever in a plight
Of discontent and worry; his craving's never done;
He is always wanting something on this planet 'neath
the sun.

And the earth yields up its treasures, it's the great
Creator's will,
Though we're disobedient children He caters for us
still.
He fed them in the desert, in the days of long ago
With the Manna down from Heaven, the food they did
not grow.
Then why are we repining ? He is keeping at it still.
Let us thank Him for His blessing, and be subject to
his will.

Winter

Another year is nearly past and Autumn's on the
wane,
Another cycle of the globe that won't return again;
The winter's coming on apace, we feel it in the air,
With snowy caps the hills are crowned, and trees and
fields are bare.

The birds have ceased the music we loved to hear in
spring,
And such a change from summer corresponding
changes bring;
Within our very nature, there are none of us so gay,
We miss the music of the birds, we miss you flowery
May.

No swallows gliding past us, no cuckoo's voice to fill,
With joy the little schoolboy, his merry heart to thrill;
The blackbirds cease to warble, no mating song we
hear;
In vain we scan the tree tops at this time of year.

To find the speckle breasted thrush, list to his vesper
prayer,
He's sought the shelter of some bush, we do not find
him there;
But little robin redbreast comes to the door anear,
Let us throw a crumb to robin, 'twill help his heart to
cheer.

His little eyes seem sparkling, he looks so smart and
coy,
Be kind to other creatures, 'tis time of peace and joy;
Let not the love of mammon, love of riches you
restrain,
Cast your head upon the waters, 'twill return to you
again.

If that cup of water given, to the donor brings reward,
Let us ape the cheerful giver, let our hearts be not too
hard;
There are many who are able, then give without alloy,
And bring happiness to others at this time of peace
and joy.

Winter and Spring (Written in March)

There's a stranger coming to us that was absent near a year,
Let us give her joyous greeting, she will shortly be here,
With a lovely green mantle, green garlands round her brow,
I am watching for her coming, I can nearly see her now.
Another guest is leaving he came from the Frigid Zone,
We don't so much revere him, but he will not stop at home;
He pays a yearly visit, but I do not him enjoy,
Though once I loved him dearly, that's when I was a boy.
He is clad in skins of animals, all powdered o'er with snow,
You will see him o'er the landscape, no matter where you go;
I hate to see him coming, I almost hide in fear,
Though many take delight in him, whene'er he doth appear.
The huntsman with his dog and gun, whene'er he sallies forth,
Delights to see the stranger from the far off frozen north;
Long icicles hang from his beard, his mantle clad with snow,
He betrays the hare and rabbit, no matter where they go.

Unto the wily sportsman, to aim his murderous gun;
Oh cruel, cruel sportsman let your quarry get a run,
And take no mean advantage, I call that murderous
fun.

Let us give a warm reception to the lady in the green,
That she'll bring us many presents is one thing that I
ween;

She always comes o'erladen, she brings presents for
the bees,

The little birds are wild with joy, I hear them in the
trees;

The cuckoo coming with her, when she leaves he
disappears,

There are little lambkins sporting, they know she's
near at hand,

I can see them in the meadows, as I pass them with
the dam;

The flowers all spring to greet her, she is coming from
the sun,

They know she'll bring them warmth, they're rejoicing
every one.

The trees are bare and naked yet. They're waiting for
their queen,

She'll warm up their life blood, she'll clothe them all in
green;

We can hear the ploughboy's whistle, as he drives his
team afield,

A thrush answering from a treetop, he hates to be
concealed.

The thorn and the bramble bush, she'll close them
with a screen,

To guard the little nesting birds within a wall of green,
From schoolboy's depredations his eyes are very keen.

Then give her joyous greeting, she did not come to
stay,
She'll clothe the land with verdure, before she goes
away;
The prospect will delight you: the wheat, the flax, the
corn,
When you wander forth to view it on a lovely summer
morn.

May Day Superstitions

Daughter:-

Oh Mother this May eve, an' you've forgot to tell
Not three hours now to sunset, I hear the Angelus bell,
An' the 'medda' far away, the May flowers not pulled
yet

To keep away the wee folk, oh! Why did you forget?
Don't you mind what granny toul you before she went
away,

To always pull the flowers on the eve of every May?
An' to have them pulled an' scattered, to keep the place
from harm

Before the settin' o' the sun; she said it was a charm
And at every dure' an windy' to scatter them around,
That the wee folk couldn't pass them when lying on the
ground

To take away our luck, so off I'll have to run
To pull them an' to scatter fore the settin' of the sun.

Mother:-

Well, run and pull the May flowers, I'll get branches o'
the rowan,

An' I'll put wan' in the Mullan where you see your
father ploughing,

Another in the flax field an' wan' among the corn
To keep the evil eye away, the morra' is May morn.
Auld Barney's flax last year, in the field beside our
Mullan,

He put no rowan branch in it – it wasn't worth a pullin'
Some evil eye o'er looked it as they passed along the
way;

He'll be more careful this time, afore the first o'May.

Daughter:-

Well, mother I am going, you know I've far to go
Before I reach the medda' and the sun is getting low.
Don't you forget the rowans, it's not so far a journey
For fear we'd miss the field of flax and make ourselves
like Barney.

An' mother, afore sunrise, if daddy don't say no,
I'll put granny's ould skirt on me an through the fields
I'll go;

Through Barney's fields an' Baxther's and Paddy
O'Connor's too,

We lost the milk last year by the sweeping o' the dew.
That ould vixen, when I meet her, I couldn't find it in
my heart to cut her.

She swept our fields last year an' tuk' all our milk an'
butter.

She'd do the same this year, but I have it in me heart
To watch her, I'll not let her, if I shouldn't go to bed.
That witch with her ould mollie cow you'd be ashamed
to see,

Sowl' far more milk an' butter than we did with our
three;

I'll be able for her this time, I'll rise at break o'day
An' sweep the dew afore her, then she may sweep
away.

On Month of April

I have watched the seasons come, I have watched the
seasons go,
And spring comes creeping o'er the land, it brings a
verdant glow;
The land has got a holiday and now King Frost's away,
And the sun is creeping northward, we will have a
longer day.
The buds are on the bushes, the leaves will soon
expand,
The coming year will bring good cheer and plenty over
the land;
The farmers all are busy now, they're scattering the
grain,
Dark clouds will also scatter, we will have good times
again.
Let not those dark clouds worry us we see up there
today,
Tomorrow's sun will brighter shine, we'll have a
pleasant day;
Let our motto still be onward, let not our courage
quail,
Will youth and strength together with determination
fail?
I think not, then why worry when we see a darksome
way;
Tomorrow's sun will brighter shine, we'll have a
pleasant day.

I know there was depression in the year that has gone
past,
Our burdens have been heavy, but that won't forever
last;
The clouds have silver linings however dark the day,
The sun will shine tomorrow, those clouds will pass
away.
Then onward, onward ever, don't grieve it is in vain,
You can't the past recover, it won't come back again;
Take the present by the forelock, that is the proper
way,
Tomorrow's sun will brighter shine, we'll have a
pleasant day.
Those dark clouds hovering over us with all their cares
and sorrow,
May only be a prelude to a better day tomorrow;
Then let us up and busy be to chase those clouds away,
The sun will shine tomorrow, we'll have a pleasant
day.

A Retrospect or a Poem for June

We are waiting for the May, it has come and passed
away,
It has ushered in the summer, the long and warm day;
The growing corn, the grass so green, the orchards in
full bloom,
They're shedding now their blossoms; this is the month
of June,
Those clusters on the branches that did delight the
eye,
Of pink and white with fragrant smell, are dropping
off to die;
They did their work in Nature's plan; they're lying on
the ground,
That plan proceeds, the garden trees with tiny fruit
abound.
The blossoms that enraptured us in lovely month of
May,
A promise gave of future store, they will not it gainsay;
And Nature still has work to do, when harvest comes
around,
Upon the trees ripe fruit we'll see, some lying on the
ground.
The days are hot, the grain is ripe, the reapers in the
field,
Those lovely fruit allay their thirst and do much
pleasure yield;
Since planted first in Paradise, through God's
Omniscient plan.
His benefits He ne'er withheld since then from sinful
man.

He sends the seasons in due course, the sunshine and
the rain.
To feed the teeming multitudes that o'er the land
abound;
Of man, and all His creatures, all grows from out the
ground,
The meanest of His creatures are not beneath His
care,
They act the part allotted them on earth, in sea, or air;
Does man pay equal homage, we to whom He gave
dominions
O'er all His earthly creatures, when our souls their
flight go winging,
From out their earthly mansions, on their last deciding
race
To that Father up in Heaven, are we worthy of a
place?
When the Book of Life is opened and our trials do
begin,
Will we hear that salutation – faithful servants enter
in?

Autumn

He is coming, we expected him to visit us again,
You can see him creeping, creeping on his path across
the plain;
And everything he touches, as with a magic wand,
He turns from green to golden on his passage o'er the
land.
He is coming from the southward, from very far away,
Where they never see their shadows at the noontide of
the day;
And he visits every nation, he visits every clime,
His lips are stained a crimson with the produce of the
vine.
See the reapers watching for him, they can see him
coming now,
He always wears a garland of ripe wheat around his
brow,
And the corn fields are golden and ripe fruit upon the
trees,
And we gather in the harvest, take a lesson from the
bees,
And he's creeping northward till he comes to that zone,
Where he meets King Frost the monarch of that region
all alone;
Without a soul to cheer him, save the seal and polar
bear,
They charm not our visitor, he never ventures there;
But wherever man has trodden, where he sees the
spade and plough,
He comes to cheer their labour with that garland
round his brow.

And they always feel delighted whenever he comes a
near,
He's the last of Nature's blessings on the products of
the year;
And the lands with plenty teeming, but man must use
his skill,
He prepares it in the factory, prepares it in the mill.
And the big ships coming laden to augment our winter
store,
From far across the ocean where our stranger was
before
He paid his yearly visit unto our island shore.

The Declining Years.

No lovely scent of perfumes, the air that gladdened us
in June,
When wandering through the bowers and inhaling the
perfume
Of the roses, and the honeysuckles, around the bowers
entwined,
To shade us from the summer's sun, to shelter from
the wind.
Those leaves, a little time ago, we saw upon the trees
So green are now turned yellow, and with the slightest
breeze
Are drifting from the branches, in heaps they lie
around,
To remind us of our life's decay, behold them on the
ground.
A short time since we gazed upon their beauty and
their youth;
That beauty's fled, they're lying dead, symbol of death
forsooth.
All things remind us of decay, the sun that shone so
bright
And warm, our hearts to charm that filled us with
delight.
Seems fading in the firmament, he's shed his dazzling
rays.
He now retires early, long night and shorter days.
The little bees that busy were some little time before
Have ceased their daily labour, they have gathered in
their store,
And safe from outward danger, from frost and wind
and rain.

Remain within their waxen cells till spring comes
round again.
No swallows gliding past us now, as in the summer
time,
They have gone away and left us to seek a milder
clime.
The wintry winds of Ireland with them do not agree;
They take a yearly holiday, they go across the sea
Their former haunts to visit, but will all return again;
They need no chart or compass to guide them o'er the
main;
Endued with instinct from on high those creatures
make their way;
No star or compass as their guide, they never go
astray.
Man claims superiority-that fact he cannot do;
He would come to grief in trying, that venture he
would rue,
He claims that conquest of the air, but often meets
disaster,
With everything to guide him, still that little bird's his
master.

Christmas Day (1928)

If in this year, so nearly past,
It be allowed us e'er to find
A time of peace, a day of joy
To cheer us in our struggling grind,
As through this weary world we toil
Oppressed with care, with labour bowed,
'Tis surely now, when all are here
In the old home, no stranger crowd.
The Yule'ogs burning on the hearths,
The family all together meet,
There's peace and joy o'er all the earth,
'Tis Christmas day, our joy's complete.
Around the windows hollies green,
By cunning hands are twined with care,
And berries red enhance the scene,
In the old home to cheer us there.
The wind is howling, trees are bare,
The snow beats 'gainst the window panes;
For wind or snow we do not care,
In the old home all meet again.
All sit around the festive board,
And all partake the Christmas cheer;
The poor display their hard-earned hoard
The rich - I can't describe it here.
'Mong rich or poor no guile is shown;
There's joy in Heaven this Christmas Day;
The Son's descended from the throne
To not let Satan have his way.

If nearer Heaven to-day we've rose,
When peace on earth all men proclaim
Forgive, forget, make friends of foes,
This time of peace may'nt come again.
To you, to me and who can say
"I'll be alive next Christmas Day?"

Lines on the Baby Year

Another baby's born again unto Old Father Time,
We're rejoicing o'er its advent, it's known in every
clime.

In every land, both east and west, we heard the
joybells ringing

In honour of the baby, that Old Time to us was
bringing.

And those dear little babies sometimes come in frost
and snow,

Their father tells the minute, when they come and
when they go.

Will this one peace and plenty bring is what we want
to know;

We have seen this babe's precursors come. Have seen
them pass away,

I've watched them since my infancy, and now my hair
is grey.

Not all brought peace and pleasure, not all brought
love and joy,

As through that weary time I've watched, e'er since I
was a boy.

We have seen them bring disaster, we have seen the
widow's tears,

And the little orphans wailing-but not o'er their loved
one's biers.

For in a foreign land they lie, for duty gave their life,
Not there to soothe that last sad scene was that dear
child and wife.

Not there to raise that dying head from off that gory
clay,

And whisper words of comfort as that loved one passed away.

Far from the comforts of a home, although in victor's grave,

They lie beneath a foreign soil; some deep beneath the waves.

Did victory dry the widow's tears, did victory caress,
That woman in her loneliness with baby at her breast?
And the evils that have followed, by us won't be forgotten;

But like Pandora's Box of old we find Hope at the bottom.

And we'll hope for peace and plenty until the very last,
Though every evil in that box abroad Pandora cast.

But hope will not attain that end, for plenty we must strive,

The bees have taught that lesson unto the human hive.

Then with hope and resolution, let us start the coming year.

We have seen the old one passing; we have gazed upon his bier;

May the one we are entered into bring plenty and good cheer.

Lines on the fall of the Old Apple Tree

Oh! that cruel twenty-third November, for my lifetime
I'll remember;
Such a cruel day for me, and the dear old apple tree;
And I loved that old tree dearly; I have watched it
daily, yearly;
And such a long drawn story, although my beard is
hoary, about it I could tell.
I have seen it in its prime, and saw me in mine;
And in every sort of weather we went down the hill
together;
Now that dear old tree lies low, and after it I'll shortly
go.
I thought not I would survive, but I did, I'm still alive,
And I'm sounding its death knell.
Oft I've watched it bare and naked, when its leaves did
all forsake it;
For they did not care to stay when the fruit were gone
away;
And with every breeze they'd see the apples go;
Until the very last, then came that mighty blast;
Now that old tree's lying low.
And I've watched that dear old tree standing there
since sixty three;
And it was no baby then, 'tis the truth I tell to thee;
Now I'll see it never more, as oft I've watched before,
To see come into sight, the lovely pink and white,
That heralded the luscious fruit I often kept in store;
And its comrades stand and stare at that old tree
there;

They're so naked and so vexed, think their turn will
come next;
That with every breeze they hear their branches shake
with fear;
And now my dear old favourite tree, you are gone away
from me;
Oh you were a lovely dear.
And I'll let you lie in state for a while, then I'll
cremate;
For from dust you came and back you must return
again;
Then you'll assume another state, maybe help to
vegetate;
For you were so good and kind, something useful to
mankind;
Oh! your usefulness was great.
And that avenging rod, that came from the hand of
God;
That mighty wind that blew brought death to more
than you;
Death and sorrow in its train, far across both land and
main;
Not our duty to complain.
And the fingers of the Hand, that "wrote as if on sand"
When at the royal feast, that ruler's doom it traced,
Though we see it not, 'tis there, it is everywhere;
We can sin unknown to man, but we can't evade that
Hand;
A wicked world in sinful state, He shows His power,
we expiate.

To-morrow

Oft we hear 'To-morrow' spoken, but it seems so very
queer,
That we never can behold it as we wander through the
year;
And we're always racing after it, but very strange to
say
We can never overtake it, it has always gone away.
We can see a horse or cow; see a woman or a man.
We can feel the wind in motion; we can see a house or
land:
We can hear the housemaid calling us to come into our
tea.
But that phantom thing 'to-morrow' we can neither
hear nor see.
And 'I'll do that job to-morrow' I can hear some people
say,
'I'll be better rested for it; I feel out-of-sorts to-day.'
Myself I'm not excusing, I am just like any other
'To-morrow' is my hobby; I am always in a pother.
And there's always something wanted, that today I
cannot do,
I will start it on to-morrow, whenever, just the same
with you:
For we have that 'put-off' tendency, that poem I can't
compose,
I will start it on 'to-morrow' whenever I get a doze.
Like the barber 'way in Paris with the sign above his
name,
'I will give free shaves to-morrow.' But to-morrow
never came:
And the lazy schoolboy in the evenings, as a rule,

Neglects his task to learn till to-morrow in the school.
But he never sees to-morrow; he's at the bottom of the
class.
And the teacher's temper rises, and he calls the lad an
ass.
So life's a disappointment, but we have the game to
play.
To-morrow fleeing forward and backward goes to-day:
And like a candle in a socket here we sit and burn
away,
Then think not of to-morrow on this your weary grind.
We should blot it from the language, it's a phantom of
the mind
Heed not procrastination, it brings loss, it brings
delay.
If you want to be successful always start your job to-
day.

Beautiful Spring

Oh! the Spring, the beautiful Spring is coming to us
once more;
We hear the music among the trees, and Winter will
soon be o'er;
Bleak Winter going, will soon be gone, he wasn't a
welcome guest,
He forced his presence among us here, but we love the
Spring the best.
Oh! beautiful Spring, we love to see you returning to
us again,
The birds bid you welcome and so do we, we love your
smiles on the plain;
And the birds are singing, and the flowers are
springing, your welcome presence to greet,
It recalls to my mind our youthful time when the
Spring and the flowers meet.
Now Winter has fled, for a while he is dead, no
pleasure to me did he bring
Although he was kind to leave me behind to revel in
beautiful Spring;
And the swallows will come and we'll hear the hum of
the bees among the flowers;
And the lambkins bleating their early greeting oh!
these are the happy hours.
And steady and slow does the ploughboy go as we pass
along the way,
Behind his team, as if in a dream, and chanting a
roundelay*;
Or in some nook with a paper or book, we read or
watch the bees,

As the sun shines down, diffusing around fresh life to
the flowers and trees.
And the schoolboys creeping along and peeping in
every briar and thorn,
And they search with such zest to find a bird's nest on
their way to school each morn.
Oh! that lovely time comes back to my mind and the
pleasure it used to bring,
As I wound my way to school each day, birdnesting in
beautiful Spring.
And the lark in the air, at his morning prayer, we see
him with out-stretched wing,
Soaring higher and higher with fond desire to thank
his Heavenly King,
That preserved that mite, through the long dark
nights, through frost and ice and snow;
Thanking Him there, with that fervent prayer, are we
thanking Him here below?
And the trees, we see there, so naked and bare, are
coming back to life again.
And the schoolboy hears, with his eager ears the
cuckoo's voice on the plain.
And all things combine to bring to our minds the care
of our Heavenly King.
For the greatest and least, for plant, man and beast,
let us thank Him for beautiful Spring.

*a poem or song

Sunrise.

The night is calm, the sky is o'ercast, and pleasant is
the air;
A streak of light, low in the east, as if it scarcely dare,
To chase away the darkness, I stand and watch it
there,
The clouds have let my vision pierce, I see the morning
star.
That herald of the rising sun has crossed the eastern
bar,
She sheds her beams like half a moon when clouds do
not her mar;
As in ecstasy I watch her, I behold her splendour fade,
As if she doffed the shining garb in which she was
arrayed.
Or is it some superior light has cast her into shade?
How often lovely Venus have I watched you lead the
way;
With your scintillating radiance before the break of
day,
I could count the times in hundreds, but that has
passed away.
And when above the eastern bar your radiance
declined,
To compensate that failure we have daylight more
defined;
And shortly will old Sol appear, he never lags behind,
And the halo of his brilliancy has tinged the east with
red.

Old Sol would scorn a borrowed light emerging from
his bed,
And everything that hates the light has with the
darkness fled;
But I list the skylark high in air greeting that orb of
day,
And wild ducks come on whirring wings from
landward haunts away.
And I hear a blackbird piping his morning melody,
And the dew on a million pointed spires like little
gems are seen;
And plants and flowers unfolding to his vivifying
beams,
And all things stirring into life seems like a pleasant
dream.
And all things feel his influence upon this nether
world,
Although with such velocity around him we are hurled;
To readers of the Universe that mystery is unfurled,
But we ask them not to solve it, a closed book let it
remain.
But for that brilliant orb of day, all things were made
in vain,
The works of the great Architect none need to us
explain;
Where 'er we look around us we see them everywhere,
His works to us are manifest to us on earth, in sea or
air.

We look up to the firmament and with awe behold
them there,
All things obedient to His will, then wherefore should
not we;
To whom He gave dominion o'er earth and air and sea,
O'er all that walk, or swim or fly, then let us thankful
be.

June

Rejoice, 'tis summer once again, no time for grief or
sorrow,
There's joy and gladness everywhere, we meet and bid
goodmorrow;
We see the bloom upon the flowers, inhale their sweet
perfume,
Too soon will pass those happy hours, in lovely month
of June.

The winter storms of rain and wind are gone and
passed away,
But now an atmosphere more kind, a long and
pleasant day;
We see the land with plenty crowned, we hear the
birds in tune,
Then why should we despondent be, in lovely month of
June?

The food is springing from the ground, fruit growing
on the trees,
The milk we use comes from the kine*, the honey from
the bees; *cows
We hear the music of the bees, then wherefore grief or
sorrow,
The God that made and formed all provideth for the
morrow.

We hear the birds in every bush, we hear the cuckoo's
call,
We list the blackbird and the thrush, they seem so
joyous all;
And all things to delight us, the roses in their bloom,
Diffuse around their fragrance in lovely month of
June.

The butterfly goes fluttering by, we hear the humming
bees,
The grazing kine have sought with speed the shelter of
the trees;
'Tis not from frost or snow or wind they've sought so
soon,
But from a sultry summer seen in lovely month of
June.

How hot they find the noon day sun when clouds do
not him screen,
They seek the shade by nature made, to shun his
scorching beam;
How lovely in that gladsome time to walk out in the
morn,
See nature dressed in all her charms, the wheat, the
flax, the corn.

To see the grass with pearls bedight, each flower a
little cup,
To hold the heavenly nectar, ere Sol has drank it up;
And we revel in the morning's pride, but can't forget
the eve,
And the beauties of the landscape when Sol is taking
leave.

The clouds have on a purple hue, the air is full of song,
And Sol has disappeared from view, but will not be for
long;
For northward underneath the globe, he wheels his car
of flame,
Brings light and heat to other lands, then comes to us
again.

The Blackberry Harvest

Now lads and lassies up, arise, there's work for you to do,
Those berries on the bushes mean money unto you;
Then get to work and pick them off, 'tis better that to ramble,
The money will be useful that you pick from the bramble.
'Twill buy you books when school begins, the money that you earn,
To you a joy, 'twill be your first, to work will help you learn;
And if you do not waste your time before to school you go,
You'll earn shoes and stockings to keep out frost and snow.
Now the little boys and girls have a harvest of their own,
We can see them busy gleaning, and they bring the plunder home;
With their buckets full of berries to their mothers go, and then
Begin and tell their mammies how they happened on a 'den'.
The hedgerows now are lovely, the berries ripe and black,
The children all are busy there is little Jim and Mike;
They are at it late and early, and say they mean to try
To have a bucketful and tubful when the man comes round to buy.

And he's coming round on Monday; he's coming twice a week,
And they'll gather all day Sunday, 'tis not manna that they seek;
Lot's warm beams won't melt them and the children think it funny
Picking berries off the branches in this land of milk and honey.
The farmer ploughs his farm. And sows his wheat and corn,
He is working late and early, in the evening, in the morn;
And what labour and attention to get the crop to grow,
See the little children reaping the crop they did not sow.
Need we to prove that God does sow, look upward to the stars and sun,
See rain descend from clouds; ah no, His works do through the ages run;
The grass that grows no mortal sows, the luscious fruit gleaned from the briar,
The air we breathe by which we live, we do not need to look up higher.
We reap the crop we do not sow, we never think we scarcely know
'Twas planted by a Hand Divine;
On sea and land that Mighty Hand extend Creation still,
The earth, the sea, all things but man obedient to his will.

Elegy on Summer

Oh! The summer is departing; we are in September
now;
The wreaths that did adorn thee are fading on thy
brow,
As we look across the landscape, it is not our favourite
green
That we took so much delight in; - another hue is seen.
We see the wheat and corn fields in other colours
dressed,
And we know that autumn's coming, they have on a
golden vest.
And summer, we are sorry to see you going away;
Your flowers were so lovely, with blossoms on each
spray.
But your appointed task is finished now, you haven't
come in vain,
We thank you for your blessings, and we know you'll
come again.
You have left us every treasure that can grow from
mother earth,
They arose with joy to greet you when they inhaled
your breath.
Your presence here meant life to us, and now your
work is done;
Your successor now is coming, and his work is just
begun.
But we mourn your departure, and are grieved to say
good-bye;
See how old Sol in sorrow hides his brilliance in the
sky.

He has joined with us in mourning; he knows your
seasons o'er,
He'll fade away from day to day, his brilliance won't
restore,
But old Sol will always greet you, for ever, and for
ever.

And welcome your return, but how many of us never
Again may bid you welcome! we may never see again
The flowers and the beauties that adorn hill and plain.
There are flowers that have faded that on their stalks
are dying;
There are flowers that are blooming all will in the clay
be lying
Before the summer flowers of another year appear;
May the Gardener transplant them to a higher, holier
sphere.

Christmas Night

'Tis Christmas night, I'm sitting here, how soon this
day's passed by;
We talked and planned for days before, how quickly
time does fly!
We're sitting round the fire tonight, not like the days
of yore,
So many seats are vacant now, we're only using four.
And on this blessed Christmas night, how far our
thoughts do stray;
They take their way to foreign lands, they sink into
the clay;
We see those dear ones o're the main, though some are
lying low,
As plain as when from Erin's isle they sailed so long
ago.
No Yule log burning on the hearth, those days are
passed down here,
The dying embers now I stir, I gaze, I drop a tear,
I conjure up such visions there, the coals are now a
glow,
They seem so plainly pictured there that I nursed so
long ago.
'Tis vain, I know, to think it so, yet still the vision's
there,
That prattled round me long ago, I muse, I say a
prayer
For those who in the grave do lie, where tides between
us roll,
No stranger there to say a prayer for the departed
soul.

But not forgot in the old spot, while time doth last
won't be,
Too plain I see those faces still that prattled round my
knee.
The spring with summer flowers will deck the graves
where dropped no tear,
Whose inmates never more will reck for flowers or
worldly gear.
No distance ever can efface the sights my eyes do fill;
The ocean where huge billows roll becomes a little rill;
The churn of voices seems to rise, and visions on my
sight,
To mind me of the long ago, this blessed Christmas
night.
Not oceans vast, not mountains high, a barrier can be,
Those visions seem to rise as plain as when upon my
knee
I nursed them, in the long ago, when hearts were
young and light,
With childish glee, upon my knee, on many a
Christmas night.
And here I'm sitting lonely now, bereft of every joy,
And another year is drawing near; 'tis looming in the
haze,
Are the comrades watching; calling me, that I knew in
youthful days?
Is that land of spirits near us, are we always in their
sight?
Is my passbook signed to linger for another Christmas
night?

Characteristics of Spring

Again it is Spring, and I hear the birds sing,
Old Sol has returned to bless us;
He has come back again, and on hill and on plain,
He is sending his beams to caress us.
Although I'm afraid that 'twas terra that stray'd,
Old Sol takes the blame with a will,
But for one of deep learning, and better discerning,
We would think he was leaving us still.
And he was snubbed for his pains, nearly put into
chains,
And did penance for telling the truth;
Did his teachings retract, and his writings reject,
In order to gain from him *ruth; *(sorrow or pity)
And it is our own planet with all things upon it,
Occasions the change we see.
They for ages did call him erratic, old Sol,
Although from all blame he was free;
Now I'll return again to the hill and the plain
From which for a while I have stray'd.
To see him down smile, on this Emerald Isle,
As he views it in splendure array'd,
All springing to meet him, in order to greet him,
They arise from their long winter thrall.
Like a father returned, in whose absence they
mourned,
There is gladness and joy among all.
There are leaves on the bushes, and the blackbirds and
thrushes
Are finding a place to retreat.
To their amorous wooing and their billing and cooing,
Each one now selecting his mate.

Now they're hedged in with green, where they cannot
be seen,
Each pair setting to with a will;
She is building inside, could we see her –the bride,
Whilst the husband brings fog* in his bill. (*grass)
But fog all alone is like stone upon stone,
There is something else needed to bind,
And the husband is kneading the cement they are
needing,
With which their wee cabin is lined.
And they'd teach us to pray, we could learn the way
If we'd hist* ere their work they begin, (*be quiet)
When the night has fast fled, and old Sol left his bed,
To their anthem or Heavenly hymn.
Now dear children, I pray, as you go on your way,
For lessons and manners to school;
If you see that wee cabin, be it blackbird's or robin,
I beg of you, make it a rule
To leave it alone, give them peace in their home,
And think of the one you have left,
Oh! how you would mourn when you would return
If you were of your own cabin bereft.
Now the fields are so green, and the air so serene
That we like to be out, not inside;
See the bluebells burst forth, that were screened from
the north
With the primrose and cowslip beside;
See the daisies again, re-adorn the plain,
That costs us no labour to grow;
With their white pink and gold that we love to behold,
And some rare ones peep up in the snow.

And that sleeky fellow, I see him, the swallow
Has returned from over the main
To his wee house of clay, and he's going to stay
Till he rears a wee family again.
Now I see him about, flying in and flying out,
To see does his house need a patch,
And if so he's away for a mouthful of clay
That will make it stick close to the thatch.
Maybe hunger is pressing and if so, such a blessing
He discerns a gnat in the air;
With his mouth open wide to let it inside
He's away, and he won't miss his fare.
Now I think it a pity to finish my duty
And forget all about the cuckoo
That we hear on the plain, when we're sowing the
grain
Although we so seldom view
It is timid and shy, and we cannot tell why
Though we love it, it keeps far away.
And not like the swallow that canny wee fellow
That keeps flying around us all day;
But its notes are a joy to the little schoolboys,
How they listen and look when they hear it.
And shout back "Cuckoo" but their fooling won't do,
They may see it, but will not get near it.
Now I'll have to give o'er, and at present no more
About Nature's works I will say
Lest consigned this might be to the W.P.B.*
(*waste paper bin)
Yours truly, dear readers to-day
John Coleman.

Likes and Dislikes.

Although I am old and worn, and the end is coming soon,
Still I love to see flowers in the lovely month of June.
And I love to hear the birdies warbling a tune
As they sit upon the branches in the morning.

I love to see the ploughboy, as I pass along the way,
Keeping pace behind his horses as he chants a roundelay;
And I love to see the lambkins in the meadows sport
and play,
When Nature and her beauties are adorning.

I love to see children as along to school they go,
And I love to see the farmer when the seed he 'gins to sow,
And I think upon the sailor when the stormy winds do blow
On the middle of the ocean, in the storm.

I love to see the swallows as they skim along the ground,
I love to hear the cuckoo, and I listen for the sound
Just like little schoolboys that in knots do gather round
And dally on their journey in the morning.

I love to see the skylark as he soars on quivering wings,
For the change from frost to sunshine to thank the King of Kings,

And I watch him rising higher, and the pleasure that
it brings
To see him soaring Heavenward in the morning.

I love to see the butterflies, I love to see the bees,
And I love to see the blossoms, and the leaves upon the
trees,
For I know that summer's coming and I always feel at
ease
When Nature and her beauties are adorning.

But I hate to see the frost and I hate to see the snow,
Although I loved them dearly in the days of long ago;
But the blood is coursing slower, and again I'll never
go
To slide upon Lough Neagh in the morning.

But the one thing I love best is the thing I'll never see,
The youth I left behind me that the years stole from
me.
Oh! could I get it back again! But that could never be,
And to those who now possess it I give warning.

You may think you'll always have it, but you're very
far astray,
For old age will wear upon you, and the years will
creep away,
When you have it make the most of it, it won't be
always day,
The night will creep upon you, not the morning.

The Month of May

Time glides away, and another May is with us once again,
When nature dons her robe of green on every hill and plain;
How far removed from chill December, it fills our hearts with feelings tender,
Like some absent friend we long remember returned to us again.
We see the flowers around us spring, and wandering birds are on the wing;
They've come again, and everything reminds of the month of May;
And we laugh, not weep, although time does creep and steal our youth away.
But we need not sigh, we were born to die, just like the month of May,
Nor shed a tear, there'll be others here when we are passed away.
The trees we saw so grim and bare as if the hand of death was there
Have come to life again;
The lifeblood coursing through their veins, they now adorn the hills and plains with robes of green again.
With all things gay in lovely May, how can we feel depressed?
Whene'er we pass along the way we see the landscape drest
With all things to delight the eye, the year is at its best.
We see the flowers where'er we stray, we hear the hum of bees,

The songs of birds from every spray, the young leaves
on the trees;
The orchards drest in their very best of lovely pink and
white,
That heralds the store when summer's o'er to give to
us delight.
Can we be sad when all are glad, when life is in its
prime,
When all feel joy without alloy in the lovely summer-
time?
But thoughts will come and thoughts will go, and
sometimes thoughts will stay,
And when we think of the long ago, they're hard to
chase away.
When age puts on the hoary hairs it does not be so gay,
Let youth rejoice, devoid of cares, this is the month of
May.
I once was young, but now I'm old, and my love for
pleasure has grown cold;
But still I had my day.
To those who have not passed their noon, whose every
month is May and June,
I here make bold to say;
In joyous pastimes without guile, when nature and her
works do smile,
Make this a pleasant May.

Christmas (1931)

The star that led to Bethlehem the shepherds of the plain,
If not in deed, in very thought, is with us once again,
When peace and joy, without alloy, o'er Christian lands should reign;
The effects of war have travelled far, from which there's no escaping,
The seed was sown o'er continents, the whirlwind we're reaping.

Then let us pray, this Christmas Day, with fervor and devotion,
For peace on earth, good will to men o'er continent and ocean;
Be spite or spleen not heard or seen 'twixt near and foreign lands, but, like the family circle, in friendship grasp their hands.

I stand and watch the cenotaph, I see no smile, I hear no laugh,
As in sunshine, rain or storm, that crowd bareheaded stands;
No! they're thinking of that hell where the myriads fought and fell,
And of their loved ones that are lying in the soil of foreign lands.

Then is it amiss to say, let us kneel and let us pray,
That we imitate the angels on that holy Christmas morn,

When from 'tween the earth and sky, they did wish us
peace and joy,
In honour of the Saviour that was born?

Ah! How often have we broken that peace, that
heavenly token!
How often kings and emperors have spurned it with
scorn!
It makes the angels weep how we failed the gift to
keep,
Conferred upon humanity that holy Christmas morn.

And the world has fought and bled till the land was
dyed with red,
And from it sprung adversity in near and foreign
lands;
But if that war has taught a lesson, it may yet bring us
a blessing,
And nations that were foemen may in friendship grasp
their hands.

Now at this holy time, when the nation's joy bells
chime,
In honour of the Saviour that was born
In a stable far away, let us kneel and let us pray,
For the peace and joy of angels on this holy Christmas
morn.

Changing the Time

If you're a friend or a foe I would have you to know
That you cannot go on as you're doing;
For the world's got mixed, and has got to be fixed,
And you need not be laughing or booing;
And I think it a shame if I have to explain,
As you tell me you don't know the reason,
That it's in such a mess, and I cannot say less,
Than your ignorance amounts unto treason.
You all very well know that a short time ago,
A deputation went up to the sun,
Their grievance to air, but sure Sol didn't care,
As he thought you were all making fun.
At first quite fainthearted till the spokesman got
started,
And he says "Master Sol we've a grievance,
Of a long standing date, but it's not yet too late,
To amend it, oh – how 'twould relieve us.
For one half of the year we would wish you appear
At your own heavenly time in the morning;
We've subtracted a score, or perhaps a few more,
But that handful of minutes we're mourning.
But the other half year, oh dear, oh dear,
I am almost afraid it to mention,
Do pray, give us an hour, as we know you've the
power;
To solicit it is our intention.
We have dull heavy heads, we'd need early from bed,
And we would all get to work with a will.
And that would be fun, we would nearly be done,
Whilst your honour was climbing the hill.

Then for sport or for play, for the rest of the day,
Whilst your splendour the hill is descending,
We'll your gratitude praise, and your generous ways,
Wish your days like this past, never-ending.”
Master Sol then spoke out (he was warm no doubt)
And says to that bloke, Mr. Speaker,
“If you are much longer here I very much fear,
You will need a big drink from your beaker.
You have come here to ask and to set me a task,
And you know that I'm not getting younger,
But I always kept time, I was never behind,
As I wanted to chase away hunger.
Now you've come to solicit, although a deceit
There is in my heating intentions,
For you know I am older and perpetually colder,
Although 'tis a thing I don't mention.
If I lie in my bed like you, dull heavy head,
You would surely have no work to do,
But I never forget, from I rise till I set
I am always thinking of you.
Now if I'd refuse you, you'd say I ill used you;
As these are the first favours I'll grant them,
As it lies in my power, I will give you that hour.”
Mr Speaker, “No thanks, I don't want them.”

Autumn

'Tis Autumn and the leaves are falling on the earth
and lying dead,
The lovely spring and summer that we loved has fled;
We felt happy in the summer, we felt happy in the
spring,
And the little birds were joyous, – how we loved to
hear them sing.
There was music in the bushes, there was music in the
air,
We could hear the blackbird's whistle, we could hear
the skylarks prayer;
As he rose aloft to Heaven, how he prayed on quivering
wings,
For the change from frost to sunshine he thanked the
King of kings.
And the thrush, I don't forget him, as he sat with
speckled breast,
And kept pouring out his vespers to his mate upon the
nest;
Not hidden in the bushes in a place we could not see,
His notes came pealing round us from the top of some
tall tree.
And now the leaves are falling and that lovely time is
past,
We can see them gliding earthward, scarce waiting for
the blast;
And like all things are returning to the earth from
whence they came,
For everything created must return there back again.

We see them lying round us now, a carpet on the earth,
And we know that Winter's coming again with that frosty breath;
And we ponder o'er the contrast a little time has made,
When in the lovely summer we could sit beneath the shade.
When free from daily labour, with a pencil or a book,
And inhale the lovely odour of the flowers in that nook.
But time is always changing to steal away our joys,
And we grow from youth to manhood – from happy little boys
To that age of care and worry that bring furrows on the brow;
I have watched that through the years, and my winter's on me now.
I have seen the leaves in summer, I have watched them fade and fall,
A symbol of the mighty change foredoomed to come on all;
The pride of man must humbled be, from pinnacles brought low,
And like the leaves from off the trees, back to the dust must go.

Christmas Day (1933)

Hold up your heads, be not downcast, 'tis Christmas
once again,
Though age may feel the biting blast, or the rheumatic
pain,
'Tis but the daily grind of life as on our path we stray,
That will lead us to a better life, give thanks this
Christmas Day.

List to the joy bells ringing, and the music that they
bring.
'Tis a message of salvation from our new-born King,
Who came down a willing victim our sins to cleanse
away,
And bruise the serpent's head upon that holy
Christmas Day.

In a far-off lowly stable, of all pomp and grandeur
shorn,
With no semblance of sovereignty our Saviour King
was born,
With celestial angels guarding as He in the manger
lay,
To teach to us humility that holy Christmas Day.

And their paeans* pierced the ether, and that
heavenly refrain
Did rouse the humble shepherds that were herding on
the plain,
Singing “Peace on earth, goodwill to men, the Saviour
King is born
To bruise the serpent’s head upon this holy Christmas
morn.”

Would that nations were united in that heavenly
refrain,
That roused the humble shepherds who were camping
on the plain;
There is jealousy, there’s strife, that will lead to waste
of life,
They are arming for the struggle, they’re preparing
once again.

When there should be peace and joy over earth without
alloy,
They are worshipping an idol, whose feet are made of
clay;
That refrain the nations spurning, and instead a world
of mourning,
Let’s implore its non-fulfilment this holy Christmas
Day.

And in fancy let us rise ‘way up higher toward the
skies,
As if among the angels on that holy Christmas morn,
And join in the refrain heard by shepherds on the
plain,
In honour of the Saviour who was born.

And Christmastide will come again, and Christmas
bells will ring,
To welcome in that holy time, that joy to all should
bring;
But who of all who read these lines unto themselves
can say,
Again I'll hear those joy bells ring upon next
Christmas Day?

paean* a song of joyful praise.

Turn Back the Clock.

“In works of labour or of skill let me be busy too,
As Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do.”

Turn back the clock, turn back the clock, it has left old
Sol behind;

We are always in a hurry here below,
Is it love of sex or mammon that is running in our
minds,
By which we all imagine old Sol is going slow?

Turn back the clock, we are foremost in the race,
Why such haste to reach the goal from which we fain
would keep away?

With doctor's pills and potions to chase away the
notions,
That youth is fleeing from us that we are hasting to
the clay.

Turn back the clock, and old Sol don't try to mock,
He has been our guide for eons here below,
Until fed up with pride they've renounced him as their
guide,
And have passed a law to tell us that old Sol is going
slow.

Then turn back the clock, or if better let it stop
Until old Sol draws level on the race;
As in every kind of weather they have always run
together,
Until Terra Firma's law-givers brought upon them
that disgrace.

I have told you oft before and I tell you now once more
To turn back the clock, it will not give us a shock,
So long we've seen them running side by side,
But we think it a disgrace, and we feel such great
surprise,
That with its hands across its face it has for years been
telling lies.

Yes, we think it a shame, but the old clock is not to
blame,
As the rulers of the land have sent forth that vile
command,
And the old clock can't say nay, nor that mandate
disobey,
But steadfast as a rock I say – “turn back the clock.”

Memories Of Childhood

Old Memories – A Reverie

I am sitting here and thinking of the days long past
and gone,
And the thinking's turned to sadness, and I'm musing
on and on;
And I think I hear the chatter, patter, in the school I
learned in,
And the little lads in classes, and the master standing
near –
He's listening to our parsing, and I think I see his leer
When we call a noun a verb, or call a verb a noun.
Oh! then our fingers tingle, it is then the cane comes
down.
Although the dear old master our welfare has at heart,
He does not mean disaster, although our fingers
smart;
And now we're at the counting, the jotters came of late
I think we had far better a pencil and a slate,
And if we thought it wasn't clean, it would soon be
clean enough,
We'd wet it with a spittle and dry it with our cuff.
He has ranged us in a crescent, and he gives us then
and there
A sum to do in practice, an angle, or a square,
Or a problem in Euclid* that keeps us in despair.
*(refers to geometry)
But we learn more than letters in the middle of the
day,
When the master issues orders and tells us go to play!
Oh! then the hurry-flurry, with the marbles, and the
ring,

For then there was no football, we heard of no such
thing,
Nor did we know a little of the pleasures it would
bring.
Now one of us is kneeling, and the rest are standing
bye,
It doesn't mean a button if the ground be wet or dry,
For each is bent on winning, let the means be foul or
fair,
With a pocket full of marbles we feel as light as air.
But now a change of life ensues, the school is left
behind,
Our work is now a joy to us, for body and for mind.
We seek the Eldorado, but it's like the rainbow span,
It's always fleeing from us, let us grasp it if we can.
We think not of the years to come before we reach the
goal,
Nor of the dangers lurking for body and for soul.
Our thoughts are all on Mammon; we have caught it
with delight,
But it oft evades its captor like a spectre in the night.
The midday's past, another stage is coming with the
years,
I little thought my erstwhile joys I'd mix with bitter
tears;
I am looking far behind me, and I see as in a daze
The features of the schoolmates I know from those
happy days.
I hear their joyous laughter and the patter of their
feet,
And the dear kindly master I oft times did greet.
And the comrades of my boyhood days and of my
manhood prime,

I see them trooping past me, they wear a look Divine;
And all are gazing at me, I cannot help but cry.
They're pictured in my vision on the curtain of my eye,
Ah! I didn't hear their laughter 'twas the wind with
eerie moan,
It is sounding in the treetops, I will leave them all
alone.

When I was a Boy

Oh! lovely rose sweet smelling flower, I saw you in
your bloom,
I grieve to see your leaves decay and fade away so
soon;
Tis but a little time ago I looked on you with joy,
You bring old memories back again to when I was a
boy.

I thought not of the years to come, nor of my youth's
decay,
I little thought the time would come, when I would
fade away;
Those youthful years so happy were, with nothing to
annoy,
Or care for then, I thoughtless was, when I was a boy.

The summer held less charm then, than did the ice
and snow,
I loved to slide upon the ice, and on the lake would go;
And time went by so pleasantly without the least alloy,
Oh! Such a curious contrast now, to when I was a boy.

I made away to school each day, my books strapped to
my belt,
My comrades joined me on the way, and all so happy
felt;
Our pockets lined with marbles were, with them to
play and toy,
No wonder memory wafts me back to when I was a
boy.

We would play a game of marbles, or maybe run a
race,
Or perhaps a game of handball, if we had a fitting
place;
And the master often watching us, he did the game
enjoy,
Oh, I never felt so happy, since when I was a boy.

But those happy days, those youthful days, have
passed, as pass the wind
And like the rose, youth fades away, old age is left
behind,
But let my years be e'er so long, it will my thoughts
employ,
I'll still keep pondering o'er the time, when I was a
boy.

Our Mother's Sorrows and our Ingratitude

There is sickness in the cottage, for I heard a cry of pain;
I stood listening alarmed, and I heard it o'er again.
I wonder what's the matter, or what it's all about;
It must be something serious, I hear another shout.
Now here comes wee Johnnie, and surely he can tell;
Ah! now I know the reason, his mammy isn't well.
For his daddy's on the bicycle away for the midwife,
And if he gets her quickly, she'll maybe save a life.
Well the evening's nice and warm and we'll sit a while
and wait;
For if something bad would happen her, the sorrow
would be great.
Every time I passed the house I thought it was a sin,
I never saw her idle, she was working out and in.
Now I see the midwife coming; we had not long to stay,
I hope she'll be successful before she goes away.
It's the mothers always suffer at the time of lying-in;
For the crime of disobedience, it's the penalty of sin.
But the more pain they suffer when they see their
infant boy
And hug him to their bosoms, the greater is their joy.
Oh! what maternal kindness the mothers always show
From the baby in the cradle, till they to manhood
grow,
And how very poor the recompense, on mothers we
bestow.
With watching o'er our infancy and nursing on their
knees,
And telling pretty stories of the flowers, and the bees.

Forgetting all their troubles, and all their worldly
cares,
And telling of a better land, and teaching us our
prayers.
But I need not preach a sermon about what the
mothers do,
As I could not do them justice, nor paint the picture
true;
Some abler pen than mine may, if the subject they
renew.
And I fear that many of us, when we grow to man's
estate
Forget our mother's lessons until it is too late.
But "better late than never," sure we haven't reached
the goal;
She is praying up in Heaven for the welfare of our
soul.

Old Memories (First day at school)

It seems to me like yesterday, I don't need 'specs' to see,
When first I ran away to school in eighteen sixty-three;
My feet were bare, uncombed my hair, I didn't care a fig,
For don't you see I mean to be a scholar very big.
The two long miles I shorten'd quick, o'er which I had to go,
My brain was not quite empty, I knew both K and O;
And thought I'd soon a master be if ma would let me go.
On reaching school I skinned my eyes when looking at the crowd
Of lads, and all bareheaded, and shouting out aloud;
And I a new arrival was, and boy but was I proud.
The master's gaze I felt for days, I nearly see it yet,
Says he you'll do, if my guess is true, I'd almost take a bet;
He asked my name, I told the same, my age was rather hard;
Then he says ask ma, or else papa, and he hung me up a card.
Such letters there before my eyes, and not one did I know,
But sure I'm after telling lies, I knew both K and O,
Oh dear, oh dear, I felt so queer, for I was in a fix,
But not for long, before I left, I knew the twenty-six.
The master came and struck my head, and says "You darling boy,
Now come each day, don't stop away, and none shall you annoy."

I felt a man, and off I ran unto my mother dear,
For days and days the master's praise was running in
my ear.
The school was now my hobby, and from it I would not
stay,
My first day's feat I did repeat, and never missed a
day;
But the time sped fast, my schooldays passed, I felt a
lad no more,
But work away from day to day beside Lough Neagh's
shore.
Those years flew past on lightning wings, some
pleasure, more pain,
All work and little pleasure, I can see it o'er again;
The comrades of those far off days have passed to the
unknown,
My times not come, I lag behind and ponder all alone.
And now, when old and worn, and my candle burned
low,
Life's memories crowd around me, they're passing to
and fro;
Regrets are vain, but now again were I a lad from
school,
Would I pursue that beaten path, I must have been a
fool.

In Dreamland

His hair is white and his eyes are dim, and his days
are nearly run,
And he's thinking o'er the bygone years he spent
beneath the sun;
When young and strong and free from care, and every
month seemed May,
When his eyes were bright and his heart was light,
like a little child at play.

And his pondering o'er the long ago that passed so
quickly o'er,
In the armchair by the fireside where his father sat
before;
Declining years and the fire's glow make his aged
eyelids close,
And unconscious to surroundings the old man droops
to doze.

Now a change is stealing o'er him, as he sits dozing
there,
To us the aged patriarch asleep in his armchair;
And silence reigns in the household, they're speaking
in whispers low,
He's nearing the end of the journey that all of us must
go.

But youth's returned to him again, his eyes are clear
and bright,
He's a little child again at play, he is brimming with
delight;

He's sitting again on his mother's knees, repeating a
little prayer,
She is looking down with angelic smile, he feels so
happy there.

Now his arms are clasped around her neck, he asks for
a little toy
High on the shelf beyond his reach, she kisses her
darling boy,
As she hands him the little wooden horse, constructed
on wheels, such fun,
With a cord attached across the floor from side to side
they run.

The mother plying her household cares, the little lad
at play,
Such a happy boy, with his wooden toy, so passes the
pleasant day;
Too good to last, it is quickly past, youth won't return
again;
That nap is o'er, he's a lads no more, he wakes, it's but
a dream.

Round Mother's Knee Again

I am old and worn now, and the furrows are on my
brow,
And visions float before me of a change;
With the years my hair is white, and I ponder day and
night,
And my thoughts do very often backward range
To that time so far away, when a little lad at play,
Without a care or trouble, nought but merriment and
glee;
Oh such a happy time, it does still run in my mind,
When a little lad I prattled around my mother's knee.

But like comrades now long dead, those happy days
are fled,
And each year that passes by me, brings troubles in its
train;
And those troubles cause me worry, and I often feel so
sorry,
When those visions rise before me that'll ne'er return
again.
As through the years we wander, we scarcely ever
ponder,
That age is stealing on us, 'tis a change we fail to see;
But the years go creeping past, and old age comes on
at last.
Then we yearn for the happy time, when round our
mother's knee.

But that dear mother that loved us all, is gone away
before us,
From her earthly habitation, on earth we'll see no
more;
That dear kindly face, she has found a better place,
Since she landed with her Father on that Eternal
Shore.
And that does assuage our grief, and bring to us relief,
When we know that loving mother on earth we'll never
see;
But although we cease to fret, still we never can forget
The happy days of childhood around our mother's
knee.

And with that maternal care she would teach her child
that prayer,
Appealing to the Father, for protection and a guide
From every earthly ill, and to do His holy will;
Whilst wandering on our journey, till we with Him
abide,
A call all must obey, and mother's called away
From her earthly worries, she's now for ever free;
But from her home on High, she still casts a wistful
eye,
On the afterlife of baby that prattled round her knee.

Remembrance

Remembrance is a holy thing, a gift from the Divine,
To meditate with pleasure on when life is free from
crime;

We may be old and near the grave, and still it brings
us joys,

To muse upon that far-off time, when we were little
boys.

That innocent, that happy time, when we were free
from sin,

When first upon our mother's knees to hop we did
begin;

That far-off time comes back again, though standing
on the brink,

It seems to us like yesterday when we begin to think.

We see again the parents that to us our being gave,
In our vision plainly pictured, although lying in the
grave;

We see again the little toys that brought us many joys,
In that happiest time of all our lives, when we were
little boys.

And now we're old and feeble, and our hair with age is
white,

Still looking through that midst of years, that time
brings back delight;

As memory wafts us back again to see those games
and toys,

That gave so much delight to us, when we were little
boys.

How well remembered mother is, seems to us standing
there,
And the joy that shone upon her face when first we
lisp'd a prayer;
A guiding light in early years, so happy in our joys,
Too quickly passed that happy time, when we were
little boys.

When we are sitting by the fire in the old worn
armchair,
We see history repeating, there are other toddlers
there;
Another guiding light we see, and happy in their joys,
Their games bring back to us that time, when we were
little boys.

And we that once were little boys have now got old and
grey,
And life that held so many joys now ebbing fast away;
And here we sit and listen to the bustle and the noise,
A memento of that happy time, when we were little
boys.

'Tis Good To Be a Little Child

'Tis good to be a little child, to be a little boy,
When hearts are light, when eyes are bright, when life
is all a joy;
When like flowers in May and June we are so young
and fair,
The joyous smile, the hearty laugh, ere we know what
is care.
Our childish games, our little sports, don't interrupt
our play,
You were a little child yourself, then let us have our
way;
The marbles and the ball you see, are our pride and
our joy,
You once like we from care were free, you were a little
boy.
Dear children cease not from your play – to me it
brings delight,
Too soon will pass your happy day, too soon will come
your night;
When childish games no more will please, your hearts
won't be so gay,
Your paths will lie in other ways, cease not your sport
today.
Long since I was a little boy, since then what griefs
and cares,
No childish games, nor little toys, see now my hoary
hairs;
I loved the balls and marbles then, same as you do
today,
Then why should I gainsay your joys, why interrupt
your play.

The joyous laugh, and sunny smile, today I hear and see,
Remind me of the far off time, when youth from care was free;
That sunny smile will fade away, that laugh to sighs will turn,
Then cease not from your childish play, you've time enough to mourn.
I see joy mirrored in your looks as there I watch you now,
But furrows on thy face will come, and wrinkles on thy brow;
The years will steal away your youth, will turn your hair to grey,
Too well I know that simple truth, then why not sport and play.
Could age bring back that happy time, that time of youth and joy,
To be again a little child, a happy little boy;
But no, like flowers of the field we bloom and fade away,
To nature's plan we all must yield, keep merry while you may.

The Orphan Boy

An infant boy in my mother's arms, my mother often
said
I crowed and clapped my hands with joy at father lying
dead,
And mother's tears I brushed aside, I heeded not her
cry,
But revelled in my childish glee as father dead did lie.
An only child I grew up wild, and never fault but
praise
Was uttered from my mother's lips at all my childish
ways;
She saw no harm in all my pranks, she thought I could
not err,
But never night or morning failed to make me say a
prayer.
Then years went on, I grew up strong, I was a sturdy
boy;
My task at home and school was sport, I was my
mother's joy,
And when at bedtime I would kneel, and say that little
prayer
My mother taught me on her knees, I felt her presence
there.
She saw me in my father's ways, his very gait, his face,
And when we would together sit his every trait she'd
trace;
We lived a solitary life, I saw the lines of care
That furrowed o'er brow and face, I saw whitening
hair.
I longed for change, I longed for scenes where care
would not alloy,

An inward something still replied, you are your
mother's boy.
Not long had I to wait for change, that face grew thin
and wan,
I watched the blood recede there from, I saw a palsied
hand'.
Her only nurse when sickness came, no other seemed
so dear,
She seemed to think I eased her pain, I knew the end
was near;
I wiped the dew from off her brow, she gazed upon me
there,
Her lips she moved, in accents low again I heard that
prayer.
That prayer she taught me on her knees I heard from
her the last,
No other word came from her lips until the spirit
passed.
No father or no mother now, I felt no more a boy,
No guiding hand, no good advice, death robbed me of
my joy;
With willing hands to help me there, I laid her in the
clay,
The change I longed for now had come, from home I
went away.
I took my way to foreign lands, oh! what a change was
there;
No good advice but every vice, but still that little
prayer
My mother taught me on her knees I never did forget;
I felt my mother's presence there, I feel her presence
yet.

And if from every vice I kept, that round me
everywhere,
I saw degrade God's image, man, I thank that infant
prayer.

Mother's Love

There's a love that liveth ever, when all other loves are dead,
A love that never weakens, nor with age does it decay,
Though the object long may be lying within its narrow bed,
From which there's no returning, where all is turned to clay.
Does the object of that passion, of that all-absorbing love,
Reciprocate that feeling from that mansion up above?
That through years, through decades never weakens, never fades,
Till it severs from its earthly shell to join its mother love.
Does she see us in our exile, is she on us watching down,
With our cross upon our shoulders before we wear the crown.
Would'st thou debate, thy words are vain, for ne'er on earth thou'll feel again,
For sister, wife or brother,
For father, though so kind and dear, that watched thy path from year to year,
The love you felt for mother.
What hopes when clasped unto her breast, what hopes when lulling you to rest,
If castles fell then how depressed, though grief she tried to smother;
All other loves may wane and fade, the love you through the years assayed
May in the end become decayed, but not the love from mother.

An angel voice, an angel face, to guard you on your
youthful race,
And guide you in the paths of grace; you'll never find
another,
As through the life that mother gave, that leads from
cradle to the grave,
When storms of life around you rave, to love you as
your mother.
She brought us forth in pain, travail, to guard and
tend us, did not fail,
If fingers ached how she would wail, and care us as no
other;
Her sands are run, from earth she goes, now freed
from all her earthly woes,
May she in Heaven find repose, our heartfelt prayer
for mother.

Religious Thoughts

The Wonders of the Universe

I often gaze in wonderment upon that Orb of Day,
With his retinue of servants revolving on their way.
I am lost in contemplation when'er I look and ponder
Uneducated mortals, we can only gaze and wonder.
But these are men of science, of learning most
profound,
Who have measured all those planets and their
dimensions found;
Although these unbelievers are, who say it is not true
That man can measure worlds the eye can scarcely
view.
Their thoughts have narrow compass and shallow is
their brain,
Who think those great astronomers have sought so
long in vain.
Would those disbelieving Thomas's that think they
know, explain
The date when lovely Venus will cross the sun again?
The moon shines with a borrowed light, and sheds it
down at night
Upon the weary traveller, that darkness would
affright;
But sometimes she looks sickly, and seen as if in pain;
She is looking through a shadow, and will soon be well
again.
I pass with much reluctance the twenty-ninth of June,
Barred by a cloudy atmosphere, from seeing sun or
moon.
But not so very long ago, the day was not far run,
The morning bright and lovely, resplendent shone the
sun.

A beautiful spring morning, the lark was soaring high,
When darkness came a creeping I looked up to the sky.
I looked upon the Orb of Day, his light was getting
dim,
The moon was stealing over him and only left a rim.
I gazed in solemn silence, my soul was filled with awe,
Admiring that grand machine, the works of God I saw.
Although it was no secret, we had heard it o'er and
o'er;
Those men who read the universe had told it long
before.
That brought another train into my mind again,
I seemed to crumble into dust, that dust from whence I
came.
I thought the very worms were equal of the man;
They are kept alive and guided by the same Unerring
Hand.
But something higher, holier, we are holding here in
trust,
The animated Spirit that will never go to dust.
He gave it in our keeping, He'll demand it back again,
Let us hope we may return it without a spot or stain.
An when we shed this mortal coil, we'll hear with
heavenly ears
What's not for earthly man to hear - the Music of the
Spheres.

Envy

Oh! envy thou wert, ere the world began,
In realms eternal, ere God formed man,
And high up in Heaven thou first drew thy breath;
Thou brought Lucifer low and to all of us death.
There are Cherubim, Seraphim, kneeling around,
At the foot of the throne their hosannas resound;
Golden censers are swinging, the incense ascends;
There is one renders homage who only pretends.
The brightest is Heaven, but never again,
His splendour has vanished, 'tis marred by the stain
Of that sin – Oh! such punishment dire;
High treason demands it – an endless fire.
We read – but with horror, of Datham and Core,
That murmured 'gainst Moses, who meekly bore
With their jibes and their taunts, and that envy so fell,
Earth opened its jaws, they were cast down to Hell.
But an archangel sinning, where angels kneel prone,
Where hosannas were ringing to God on His Throne;
Surely Core and Datham it casts in the shade,
See the havoc on earth that foul envy has made.
And is making, and will, whilst the earth rounds the
sun,
In its annual circle, forever will run.
That angel that shone as resplendent and bright,
Ere envy possessed him, now dark as night,
Or the dungeon consigned to – oh! hard to conceive,
In the guise of a serpent, approached mother Eve.
Oh! lovely Eve, like the star of the morn,
Emanating from Godhead, who did her adorn,
With every virtue by Heaven possessed,
The crowning one, innocence, gift of the blessed.

Betrayed by that serpent now sorrow and death
Is the portion awarded us here on earth;
Like the beast of the forest when hunger's appeased,
That gloats o'er his victims, and kills but to please.
He, his malice and envy instilled into Cain,
And there at God's alter that brother was slain;
And down through the ages he's handing it still,
Just think of the armies, the blood that they spill.
It's the envy of nations puts man against man,
For who'll be the strongest, deny it who can;
Till the earth drinks the blood of the bravest and best,
Oh! that vice of the serpent, let mankind detest.

Fireside Thoughts

When winter winds and biting frosts together do
conspire,
Well aided by the driving snow, to keep me by the fire;
I look and see the leafless tree, its lovely mantle shed,
The naked fields save for the snow, all nature's
beauties fled.
The burns are racing in alarm, as if to reach the sea,
The flying clouds portend a storm, old Sol we do not
see;
He's hid behind those murky clouds, the days are dark
and drear,
All nature seems in mourning in the winter of the
year.
And age has on the mourning, for the youth that's
passed away,
The ghosts of former years seem passing in array;
We cannot bring them back again, they are like a
passing dream,
But memory still recalls them, and we cannot drop the
scene.
And hope still buoys us onward, though maybe past
the span,
We aim to reach the century, Oh! the vanity of man.
Though poverty may scare us, of death we stand in
awe,
We fear to cross the bourne*, although God's Heavenly
Law.
Has earth so many charms for the poor and oppressed,
When she clasps us in her arms and hugs us to her
breast?

We will stand on equal footing with the mighty and
the great,
When we render up our stewardship before the
judgement seat.
The merchant seeks for gain, and the warrior seeks for
fame,
One pondering o'er his ledger and the other midst the
slain,
Both treading different highways to reach the sought
for goal,
Engrossed in their surroundings, never thinking of the
soul.
They are both seeking for the bubble, and will find if
they can,
They'd pledge their souls to find it, spare not their
fellow man;
As if their roots eternal were, planted in the soil,
But death comes unexpected, where's the fruits of all
their toil?
Now they are gone before their Maker, to appear
before the bar,
To render up their stewardship, but no panoply** of
war
Adorns the mighty warrior, he is just as at his birth;
No insignia of honour, they are left behind on earth.
Like the shell he left behind him, to return into dust;
Such things have no inheritance with the wicked or
the just;
Now the merchant's cited forward, but his ledger's left
behind;
But there are dark transactions now recurring in his
mind,

He seems to fear the verdict, for he knows it will be
just,
Let a Higher Power judge him, in Right, let us put
trust.

* A boundary – life ** Full suit of armour

Gethsemane

We describe ourselves as Christians, or followers of
Him,
Who gave His life on Calvary, to expiate the sin
Of disobedience, when the serpent by his cunning did
betray
Our parents in the garden, caused them to disobey.
The commandment of the Father that told them to
abstain
From eating the forbidden fruit, or do it under pain
Of death to them, and banishment from Eden in
disgrace,
A heritage they handed down to all the human race.
But to foil the wiles of Satan, the Heavenly Father
gave
The Son, a God incarnate, and sent Him down to save;
By His death upon Mount Calvary, His children from
the ban,
Through the cunning of the serpent, pronounced on
fallen man.
We are all the heirs of Adam to whom He gave
command
To propagate his species and populate the land;
He disobeyed his Master, he ate forbidden fruit,
We follow his example, that plant had taken root.
We are born into the world, we live from day to day,
We go about our duties, spare no thoughts for Calvary;
Christ's agony in Gethsemane recurs not to our mind,
Forgetful of His sufferings for the sins of all mankind.
That hour in the garden when His soul was overcome,
As He thought of all the evil in the world would be
done;

He beheld, with grief and sorrow, the sins of ages past,
He gazed into the future, He saw 'twas going to last.
He saw His chosen people, among whom as God he
came,
Reject His sacred council, blaspheme His holy name;
He saw His own disciple, with a kiss his God betray
For the thirty pieces of silver his Master gave away.
He heard His chosen people, cry out with fiendish hate
For the blood of their Redeemer, no wonder bloody
sweat
From every pore issued, as He knelt in sacred prayer,
In the garden of Gethsemane by all forsaken there-
As he cried out to the Father, in suppliant humble
tone,
To "let that chalice pass from Me, but not My will be
done";
In an instant all those torments passed before Him, in
His mind,
He was overcome with sorrow for the evils of mankind.
Mocked by a Jewish rabble, scourged, behold that
sacred brow
Pierced with a crown of thorns, on a cross extended
now;
And all to save us sinners, we are very dearly bought,
That sacrifice on Calvary should give us food for
thought.

The Rainbow

Oh! Father, such a lovely sight, the rainbow in the sky,
And so many lovely colours, please father, tell me why
We see the rainbow in the clouds, or what has placed it
there,

Or why we never see it when the weathers dry and
fair.

Well Charles now you've asked me, I will do my best to
try

And tell you the reason of the rainbow in the sky.

So Charles pay attention, if you want me to explain
The meaning of the rainbow, that you'll always know
again.

When God greeted Adam, father of the human race,
He gave to him a partner, and in a lovely place
That baffles all description, he placed that happy pair,
To propagate the human race, and for the garden care.

A fruit tree in the garden, their obedience for to test,
He told them to abstain from, but eat of all the rest,
But Satan filled with envy caused them to disobey,
They disobeyed their Master, were from Eden drove
away.

Their progeny were sinful, they overran the law,
So sinful, God repented that e'er he formed man.

And he said "I will destroy the earth, and everything
therein

But Noah and his family that walkest not in sin."

Gave instructions unto Noah, "Make an Ark of Gopher
wood,

To save you and your family when'er I send a flood;
For everything upon the earth that walk, or creep or
fly,
Save those who're with you in the ark, all living things
must die."

The ark was made, the waters came, and Noah free
from sin,
With two of every species to the ark went in;
The flood came down, the waters rose above the
mountain tops;
For forty days continued before that it did stop.
And Noah and his family for a year did remain
Within the ark awaiting for the ground to dry again.

Then God gave him instructions to come out of the ark,
And he and all his family from it did disembark.
A sacrificial thanksgiving he offered up to God,
That preserved him and his family from that avenging
rod.

Then God gave him a promise that on earth He never
more
Would send a flood of waters to destroy it as before.

As a token of fulfilment, whene'er he'd look on high,
He'd see when doubt existed, a rainbow in the sky.
So Charles, that's the reason that you see the lovely
bow;
There are many things omitted into which I did not go,
But should your teacher ask you, or anyone again,
The meaning of the rainbow, you'll be able to explain.

The Wanderer

It is nearing Christmas Day, when all the world is gay,
Where everyone seems happy; there is joy in every
home;

But for me all joys are fled; I've nowhere to lay my
head;

No pity for the Wanderer, I journey on alone.

Yes, I journey on alone, without a friend or home,
No compassion for the wanderer, no sympathetic gaze,
From mankind isolated, oh! I feel as harshly treated.
Still I'm one of Gods creation; we're uncertain of his
ways.

And I'm lonely and I'm poor and the hardship I
endure,

On my journey through the desert, 'ere I reach the
Promised Land,

May be the refining fire, to prepare me for a higher
And holier habitation that upon this earthly land.

There was One who went before, who was humble,
who was poor,

No riches graced His equipage, His ways were a
wondrous kind.

Though Lord of all creation did exist in lowly station.

He healed the sick, cast devils out, gave sight unto the
blind.

In that far off eastern inn, could no room be found for
Him,

But in a lowly stable was the world's Saviour born.

There, between the ox and ass, this Nativity did pass;
No earthly joy bells ringing on that holy Christmas
morn,

Not so the Heavenly choir, with the angels, way up
higher,
There was joy and exultation, they did hallelujahs
sing;
The shepherds on the plain, heard with joy that
Heavenly strain,
Christ's angels, singing praises to their new-born
King.
With a star to guide them right, went those shepherds
with delight
To Bethlehem of Juda' where was Christ the Saviour
born.
Where, in a manger laid and in swaddling clothes
arrayed
They adored that infant Saviour, on that holy
Christmas morn;
He chose that lowly station, although Lord of all
Creation
Came down among His creatures to redeem a world
from sin.
Then reflect upon the poor, and the hardship they
endure
What you do unto the least of them, you do unto Him.

The Prodigal Boy. Versified
(Luke XV, eleventh and following verses)

From under his father's roof he's gone, in it he found
no joy,
He thinks beneath it he stopped too long, the foolish
prodigal boy;
He craved his portion, such a foolish notion, at home
he would not stay;
Now he's left it and to a distant land the prodigal's
gone away.
And the fathers sad for a foolish lad, he thinks he'll see
no more,
He's gone astray from the narrow way, where many
have gone before;
His substance he wastes, not the poison tastes, for yet
it is tasting sweet;
With women and wine, such a glorious time, but the
end he has yet to meet.
And each day that passes, with the wine and lasses,
sees the money pass also;
To the very last, now the die is cast, and the wine and
the lasses go;
And the money's gone, and the hunger's on, and a
famine o'er the land.
Neither wine nor bread, and they all have fled that
wasted his money, and
He's forced to seek, with a countenance meek, for
manual work to do;
Not now drinking wine, but feeding swine is his work,
he begins to rue.
Not now so jolly, he would fill his belly with the husks
that the swine do eat,

But in vain he did crave, for no man gave, though he'd
think the husks a treat.
Now feeding swine in a distant clime far away from his
father's home,
And the famine on, and the company gone, a stranger
there alone;
With his substance wasted, now the poison's tasted, he
has swallowed a bitter pill;
But he now intends to make amends for opposing his
father's will;
And he says in his heart, oh! why did I depart from my
dear father's home,
Whose servants there dine on best of fare, whilst here
I hunger alone;
I will rise and return, no more I'll moan, perhaps he
will take me in
As a hired servant, though I don't deserve it, to tend
among my kin.
To my father I'll say (and for mercy pray) oh! forgive
your unworthy son,
Though 'gainst Heaven I've sinned, do take me in, I
have that race to run;
And the father smiled, when he met his child, and fell
on his neck and wept,
Such a dreary past since I saw you last, I've a lonely
vigil kept.
Now we'll rejoice and laugh, kill the fatted calf for the
son I thought was dead;
With a robe of the best my son invest, put a ring on his
hand he said;
Let the music abound, he was lost and is found, that
son I long have mourned,

There is dancing and joy for the prodigal boy, to his
father again returned.
There's a parable here, to all of us clear, unless we're
dark as night;
How often we stray from the narrow way that leads us
to the Father of Light;
And oh! with that joy, like the prodigal boy, will the
Father compassion extend,
To His children who stray from the narrow way if with
sorrow they can make amends.

The Battle of Life

Oh! such a weary road, with such a heavy load
Of care upon our shoulders do we travel day by day;
Badly armed for the strife in the battlefield of life,
Are many of life's soldiers as they march upon their
way.

And that warfare's never o'er, they keep marching ever
more,
Giving battle on their journey, till they exhausted fall;
What multitudes have passed on that journey to their
last,
Realm of grief or glory that beyond await us all.

And we march along in doubt, not on earth will we find
out,
Though e'er so swift our race may be, if we have
gained the prize;
In that warfare let us fight, and with courage for the
right,
We will triumph in the battle gain, that home beyond
the skies.

When that battle's fought and past, and we reach the
goal at last,
With the land of immortality, so plain before our eyes;
And have found a rest from strife in the battlefield of
life,
Are we victors over Satan, have we gained the sought
for prize?

Or did Satan us pursue with the envy which he knew,
And used in early ages our parents to betray;
Pioneers of our race in lovely Eden placed,
His cunning wrought their downfall, caused them to
disobey.

Then gird your armour on, as in life you march along,
There's an enemy in hiding to prevent you from the
right;
With that heavy weary load, still keep on the narrow
road,
You will reach the goal a victor, you will triumph in
the fight.

No Cross, No Crown

Life's a weary road to travel, though we never go
astray,
We keep marching onward ever to the goal from day to
day;
Not resting on our journey, from the sunshine or the
rain,
We are always moving forward, no turning back again.

And our path is strewn with thorns as we wander on
the road,
And we feel so crushed and weary beneath life's heavy
load;
And it's always on our shoulders we can never lay it
down,
But like soldiers let us bear it, no cross, no crown.

When clouds are hovering o'er us and we feel bowed
down with care,
When the load upon our shoulders seems beyond our
strength to bear;
And the clouds are growing darker and fortune seems
to frown,
When like soldiers let us bear it, no cross, no crown.

We start gaily on our journey, our sun is shining
bright,
And our path is strewn with roses; then how far away
that night
That we think will never darken, our sun will ne'er go
down,

We think we'll never bear our cross before we wear the crown.

But we're plodding onward and then roses all are gone,
And the thorns up are springing as in life we journey on;

And disappointment, worry, maybe on our brows a frown,

But like soldiers let us bear it, no cross, no crown.

And we still keep marching onward, and now the goal is near,

Some voices long departed seem to whisper in our ear;
And they tell us through the ether that before our sun goes down

To bear our cross with patience if we want to wear the crown.

There was One who went before us, who for us did bear his cross,

And on it yielded up His Life to save our souls from loss;

Ever patient on His journey, never on His brow a frown,

With our burden on His shoulders that we might wear the crown.

Then let us never falter as we journey on our way,
To that goal beyond the bourne we are nearing day by day;

Let us bear our cross with patience and when our sun goes down

That Donor of Salvation will place on us the crown.

We All Must Die

Wonder not that all must die,
Envy not great length of days;
We act the part that God designed,
If we Him honour, give Him praise.
Long days bring frailties in their train,
Lament not for the young's demise;
A better change will come again,
Long happy time beyond the skies.
Let's not put trust in earthly dross;
Death spurs it loathing, seek the sun,
Instead, amazed, enraptured with,
Elysian joys, love, honour and obey, - it's won.

The Wind

We have eyes to see, but cannot see
The wind we so plainly hear,
As it rushes and roars through the noble trees,
Till they seem to bend with fear.
That unseen something that man can't still,
That he feels and hears; can't see;
That humbled itself to its Master's will
On the waters of Galilee.
When the waves ran high, and the craft so frail
That carried the Lord of all,
Did seem to founder beneath the gale,
His disciples on him did call;
"We perish oh Lord! arise and save,
The waters our craft do fill;"
He arose and rebuked the wind and the waves;
They obeyed Him and all were still
We can see the rain as it falls to earth,
We can see the hail and snow,
We can see the ruins the wind has left;
Though unseen, we can hear it blow.
But its uses are many, although unseen
By us mortals here below;
It drove the ship and it drove the mill,
In the days of the long ago.
With gentle gales it filled the sails,
When Columbus, them unfurled,
And drove him on, though the way was long,
Till he found the Western world.
We can sit at our ease and listen in,
As the winds to us convey
The music and songs that we love to hear,

From places far away.
But the greatest use of the noble wind,
Is supplying the breath unto all mankind,
Unto bird and beast, unto plant and flower,
It gives life to all by its magic power.
Without the wind such a dreary waste,
The world would be neither man nor beast;
Then unto the Donor a benison* make,
That stilled the wind on that far-off lake.

(*a blessing or a benediction)

Philosophy

Philosophers of birds and beasts, of all things old and new,
Of plants and flowers, and healing showers, and of this world we view,
My thanks I'd raise in paeans of praise were I but one of you.
I cannot grasp, with full import, like those of mighty minds,
The greatness of His works below, His care of all mankind,
His care for birds and beasts and flowers, the grasses of the plain –
He sends the healing balm for all, the sunshine and the rain.
We see all nature in repose, we see the frosts, the winter snows,
And farther southward still he goes that gives us heat and light.
The clouds of earth old Sol assail, and fogs and mists almost prevail to blot him from our sight.
But He who rules that orb of day has stopped him on his southward way, we know we need not fear,
He's coming back to us again, to dress the valley, hill and plain, with plenty and good cheer.
And where, before the snow we've seen we'll see the landscape dressed with green,
We'll feel his warm reviving beams, and corn and wheat appear.
And now no landscape bare we'll see, on every flower and plant and tree a robe of green and white.

We see the little plants upspring; we list the little
songsters sing,
The tiny lark uprears on wing, until he's out of sight,
As if to Heaven's gate he'd wing his way, to thank his
Heavenly King for gifts, to earth below.
Oh man! I fear thou art behind, that mammon
occupies thy mind,
Thou can'st not see as if thou'rt blind, the gifts He does
bestow,
Who gives the increase on the plain, the early and the
latter rain to make the crops to grow.
From age to age He guides the sphere, His watchful
eye is on us here,
We gaze aloft with awe and fear to view the myriad
world,
Whene'er the night has chased the day-
One Pilot guides them on their way, as through their
orbits hurled.
Let us bend our knees in silent praise to thank Him for
His wondrous ways.

“Christmas Day.” (1932)

Let us join in the refrain,
Heard by shepherds on the plain,
It is echoing once again,
Both near and far away.
Let us pray for peace and joy,
Over earth without alloy,
No dissension to annoy,
No, this holy Christmas Day.
We may be humble, may be poor,
Maybe hunger at the door,
Beg for patience to endure,
As it was the Master's lot.
Though it may be true alas,
Sure between the ox and ass,
Christ's nativity did pass,
Not in mansion or in cot.
There are dear ones far away,
On this holy Christmas Day,
They will pay a short sojourn.
Mental visions of the brain,
Will depict them once again,
Although far beyond the main,
Aye! and those beyond the bourne.
And we'll note their childish ways,
And we'll watch their childish plays,
And we'll list their childish lays,
Ah! no wonder that we mourn.
And old age comes creeping, creeping,
And another year is peeping,
If we're old 'tis useless weeping,
As it comes around the turn.

It may spare another while,
Or our love of life beguile,
We may greet it with a smile,
Although inwardly we mourn.
Those Christmas bells, those Christmas bells,
That peel with joy my bosom swells,
I thank it for the tale it tells,
This holy, holy, Christmas day.
The promise the Creator gave,
That man shall not be Satan's slave;
Now Christ is come on earth to save,
The serpent's crushed to-day.

Reflections. (1933)

The years glide past, maybe the last on earth I will
see,
Until, dear Lord, Thou claim'st the life Thou gavest
unto me;
I pine not for a longer stay, I thank Thee for the years
Thou gavest me to wend my way from out this vale of
tears.
And if the broader way I've trod when morning sun
was bright,
Ere downward from meridian height to herald coming
night,
May those who trod the narrow path my mediators be,
When hence I part to render up my stewardship to
Thee.
The ghosts of all my long past years, before my eyes I
see,
They're marching past in single file, they seem to
beckon me,
They know I'm standing on the verge, how long, dear
Lord, how long,
Thou'lt for me care, my faults forbear, before I join the
throng?
Those milestones seemed so far apart, old age a myth
did seem,
As on my way from day to day, life seemed to me a
dream;
Now looking back upon that past, how quickly time
has fled,
Those years that seemed so far apart have all like
phantoms sped.

And now I call the phantoms back, obedient to my
whim,
I analyse them one by one, I find my faults, my sin,
I find where often I have err'd, but who will cast the
stone,
As here I stand upon the verge, unchampion'd alone?
And try to peer into the haze that hides futurity,
Invested in this mortal coil, a thing that cannot be;
Resigned to wait Thy will, oh Lord, upon the verge I
stand,
Until Thou deign'st to call me hence, unto that
Promised Land.

Christmas Day. (1934)

Old Father Time again brings round another
Christmas morn,
Where in a manger far away the King of Kings was
born;
He chose not wealth, no royal bed that Infant Head to
rest,
But there between the ox and ass, against His
mother's breast.
The chosen of the Mighty One, to act the part
designed,
Whose seed should crush the serpent's head, salvation
bring mankind;
In mental gaze behold Him there, in swaddling clothes
arrayed,
Incarnate Word, the King of Kings within a manger
laid.
No earthly joy-bells on that morn to ring His advent
in,
Who came, a willing victim, to free the world from sin;
But "peace on earth, good-will to men," that heavenly
refrain,
Did rouse the humble shepherds who were herding on
the plain.
A star again is rising that will be to us a guide,
As to the Wise men of the East that holy Christmas
tide;
We can see it in perspective, it will point us to the way
That will lead to the Redeemer, this holy Christmas
Day.
Are you blessed with earthly substance, with all that
money brings?

Then gaze into the manger and behold the King of
Kings,
And there you'll see humility, to teach you humble be,
That to free from Satan's bondage gave His life upon a
tree.
If devoid of worldly comfort, if the joys of life have fled,
Into that stable enter, and behold that manger bed;
Gaze on that humble pallet, and your King and
Saviour see,
Take your woes upon His shoulders that from Satan
you'd be free.
May the infant Saviour teach us, in that manger far
away,
To ape His great humility this coming Christmas Day;
Not all who wake this morning with this world's goods
are blessed,
Then extend a hand of succour to the poor and the
distressed.

Life And Death

Wanted – A Contented Man

Some musty old books I have read in my time,
That were hidden in nooks, in a cupboard of mine;
But I would like to get more and read them in peace,
For there's something I'm seeking I never could trace.
I have read through these books and of many
enquired,
And I'm searching for more before I get tired,
And if I'm successful, I will think it well spent
If a man I can find, who is always content.

I'll begin with the farmer, his work's never done,
He is busy from daylight till set of the sun;
He is ploughing and sowing, and always kept going,
And I can assure you his work isn't fun.
He is watching the weather and the change of the
moon,
Or will it keep dry or will rain come on soon;
And his boots aren't polished, nor walking on flags,
And a good many of us are clad in old-rags,
And the rent and taxes still bother his mind,
Let him borrow or beg it, he'll have it to find;
And the wages and stamps are far worse than the rent,
So he's always in trouble – he's never content.

The next are the rich who have plenty of "stuff,"
But the more they get, they have never enough;
And they're not like the poor, their money's not trash,
For if I might say it, their god is their cash.
The stuff that they sell you they say it's so nice,
And the quality good, and they keep up the price;

And they are pinching and scraping, and casting
accounts,
With their eyes on the alert to see the amounts,
And if the poor farmers have not got the rent
They will have to pay them and they aren't content;
And they're hoarding it by in a safe or the banks,
And those who came after will give them small thanks.

I will make a big bound now, and jump to the plain,
Where the armies are fighting and thousands are
slain;
The Commander in Chief's there but not at the front
Like Wellington – Bonny – that still bore the brunt.
He's not in the van but away far behind,
Not wielding a sword but employing his mind,
He's using the phone and he's all in a sweat
Sending out his dispatches for fear he'd be beat.
And he's planning and scheming, on victory bent,
But will any one tell me that he is content?
Well I know he isn't although he is brave,
This is getting too long – sure all leads to the grave.

Death like a Thief in the Night

There is grief again the Reaper came fast flying on the wing,
Another victim claimed last night. Oh! Cruel, cruel thing!

It came so unexpected in the very prime of life;
He's gone, left all behind him, his riches and his wife.

Death sent him no warning notice, as we've sometimes known him do,
Oh no! he took no chances, determined not to rue;
The man had wealth at his command to carry on the fight,
But Death stepped in without false keys and says
"You'll come this night."

He felt secure for every door was bolted tight;
The safe was there but tamper proof, for it he felt no fright.
Although inside a thousand pounds had lain there for years;
He opened it and looked again and oh! such lovely dears,
The very jingle of the gold was music to his ears.

It seemed to fascinate him; he could scarcely look away
As serpents do, in torrid lands when watching for their prey;
But at last he closed and locked it, with a well contented smile
Not thinking that a burglar was creeping in the while.

He sat down beside the safe, and on the couch reclined,
With many money making schemes revolving in his
mind;
And as the gold seemed pouring in he felt a twinge of
pain,
It's but this stuffy atmosphere reacting on the brain.

“I'll go to bed and lie awhile, I fear I cannot rest,
I know there's not enough of gold within that iron
chest;
But sure it's only summer, I'll have more afore the
snow,
I have many ways of getting in that innocents don't
know.”

He went to bed, but not to sleep he tossed and tumbled
there;
He thought he heard a something creep, or coming
through the air;
The doors were bolt, the lights were out, the house was
very still;
But something seemed to fill the room that brought
with it a chill.

There came a whisper in his ear, he felt like getting
weak;
It said “I am a stranger here my message I must
break;
I'm Death, I must my duty do, I do want your pelt,
For worldly goods I do not care, I'm coming for
yourself.

The night's far run, prepare to come before the break
of day;
Make no excuse, it is no use, you have half an hour to
stay"
Away from all, wife, gold and lands, Oh! what a cruel
thing,
"Oh grave, where is thy victory, oh death! where is thy
sting?"

Our Journey O'er Life's Ocean

I am feeling old and done, and the race of life near
run,-
Just a unit on the sphere that revolves around the sun,
But I once was young as you, and I'm sure as
lightsome too,
Now I see the end in view, and the thread of life near
spun.

We stand before the mast, and the years go quickly
past,
For we're sailors on Life's Ocean, and the ship moves
swiftly on;
With a sure and certain motion she is gliding through
the ocean,
And drawing near that Haven that we never think
upon.

On that journey when we start, we are all so full of
heart,
Not a curl on the ocean, not a cloud up in the sky;
We keep chatting gaily on, as the vessel moves along,
And admiring the scenery, but we never heave a sigh.

Without a thought or care, and our spirits light as air,
And all around us smiling – their faces happy seem;
We've forgot our youthful errors, and the future holds
no terrors,
Though the ship keeps moving onward, life seems a
pleasant dream.

But the journey now half through, there is coming into
view,
A ripple on the ocean; the sky is overcast,
The crew have ceased their song, but the vessel glides
along,-
Her speed is not abated, she is heedless of the blast.

Now the wind begins to moan, and the billow-crests
are foam;
The ship is tossing furiously, but still keeps up the
pace;
The faces all are sad, they were once so bright and
glad,
All speaking of the happy days when starting on the
race.

Oh! she goes 'gainst tide and wind, and never lags
behind,
But plunges steadily onward, as she did from day to
day,
To a land there is no knowing, on the chart it is not
showing-
We are hoping for a better land, but fain would court
delay.

There, where friends were good and kind, we have left
them far behind,
We'd like to send them letters, but I fear there's no
return,
From the land we're going to, where the skies are
always blue;
I can see the coastline showing, but comrades do not
mourn!

Now something seems to rise like a mist before our
eyes,
As we gaze into the distance that hides it from our
view;
And the journey's almost o'er, for the ship is near the
shore,
I can hear the distant voices bidding earthly scenes
adieu.

On The Vanity of Man

When I wander through God's Acre, which thing I
seldom do,
And see narrow houses lie so plain before my view,
And the tenants, all so silent, and the place so loan
and drear,
I think them very hard indeed that would not shed a
tear.

They're gathered all together there, the poor man and
the rich.
Just take away the monuments and can you tell me
which
Were favoured in this world with the things that do
delight
From those who never knew a joy, whose days were
always night?

Perhaps they're lying side by side, the rich man, and
the poor
That craved the crumbs from Dives and was turned
from his door.
They're now across the border, and both are turned to
clay,
And worms are crawling through them until the
Judgment Day.

The heroes of past ages have faded into gloom,
And the great men of the present will follow very soon.

They have chased an empty bubble, and have deluged
red the plain
With the blood of every nation for that phantom –
earthly fame.

There's the man that gained his riches by means that
were not just;
Now what does it avail him? He's returned to the dust.
And he that sought for lucre by ways that were not
fair,
And the man that wronged his neighbour – they both
are lying there.

And the soldier from the battle that escaped the battle
field;
He has fought his last engagement and to Death he
has to yield.
And the man that wronged the maiden in the summer
of her bloom,
His soul's with guilt o'erladen, and his body 'neath the
tomb.

And the mother – she is yearning for the baby in the
clay;
And the widow's donned the mourning for the husband
gone that way.
For death makes no distinction; he takes no bribes at
all,
For all must cross the border when'er they get the call.

The world is going crazy with aeroplanes and cars.
Now they're making preparations to communicate with
Mars,

Never thinking of the Reaper, or when he'll come, or
how;
I wonder what would happen were it written on their
brow.

Oh! poor deluded mortal, the insects of the day,
An atom of Eternity's your time on earth to stay,
When this earthly journey's over, Eternity is thine;-
Then make some provision, there's yet a little time.

The Twin Sisters Happiness and Sorrow

The world is always moving round with sorrow in its train,

But will anyone find happiness till the world comes round again?

I think it is a phantom word; I speak the thoughts of many;

A shadow, not the substance that few have seen, if any.

But sorrow's very easily found, she is always in our wake,

And let us run, or let us walk, she will us overtake,
And if but for a little time she seems to stop behind,
It's but to strike a harder blow she's making up her mind.

We think we have found happiness, if only for a night;
She very soon evades us, she has fled before daylight,
And sorrow, with long skinny arms, has caught us in her grasp,

Our very hair she whitens, she's the venom of the asp.
Her grasp's a grasp of iron, or hand of hardened steel;
She wears us down with thinking till our very senses reel.

Will no one come to aid us, or hit the jade a clout,
Or where's her phantom sister gone, that people talk about?

Thus none of us find happiness, though all of us, her woo;

She's always fleeing from us and still we her pursue.
Did Hannibal, that scaled the Alps, and brought his armies o'er,

Or did the Kaiser William, whose cannons very roar

Shook Europe like an earthquake, till the rivers all ran
red,
And the world is still in mourning, for the blood those
armies shed?
Or did Great Alexander, that subdued the world o'er,
Then sorrows racked his bosom when he couldn't
conquer more?
Those great men all pursued her till she seemed
within their grasp;
She'd smile and look askance at them, they never
could her grasp.
That mighty warrior, Bonaparte, that made the
nations quake,
He sought her at the cannon's mouth, kept fighting for
her sake,
But on a lovely day in June, when warriors strewed
the plain,
She filled his cup with sorrow, saying "you'll never
fight again."
But I'm told that some have found her, but not the
mighty great,
It is not Kings and Emperors, or men of great estate.
But the very humble peasant, with the door on the
latch,
And windows may be stuffed with rags, and cabin
minus thatch.
She often comes to visit him, and sometimes will she
see
Him sitting on the hearthstone with the pratties on his
knee,
And a little salt and pepper there, ready to his hand,
And she very seldom leaves him; – Oh! he's a lucky
man.

We'll All Be Happy Yet

The tides are always changing, and time's always on
the wing;
We are here today, we're bright and gay, what may
tomorrow bring?
We cannot claim one day of time, we cannot claim one
hour,
When called away we must obey that Great Almighty
power.

That placed us on this earthly ball, and formed us
from clay,
Our comfort when affliction comes, that call we must
obey;
He guides us with a Father's hand when grief and
cares best,
He'll bring us to the Promised Land, we'll all be happy
yet.

We see the strong, the healthy man, just in the prime
of life,
He's called away, he must obey, leave children, home
and wife;
The old and frail are left behind, as if He did forget,
But no, the Promised Land's in view, they'll all be
happy yet.

We see the mother taken from the baby at her breast,
Or the baby from the mother, then with sorrow she's
depressed;

Such grief should not assail her, with strength it
should be met,
Such trouble won't avail her, she'll be happy yet.

Sometime's the husband's taken, sometimes it is the
wife,
We pity the survivor, as they plod along through life;
Bereft of youthful sunshine, when as lovers they first
met,
But more radiant suns will shine again, they will be
happy yet.

I know our troubles multiply, as o'er life's path we go,
But think you, does that justify such great travail of
woe;
Making mountains out of molehills, our sun has not
yet set;
We are only on a journey, we'll be happy yet.

Then let us not despondent be on our journey here
below,
He guides as the Israelites, as o'er life's path we go;
We are wandering in the desert, but He will not us
forget;
He'll bring us to the Promised Land; we'll all be happy
yet.

The Fallen Leaf

“How few of us e’er think of Death,” a saying very true,
But thoughts will turn from gay to grave as objects
meet our view,
Reminding all that pause to think that life is very
brief,
As o’er the way we pass along we see the fallen leaf.

How short a time since gazing around we saw on every
tree,
Arrayed in verdant beauty, those leaves that now we
see,
Trod underfoot, in Nature’s plan to act another part,
This is an object lesson, that all should take to heart.

The icy winds of winter come, the trees stand gaunt
and bare,
And life seems fled, their naked limbs are wrestling
with despair;
A little while, a change ensues from Sol’s reviving
ways,
The buds come forth, the leaves expand, they’re
clothed like other days.

Behold the lordly oak and ash, their leaves lie on the
grass,
We see them dead and faded lie in one confused mass;
Mixed with the thorn and bramble leaves, their lofty
pride lies low,
They’re in decay, they point the way, that all of us
must go.

The parent trees will bud again, and other leaves as
green,
As those now moulding in decay, upon them will be
seen;
But winter will again come round, those leaves will
fade and fall,
And turn into dust again, so is it with us all.

We are leaves upon the tree of Life, we bud, we then
expand;
We act our part in Nature's plan through God's
designing hand;
The autumn comes, our beauty fades, death's stealing
like a thief,
He strikes the blow, away we go, just like the fallen
leaf.

To a Critic

The wintry winds are howling wild, I'm sitting by the fire,
It is not like the long ago, I am not hard to tire;
For youth has long forsaken me, old age has overtaken me,
There's nothing save the scribbling to which I can aspire.

But thoughts keep trooping past me, they're coming fast and slow,
There are some I pay no heed to, and some of them won't go;
Then I lift the pen for play, and to pass the time away,
Don't ask me any questions, and I'll tell you all I know.

Some of these thoughts possess me, they will not keep away,
And most of them depress me, can't help it, well-a-day;
For I do not know the number of the days before that slumber,
I will never muse nor scribble when I'm lying in the clay.

There are critics here and there, of course not everywhere,
Would try to pick a hole in me, I think it isn't fair;
And what's the reason why, that they do not have a try,
And send us something wonderful, or why do they forbear?

To see a lad like me, that knows not A from B,
Supplying the “Mid’s” readers with such poetry;
I suppose they think it’s quare, when they read it o’er
and stare,
To see a verse proceeding from a simpleton like me.

Now dear critic take a hint, and I think there’s
something in’t,
That dress or education a poet will not make;
I’ve neither one or other, about them I don’t bother,
I don’t aspire to honours, of course I am a fake;
But if e’er again I write, I will get you to indite,
And a Shakespeare or a Milton between us we could
make.

A Race with the Years (Written on new years eve)

Old Time's another circle run, I'm listening to the bell,
The old year's dead, senile decay, I hear his dying
knell;
Instead of sorrow, sing with joy, lament not twenty-
seven,
A young one's born in his place, the old one's gone to
Heaven.

We ran together, but he never made a hitch,
Whilst I am very glad to say I toppled in a ditch;
And o'er I went, and there I lay, he never looked
behind,
But came a winner to the post, careering like the wind.

Now that he's gone I'll shed no tear, a young one's in
his place,
I'll lay a flower on his bier, and start another race;
The young one's found his legs at once, away he's gone
again,
I'll let him lick me if he likes, I'll neither cry nor
scream.

Time's wheels are lubricated well, his tyres never
burst,
He'll drive you anywhere you wish, the wicked way or
just;
But keep your wits about you, or he'll play a nasty
trick,
And when the race is over, he might land you with Old
Nick.

Don't think that race will ever last, you may be hale
and strong,
But life's a riddle ne'er was read, it may be short or
long;
You may be gliding pleasantly, and laughing till you're
hoarse,
He'll press a spring, and out you'll drop, and he'll go on
his course.

And it be a king or beggar, whene'er he takes the
whim,
It matters not, away you go, no parleying with him;
Though old, in driving he excels, but should his car e'er
"stap"
Oh! such a jolt he'd give us all, he'd whisk us of the
map.

Although 'tis said that long ago, away in foreign lands,
He braked* his car and stopped a wee, for holding up
of hands;
I suppose to watch the bloody work, and see the dart
and lance,
But many a tussle's fought since then, and he never
cast a glance.

That's the only time in history he was ever known to
wait,
So just take him by the forelock, when your hurry's
very great;
And be sure and go the narrow way, we're told it is the
best,
The broad one leads to Old Nick, the other to the blest.

The Western Seaboard Tragedy

A wail of sorrow and despair across the land has sped;
Our husband, sons, and father now are numbered with
the dead;

Along the western seaboard now we hear that
mournful wail,

It rends our hearts to listen to that Caoine of the Gael.
An evening calm, and seeming fit, no rumble in the
air,

The aspen leaves not stirring, those fishers did
prepare

To board their tiny fishing boats, their thoughts from
danger free,

And ply their trade unmindful of the perils of the sea.

To lure them forth a sea like glass, though sky was
overcast,

Away they went not dreaming of that fatal pent-up
blast;

Confined as if in mammoth tanks to wait that fatal
hour,

Let free upon a glassy sea when mad with rage and
power.

A fatal calm pervades the scene, a calm before the
storm;

Their nets are cast, the work proceeds, and nothing to
alarm;

The sea is calm, the night is fine, the air is thick and
still,

To lull to false security, and on them work its will.

Their nets are in the water now, with haste they ply
the oar,

A swell arises on the sea, they hear a distant roar;

The noise proceeds from far at sea, they are filled with
awe and wonder,
They ask themselves, what can it be, it sounds like
distant thunder.
Inured to toil and hardship, those fishers of the west,
That from a boundless ocean did a scant subsistence
wrest;
Undaunted by its perils, its treacherous rock and tide,
A thrill of fear pervades them now, a fear they cannot
hide.
With haste they haul their nets aboard, they work
with might and main,
Oh! fatal haste, to haul those nets they'll never cast
again;
Confirmed their fears, no useless tears or prayers will
now avail,
T'is courage now to meet their fate, those children of
the Gael.
Those pent-up furies are let loose, oh! such a mighty
roar!
The beacon lights to guide them back are blazing on
the shore;
T'is all in vain, for ne'er again, will mother, child or
wife
Hold converse with those loved ones, they are
struggling now for life.
Their little craft, like cockle shells, are tossed from
wave to wave.
Some shattered on the jagged rocks, all find a watery
grave.
Oh! Such a cry of anguish now arises on the shore,
From old and young, from wife and maid, was never
heard before.

Upon that western seaboard, it's like the day of doom,
A shroud of darkness o'er the land, a fatal pal of gloom;
They watch all night, with crests of white those billows
come to land,
All hope has fled, but for their dead they wander on
the strand.
Their last long vigil now they keep for never, never
more,
They'll watch again that western main to see them
come ashore;
A broken spar or broken mast comes floating with the
tide,
A husband, or a father, or some loved one by its side.
Again a wail of anguish, as they see it come to land,
Their cries resound, they gather round, t'is cast upon
the sand;
And all that night they in affright, their mournful vigil
keep,
And as the waves cast up their dead, oh! how they wail
and weep.
The wind has died, receding tide, they search along the
shore;
Some loved one's cold in death they find, that often
times before,
In loving fond embrace were clasped, a father,
husband, son;
But never more, that pleasures o'er, their race on
earth is run.

A Poetical Treatise on “No”

There's a word of two letters, so short and so plain
That the simplest its meaning can't doubt;
The teacher at school doesn't need to explain,
For the child on the knee finds it out.
On your journey though life, as you amble along,
And troubles beset on that path as you go,
Beware of the tempter; he'll tell you do wrong,
But that word will confound him, just answer him
“No.”

In the morning of life, when at work or at school,
When temptation would lure you away
From your work or your lesson, still make it a rule,
From the task that is set you don't stray.
When your task is complete your heart will be light,
No pangs of remorse will you know;
Your conscience is clear, your task is done right,
You have scorned the tempter with “No.”
When the school hour comes from it don't stop away,
And your lessons don't try to evade;
Work hard and succeed and your teacher obey,
See the great men that learning has made.
When you fail, “try again;” don't let failure creep in;
'Tis a maxim that all of us know;
Then put it in practice, in the end you will win.
You will chase away failure with “No.”
In the evening of life, when we hobble along,
And see the mistakes we have made.
'Tis useless to murmur: we can't right the wrong;
Better totter along undismayed.

But the danger is in front of those coming behind,
Whose sun in their life is still low;
I am sounding the tocsin* to put them in mind,
(* alarm bell)
When temptation assails them – say “No”.

Parting and Farewell

“Farewell,” what grief that word conveys that we so often hear!

You ask me have I heard it oft, I’ve shed the farewell tear,

I have seen the young and strong depart far from the native shore,

I’ve heard that word from stricken hearts I’ll see or hear no more.

We stand beside the dying bed where life is ebbing fast,

Some loving friend is lying there, each breath appears the last;

The farewell tears are in our eyes, they’re gazing into space,

They see us not, we hear their sighs, they’ve run their earthly race.

How sad to hear that word “Farewell” from those we love as they depart!

It sounds to us their dying knell, it grieves us to the heart;

That cherished voice no more to hear, whilst here on earth we dwell,

We’ll meet again, no parting tear, no more that word “Farewell.”

Now death is tapping at the door, all earthly visions fade,

The prospects that in life before and plans so often laid
Are vanished like a passing cloud, or night succeeding day,

The last hours come, the sable shroud, the narrow house of clay.

That soul has fled, at grief we've mocked, today we
sigh and weep;
Death's present here, our hearts are shocked, we see
that last long sleep
Of a loving heart, so good and kind, the friends are
gathered there.
Those projects now a blast of wind, we list to the burial
prayer,
Now that clay cold corpse in the silent dust while time
doth last will lie;
To its original state return, it must, 'tis an order from
on High,
But the spirit that's fled from the silent dead let us
hope with God does dwell.
That we'll meet it there be our earnest prayer, no more
to hear "Farewell,"
The death bed scene, we have lately seen, do e'er we
ponder o'er,
When we cross to that bourne there's no return, where
so many have gone before;
Perhaps to-day it may come our way, have we earned
the right to dwell
In that blessed land, with that heavenly band, where
no more we'll hear "Farewell?"

“Granny on a Scooter”

I’ve read “Granny on a Scooter”, perused it o’er and o’er, And “Hygiene” has told us things I never knew before; I never knew that granny had a scooter till I read

Of it in the Mid-Ulster, it has nearly turned my head. And he tells a great deal more than that – my head is feeling flighty;

We hear so little news away down here in “Blighty.” Has granny lost her senses, have the fashions turned her brain?

Sure Hygiene’s after telling us she’s got an aeroplane. I suppose she’s bobbed and shingled now, has phillibeg and hose;

She’s competing with the youngsters, has no specs upon her nose.

With all her puff and powders she thinks herself a belle,

She means to feign the maiden now, she thinks we cannot tell

‘Tween a granny and a maiden, but she’s very far astray,

For here am I, a granda, I could tell it any day.

Now that granny has an aeroplane I wonder where she’d land;

If she flies with me to Paris I’ll get in a monkey gland,

I will go to Dr. Voronoff (his patients feel no pain),

He’ll do the trick, oh! such delight, be young once more again.

Companion meet* for “Grannie” then I’ll think myself her equal; (*suitable)

We’ll get into conversation, and you cannot tell the sequel.

I will not call her “Grannie,” for I know she tries to
screen it,
I’ll guess her age at twenty-five, although I do not
mean it.
Think of granny and granda both sitting side by side,
And flying in an aeroplane; she might become a bride.
And if such a thing should happen it will surely take
the cake,
We will fly to church and back again a lovely wedding
make,
And in the plane we’ll fly again to spend the
honeymoon,
For it was in the aeroplane we first began to spoon.
Now the wedding’s over, and that I do not care,
I’ll tell to you in words a few how I cajoled the fair,
We started off together, sitting in the aeroplane,
The clouds above and earth below, it soon began to
rain.
She didn’t make a nose dive, just went the other way,
And high above the clouds we went, oh! such a lovely
day,
The sun shone out so lovely, the rain was all below;
And Granny’s spirit buoyant rose, well, she did let her
go.
We began to talk of marriage, and I asked her if she’d
care
To change her life from single, when, with a knowing
stare,
Her profile slightly turned to me, she asked the reason
why,
She wouldn’t be like others, says, “I’ll surely have a
try.”

Well that was the beginning, and I'll tell you nothing
more,
But the bargain soon was finished and the courtship
soon was o'er.

Why do the flowers fade, Mamma?

“Why do the flowers fade, Mamma?” the little maiden said,
“I’ve watched them bloom so lovely, and now I see them fade;
I’ve tended to and watered them; is there no other way
By which we can preserve them, and keep them from decay?”
“And mother I’ll be lonely when the lovely flowers die,
We’ll not gaze upon the rose bush with pleasure you and I,
As oftentimes we did before, when in the month of June,
We sometime plucked some beauties to inhale their sweet perfume.”
“I see some roses on their stalks, some lying on the ground,
And every breeze that shakes them, their leaves are scattered round;
Such lovely flowers dying, I am watching them with pain;
Please mother, can you tell me, will they come to life again?”
“My darling child you ask me why the roses fade away,
Know that everything upon this earth is subject to decay;
You are a little rosebud now you’ll soon be in your bloom,
To delight and fascinate us, as the roses did in June.”
“But darling little rosebud that time will pass away,
And like roses in the garden your beauty will decay;

And when it's gone away forever, not the sunshine or
the rain
Can restore to you your beauty, till you bloom in
Heaven again.”
“And mother where is Heaven? I sometimes heard you
tell,
Since little brother went away in Heaven he does
dwell;
Oh! I loved my brother dearly, we used to sport and
play,
Oh! when will he come back, Mamma, what made him
go away?”
“My darling those are questions that you cannot
understand,
Your brother's gone away from us into a better land;
Where the flowers are always blooming, where the
roses never die,
Sin not, and you'll inherit that happy land on high.”
“Where you'll bloom among the roses and will
hallelujahs sing,
In concert with the angels before your Heavenly King;
Where your little brother awaits you for evermore to
stay,
And the flowers are always blooming and will never
fade away.”

Lines on a Shakespearean Quotation

'Who steals my purse steals trash, 'tis something
nothing;
'Twas mine, 'tis his, and maybe slave to thousands;
But he who filches from me my good name,
Robs me of that which not enriches him,
And makes me poor indeed.

SHAKESPEARE

There's the thief that steals our cash that Shakespeare
calls the trash;
'Tis trash that all are seeking no matter what their
station;
And the thief that steals the name, that we laboured
years to gain,
Or in other words the thief that steals away our
reputation.
When're we lose our purse, we think nothing could be
worse,
We feel so very flurried, we are not in jubilation;
But that purse was stole for gain, not to defile our
name.
Unlike the thief with envy filled, just read above
quotation
From that poet of renown, whose name is handed
down,
And will be through the ages, he lies on banks of Avon
But just his mortal frame, with an immortal name;
Let us hope his more immortal part is resting up in
Heaven.

He tells in words quite plain, when deprived of our
good name,
It far surpasses money loss, that we are really poor;
We can work again and earn, and to guard the money
learn;
But a good name filched away from us is gone for
evermore.
Oh! envy such a curse! you steal our names and worse;
You've never ceased your dirty work since dawn of the
creation;
The first penalty was Hell, but as mortals we can't tell,
The penalty imposed on those who steal our
reputation.
When you hear that lying tongue, do not answer, just
keep dumb,
It fain would spread infection, that tongue's with
poison laden,
That envious lying word cuts far deeper than the
sword,
An offspring of the serpent, it is handed down from
Eden.

The Old Clock on the Wall

When my domicile I enter, where I fain would always stay,
I am greeted with a welcome that continues night and day;
And that voice is so familiar that I heard so long ago,
When I was a little lad and my sun was very low.
Then it rose a little higher and I donned the corduroys,
And made away to school each day along with other boys;
When it called me in the mornings, I would jump and rub my eyes,
And half asleep would mutter that old thing is telling lies.
But my sun kept mounting higher until it reached the top,
And like Sol upon his daily course, did never rest or stop;
And when daily labour over, and often tired and sore,
That greeting always welcomed me on entering the door.
Now my sun has long been sinking, and may very soon be set,
Still that kindly voice assails my ears, I hear it plainly yet;
Like a voice from the far distant past, it seems a kind of call;
It tells me time is passing fast, that old clock on the wall.
And youthful scenes go gliding past, like pictures on a screen,
To memory returning like a long forgotten dream;

And I list the seconds passing, and the hours as they
chime;
And so forcibly it strikes me that the present's only
mine.
And there it sits and stares me with its hand across its
face,
And that chatter never ceases as with time it runs a
race;
And I love to hear that chatter, it annoys me not at all,
We should all be very grateful for the "Old clock on the
wall."
Its tells us when it's bedtime, it tells us when to rise,
It tells us when the school hour comes for little girls
and boys;
It rules our daily labour, when we work or when we
play,
It rules when on holiday to pass the time away.
If we take a trip by water, to guide us it won't fail,
It guides us to the markets, it's a guide on road and
rail;
And if to fairs or races, or away to kick football;
Before we go we all consult the "Old clock on the wall."
And as there it sits and chatters, it tells us something
more,
It tells us life is fleeting fast to the eternal shore;
And we're hunting after mammon and we never think
at all,
Of the lessons that it teaches, that "Old clock on the
wall."

Death and the Lady

A lady on a sick bed lay, a lady great and grand,
Whose word was law, none dare say nay, with wealth
at her command;
Now stricken down in prime of life, as there she lay in
pain,
Death held no terror for her she would soon be well
again.
Past pleasures seemed to beckon, as they rose before
her view,
She heard companions calling out, "We're waiting here
for you."

Lady – But such a strange sensation, it takes away
my breath,
Oh! I see an apparition, can that thing there be death?
Whose form is so repulsive, I see it standing there;
It makes my flesh so creepy it looks so gaunt and bare.
Its very bones protruding, seems scarce encased in
skin;
Oh such a frightful spectre, oh how did it get in?

Death- Then spoke that apparition- you have guessed
my name alright,
Your career on earth has finished, I have come for you
to-night;
You have spent your life in pleasure your earthly span
has run,
Another world awaits you, are you prepared to come?

Lady – Oh, Death be not so cruel, I am not prepared
to go,
Then why such haste to force me, and leave this world
below;
I have every pleasure here in life and nothing seems
amiss,
I know where I'm going, then wherefore part from this,
And leave this lovely mansion and my pleasures all
behind,
Please seek some other victim, to whom fate is not so
kind;
And grant me an extension, a longer time I crave,
Extend to me your clemency, oh! I abhor the grave.

Death- I come not here to parley, or grant you a
request,
And the grave is not so awesome, 'tis there you'll lie at
rest;
If your life has not been evil, you need not grieve for
earth,
You'll have nothing to complain of when I take away
your breath.

Lady – Oh! Death have some compassion and don't
cut me down so soon,
You have passed the old and feeble, and I am in my
bloom;
I've everything to live for here, my life's a heaven on
earth,
Then why come here to claim it, and take away my
breath.
Instead, relieve me of this pain, and let me longer live,

And when this way you come again my life to you I'll
give;
Then for the present pass me by, my eyes are wet with
crying,
I'm not prepared to go with you, I never thought of
dying.

Death- Dear lady you entreat in vain, I cannot grant
your prayer,
You think you should on earth remain because you're
young and fair;
But I make no distinction, though it may seem unkind,
I delight to take the young away and leave the old
behind.
Those earthly things you cherish most, in which you
put your trust,
When in the clay will fade away and all return to dust;
Your youth, your beauty, and your gold, from me will
not you save,
And I'll delight to see the old convey you to your grave.

Lady- Oh, Death forbear, and have a care, don't cast
that fatal dart,
Replace it in your quiver there don't aim it at my
heart;
There's a secret that I have in store, I can no longer
hide,
My plea for mercy don't ignore, I'll soon become a
bride.
I beg for mercy, I implore, oh! please your wrath
restrain,
And I agree to go with thee when you come round
again;

Then grant to me a longer space, I'm far too young to die,
How short has been my earthly race if I must bid
goodbye
Unto my lover and my friends, my mansion and my gold;
Oh! seek some other victim from the feeble and the old.

Death- In vain dear lady you implore, though it may seem unkind,
Those earthly things that you adore, to leave them all behind;
To choose a victim from the old, consign it to the tomb,
Would not surprise the living, like a lady in her bloom.
They see the old and feeble pass, they never think of death,
Until I enter like a thief, and take away their breath;
That lover that awaits for you, his bride you'll never be,
To earthly pleasures bid adieu, and come along with me;
I can no longer parley here, I'll cast this fatal dart,
The change that I have forced on thee may be the bitter part.

Lady-Oh! cruel Death withhold that shaft, and for a little bide,
I thought you would compassion have on a prospective bride;
But no, you hound me to the grave you blast me in my bloom,
You leave behind the old and frail, consign me to the tomb.

What numbers have you passed today – the old, the
maimed, the blind,
Yet singled me out for your prey, and left them all
behind;
You hateful spectre from me part, no more for life I
crave,
I care not for your fatal dart I'm goaded to the grave,
I close my eyes, and turn my face, to hide your hateful
sight,
But oh! how short my earthly race and must pass
tonight,
Farewell to all I love on earth – my friends, my gold,
my lover,
I'm forced to part from all by death, from all I love to
sever;
To see them never more on earth, from all I'm forced
away
The shaft is sped, the lady's dead, now fodder for the
clay.

On Youth

Oh! gladsome, wayward, careless youth whose race is
not long begun,
So joyous seems, that merry face, before that it is run;
Oh! what a change will o'er it come before thy sun goes
down,
But long as youth is only at thy side let future sorrows
drown.

With head erect keep racing on, you've time enough to
mourn,
For age comes stealing unawares, youth goes not to
return;
Then make the most of it when here, thy sun's now
shining bright,
Dark clouds will shroud it yet in gloom before thy
coming night.

Then up, arise, make no delay, time's always on the
wing,
The stream's descending to the sea, it will you with it
bring;
It's left its source, it gathers force descending to the
sea,
There's no return, the torrent's strong, the goal
eternity.

That tiny stream we start upon increases day by day,
It branches into many parts as it goes on its way;
The longest stream we know of a century may run,
The shortest lost within that sea when scarcely begun.

But should that stream you sail upon meander
through the years,
Beware – the rocks that in it lie will bring you sighs
and tears;
Then look out for the beacon lights, and try those rocks
to shun,
More happiness, less sorrow, as down life's stream you
run.

Those rocks may wreck your happiness before you
reach the sea,
Your soul will yearn for early years, a thing that
cannot be;
In fancy's gaze you'll see again those youthful happy
days,
That tiny stream you started on will show as in a haze.

Old memories crowding round us, loved voices
whispering low,
Bring back in silent sorrow the days of long ago;
Some loved ones long departed, long wafted down that
stream,
Some looming in the distance, we will greet them once
again.

They're waiting our arrival where no parting of the
ways,
Or sorrow ever enters, through the long eternal days;
Still down that stream we're rushing on our passage to
that goal,
May angels greet our entrance, bring joy unto the soul.

Death

What mournful sound assails my ears, is it a dying
knell?
I listen more alert to hear, it is our old church bell;
No call to Vesper prayers at noon, I know its mournful
toll,
That thrice repeated sound proclaims some dear
departed soul.
Another hurried off the stage, gone from the scene of
life,
Death stole a march upon him and was victor in the
strife;
That young man gone away from us, we feel a pang of
dread;
To think that one so young and strong lies numbered
with the dead.
But death comes stealing like a thief, the prison bars
he burst,
The spirit's fled, the mortal part returns to the dust;
Tread softly in that house of death, their grief they
can't restrain,
The happiness they felt before, for years won't come
again.
A widow's tears, a mother's cares, a heavy load to bear,
The joys and pleasures gone she felt before death
entered there;
He scarcely thought through all the years that he
could mortal be;
No more when daily labour's o'er he'll take upon his
knee
The prattling infant at his feet and sing a lullaby.

The strong man gone that felt so sure he had a lease of
life,
The dual charge between them borne devolving on the
wife;
To act a man's and woman's part, a very heavy load;
But such is life, we bear our cross along this weary
road,
That leads us onward day by day to mingle with the
blest,
"Where the wicked cease from troubling, and the
weary are at rest;"
That blest abode from where the just on us are
watching down,
To gain it we must bear our cross before we wear that
crown.

Thoughts of the Heart

Oh! Ask us not, it is a theme too sacred to impart,
The meaning of those fitful dreams, the story of the
heart,
The cause of all those waking hours that chase away
repose;
Oh! ask us not to tell you what our conscience only
knows.
When thoughts of long ago arise, aye thoughts that
won't forsake
The memory of that long past-time as there we lie
awake;
The scenes of long ago come back like a forgotten
dream,
Mistakes we made in youthful days of things that
might have been,
And we ponder o'er those early years, as there we lie
awake,
And we think we have done penance for making that
mistake,
We see the prize before our eyes it dangles to be seen,
As there we lie and ponder o'er the things that might
have been.
They're gone those youthful comrades, and all their
youthful ways,
No more the youthful amours in those far-off happy
days;
We need no noonday sun to see, it is no fitful dream,
It seems to us reality the things that might have been.
But we let that chance slip past us, it won't come back
again;

When that tide went flowing past us we failed to board
the stream,
And now the stream is shoaling, and among the rocks
we lie,
And flounder here like fishes when the water has run
dry.
We see the early paths we trod ere noonday suns had
shed,
Their beams upon our early lives, the wayward paths
that led
Us onward through a tangled maze as if our eyes were
blind,
To wander in a labyrinth no exit e'r to find.
And we gaze upon that picture we have painted in our
mind,
And we feel so pessimistic that fate was so unkind,
For we think our lives are wasted, and that we'll never
die;
Oh no! we'll live forever, and that's the reason why
That at fortune we are railing, that we're angry at
fate,
Because we're poor and humble, that we are not high
and great;
There's an idol we are seeking, whose feet are made of
clay,
Will we find it? Make a god of it, we'll never pass
away.

The Old Armchair

Here I sit and ponder, as my thoughts do wander
To the years that have gone past.
Many a deathbed scene, of those years I've seen;
May this one not be the last
For I cling to the earth, to my very last breath,
And therefore I offer a prayer
For another year's grace, in this homely place,
Where I sit in the old armchair.

Far from noise and from strife that would crush out
my life,
Unused to the roar and the din,
Here I sit and I pray, "may death go astray,
When seeking to find his way in."
For as life along goes, I love the repose,
And I think there is nothing unfair
That would lead him astray, from this place keep
away,
Where I sit in the old armchair.

There is work far behind, 'twas the work of the mind
I neglected when I was a boy,
And although I am sorry it is useless to worry,
In my winter I yet might have joy.
Away here in quiet, from noise and from riot,
It diminishes worry and care,
And I'd like to sit here for a multiplied year,
At ease in the old armchair.

And with vigour I'd act, to make up for neglect
Of the time that I lost in my youth;
With the pen, not the plough, I would work harder
now,
If the Reaper for me would have ruth.
To make up for lost time I'd be well inclined;
No doubt it would only be fair
Could I keep him away, and for that I will pray
And compose in the old armchair.

If existence is granted no favours are wanted;
I'd consider existence a boon.
I'll be long enough sleeping where worms are creeping,
Obscured from the sun and the moon.
Under grasses and clover that I now walk over
Inhaling the sun and the air,
And thrilled with the joy that I felt as a boy
When I sit in the old armchair.

With a pencil and book, and a masculine look,
I sit not on history perusing;
Not on Ramsay Macdonald, or the great Dan
O'Connell,
A subject quite different I'm choosing.
Even could I climb higher I would not aspire,
To others 'twould hardly be fair;
But in plain simple verse I send out my address,
As I sit in the old armchair.

And though life may last longer, I'll grow weak, not
stronger,
But if mind keeps intact I will write,
Myself just to please, as I sit at my ease,
And compose in the long winter night.
And when baffled by dozing, I cease the composing,
Then unto my bed I'll repair,
And something behind will come into my mind,
That I missed in the old armchair.

And if some I don't please, I hope they won't tease,
And my writings they won't criticise;
They seek the mistake that the poet did make,
But like them, I have not Argus eyes.
I am loaded with years, and all my compeers
That I know, when no worry or care,
Have crossed o'er the bourne, from thence no return,
Whilst I sit in the old armchair.

And proud man is so vain that he scarcely would deign
To ascribe to the humble his equal;
Soaring higher and higher, would to angels aspire,
Till like Satan his fall's oft the sequel.
Better not don the wings, though from pride we get
stings,
But keep low; we've no cause to despair,
I for one don't aspire to soar any higher,
Sitting here in the old armchair.

That one word “competence,” my ambition contents,
Give me that and I ask nothing more;
With that I’m content, ‘tis a boon Heaven sent,
No matter how high others soar.
I will sit here and write, it will give me delight,
What others may say I don’t care;
I am trying to please, as I sit at my ease,
Ere vacating the old armchair.

Poem Addressed to the Aged

Though 'tis vain to regret, still we cannot forget,
The years we have left far behind,
Till we yield our last breath in the struggle with death,
'Tis a thought that will run in our mind.
If some big mistake in our lifetime we make,
As we journey along to that goal,
And our footsteps do stray for a short time away,
From the path that brings joy to the soul.
When the tempter steals in to entice us to sin,
As he did with our first mother Eve,
And we ate of the fruit that in Eden took root,
When his oily tongue did her deceive.
As the years go by, we to cure all may try,
From our sins and mistakes away turn;
But the youth that is gone we so often muse on,
Will again to us never return.
Ah! that far away time, when as infants we'd climb,
On the knees of the Mothers that bore us,
That we'll never forget, we were then "mammy's pet,"
When she'd clasp us in tender embrace,
And a vigil would keep, there to soothe us to sleep,
And so plainly we yet see that face.
Then when schooldays arrived, how the mater would
strive,
To send us to school neat and clean.
How we crept along there, building castles in air,
That was soon to be tumbled again,
And if frost or if snow, then so lively we'd go,
All laziness then cast aside.
And the rolls would be late, if the master would wait,
How we longed for that ice and a slide;

Or perhaps April showers, and the slumbering flowers,
With their buds pointing up to the sun.
Now just starting to peep from their long sleep,
Such pleasure we gazed down upon.
But the little snowdrops 'fore them all took a hop,
We have watched it with snow for its bed;
Its spring was then past, and its seed was then cast,
It rejoiced us when others were dead.
And the dear little swallow o'er ploughed land and
fallow,
Is cleaving his way through the air.
He has crossed o'er the main to the old land again,
And is hunting through space for his fare;
Now a feeling of awe, although nothing we saw,
It sounds like a far away paeon,
And we eagerly listen and our eyes with joy listen,
'Tis the Cuckoo, we hear it again.
Though we don't hear the bees, and no leaves on the
trees,
Still we know now that summer is near,
And we run onto school shouting out "April fool;"
We are late, and a rating we fear,
But our summers now pass and our autumn leaves
falling,
And the cold icy blast of old winter is calling,
It tells us beware, there is death in the air,
And we know that the vision of Mirza is true.
We are crossing the bridge, and our comrades drop
through;
They are dropping around us, the high and the low,
And so jolly and careless across it we go;
Still plodding along, unaware of the trap,
Never thinking of death till we reach the last "lap."

Or trying to cheat him from claiming his due;
But like those gone before us, we'll shortly drop
through,
So comrades beware, there is death in the air,
And ere it be late, let us for it prepare.

Life and Death (1930)

As on their way they went, one day, each one to do his
duty,
Young Life, of love and vigour full, and Death in
search of booty,
This couple met, but you may bet, 'twas not a pleasant
meeting,
As Death did stir at young Life, there was no ardent
greeting.
Stung with the thought that Death was there, and
Life, so very young and fair,
To gaze upon him seemed like hell, he was so gaunt
and bare.

Then out spoke Life, "You think I fear because that
you have met me here,
But you know right well, that many a year will pass
before you claim me.
I am young and strong, scarce in my prime, and the
earth will roll round many a time,
And I will visit many a climb before that you may
claim me.
Why interrupt me on the way? Make room to pass, I
will not stay;
I fear you not, I will not pray for ruth or mercy from
you.
You came to meet me here by stealth, intent to take
away my health,
Deprive me of my life and wealth, with the blight of
death upon me."

Then Death spoke out, "You do me dare but little I
heed your jargon there,
And for your youth I do not care, I'll do my duty when I
will;

I care not for you or your skill, for doctor's potions or
their pills, I won't relax my duty.

You seem to think you can defy; that if I wish you
would not die,

But for the present I will not try to send you o'er the
river.

That may be river Styx, you see, and Charon may the
boatman be;

That would be very bad for thee although you seem so
clever.

But now that I have let you free to laugh or scoff would
foolish be,

In the coming years still think of me and of my dart
and quiver.

For sure as I stand here today the next time I come
your way

No matter how you beg or pray, I'll send you o'er the
river."

"You'll never, never see me more, I'll take my way to a
foreign shore,

And across where angry billows roar, to shun your dart
and quiver.

I'm hard to scare, but such a fright, 'twas well we did
not meet in the night,

I hope I'll never see a sight again to make me shiver
And such a sight, so gaunt and bare, I've lost my
nerve, and now my hair

Stands up on end. To see you there has made my
reason quiver.
I'd seek the Pole's eternal snow, would to the top of the
Andes go;
Or pierce the ocean down below so that I'd see you
never."

"Ah! Foolish boy, I'm everywhere. If thy were seven
miles in air
Or feasting on a Polar bear you'd meet me and my
quiver.
I'm everywhere on earth but, well, I'm not in Heaven
or Hell,
But I will sound your funeral knell and then we part
forever.
And then we part forever, and as you live, so will you
die,
Go down below, or soar up high, and that's the reason
you should try
To keep far from that river."

Fallin' in Luv Agane

Och! shure I'm fallin' in luv agane,
An such plaisure it gives me, not pane;
I'll not tell the raison, for that wud be treason,
But I'm fallin in luv agane.
Now mabbie you think I am oald,
And my luv is all dormant an coald,
But if coald as the snow I wud hev you to know
That I'm fallin in luv agane.
Yis! I am falling in luv agane,
But not with the same old dame;
Neither figure nor dress, but I'll just let you gess
Why I'm fallin in luv agane.
I've been asked wance or twice, and I think its not
nice,
The name of the blushin young made
That has me captivated although antequated
To whom my affections hav straid.
Did I tell? Well not me, fur you surely can see
That it mite, to that lady, giv pane,
But as shure as I'm heer, an you may think it queer,
I'm fallin in luv agane.
In o'er three score or moar, - I will shortly be foar,
But that disn't matther a bane,
Whin it cums in yer way shure ye cannot say "Nay,"
So I'm fallin in luv agane.
Th' other day I met Joe; (he's a comrade, ye know),
So crestfallen he seamed as in pane,
He told me he haird I hav shaved aff my baird,
An was fallin in luv agane.
"Well," said I, "if I do, shure that's nuthin to you,
That fit hes cam on me, an I cannot abstane,"

An that med him wurse, as he srtarted to curse,
But I'm fallin in luv agane.
An its not like befoar, for a week, - mabbie moar,
I wud let the dust on me remane;
Now a bath evry day, an so spry an so gay,
'Cause I'm fallin in luv agane.
An without a dout, whin Lent has gone out,
We'll be wan, that befoar it wur twane;
She's so pashently waitin' och! I heer my heart baiting,
I'm so deeply in luv agane.

Age

Forbear thy spleen, nor criticise,
With inward thoughts or wayward eyes,
Whene'er thou see'st in mean array
The furrowed brow and locks of grey.
That face once smooth, the locks as fair,
Agile the gait as thou art there;
No thoughts of age crept through that frame,
In years to come thou'lt be the same;
Eternal youth without alloy,
And nought to mar its youthful joy.
Oh happy youth, until at last,
Our noonday sun is sinking fast;
The shadow on the dial plate
Keeps creeping round, it will not wait.
From west to east it takes its way,
Round northern arc from day to day,
Mayhap it tells of youth now past,
That happy time we thought would last;
Memorial meet, to us remind,
Of scenes and days we've left behind.
Mayhap it tells of rising sun,
And happy youth in days to come;
Or of meridian sun it tells,
When welkin rings with marriage bells.
But furrowed brow, and lines of care,
With tattered garb, and hoary hair,
Won't cause the shadow on that plate
To retrograde; no, fate is fate.
No earthly power stops time and tide,
For kings or princes will not bide.
From youth we're hurried down the stream

A gulf of years now lies between
And still adown the stream glide,
For us there's no returning tide,
And shoaling sands, and hidden rocks,
Make deeper furrows and whiter locks.
As on we go we backward gaze,
And we see behind us in a haze
Of fog and mist that blur our eyes,
What once we were, we feel surprise.
As down the stream we glide along,
We hear the music, we list the song.
The blood that trickles slow and cold
Through crusted veins, would fain make bold,
As erst before its course to run,
In answer to that song, that fun.
But age forbids, no, ne'er again,
Thou'lt run unhindered through the vein.
Your frame, your strength, your face, your hair,
Your blood, all changed from what you were.
That stream now takes another bend,
Ah! now we wish that song would end,
No mirth, no jubilation here,
A wider stream, the ocean's near.
We hear the roaring of that sea,
We've heard of oft – Eternity.

Reflections (1931)

What thoughts arise within my brain, as here I lie at
morn!

No more I hear the blackbird's strain from out its
favourite thorn;

But I thank God for another day, as I lie in bed,
My gaze does through the window stray, the leaves are
lying dead.

"And why not I?" I speak aloud, and echo answers,
"Why?"

"Your summer's past, the wintry blast is come when
man must die;"

No second spring for earthly man, his sun but once
does rise,

Though short his race, or past the span, he fades away
and dies.

I learnt a lesson from the leaves I see now strewn
around,

Their summer's beauty did me please, now lying on the
ground;

So is it, will it be, with man that thinks himself a god,
He buds, he blooms, then fades away, and lies beneath
the sod.

I look and see death's emblem there, I hear their
funeral knell,

I list it moaning through the trees as if 'twould say
farewell;

"I have kissed you in your springtime, I have kissed
you in your bloom,

When I inhaled your fragrance, now I haste you to the
tomb."

Another wail among the trees, some strike the window
pane,
Their taps imply a long good-bye, "We'll ne'er return
again;
But other leaves will take our place, and lovely
summer days,"
But still an answer left unsaid, will I be there to gaze
Again upon the beauties of another summer morn?
And here again the skylark, and the blackbird from
the thorn;
And again inhale the incense of summer's lovely
flowers,
As 'tis wafted to my nostrils by the gale's unerring
powers.
And here I lie and watch them till they disappear from
view,
And an inward something whispers, "You will shortly
follow too;"
But I re-arrange the pillow that my head has lain
upon,
And I tuck the bedclothes round me saying, "Oh Lord,
Thy will be done."

Thoughts of the “Hereafter”

I am oft times thinking if life was one day,
And the sun always shining as in June or in May,
And the birds always singing, would my hair be as
grey.

Would the wrinkles have kept off my forehead then,
Or the furrows have kept off my face,
That somehow or other stole on it,
Although unto me no disgrace
As I hobble along on my journey,
To the end of my earthly race?

Would my footsteps so laboured and slow be,
And my breathing so feeble and weak,
That I often stand still for a breather,
And would rather keep thinking than speak.
Though a contrast I erst time remember,
And I fain would keep mute for its sake?

Would my eyes be as dim as they now are,
With the letters all blurred that I see,
With a mist intervening before me.
That I don't know an A from a B,
Until Art that I once did ignore so,
Restores again pleasure to me.

And I know that my sun's nearly setting,
And I look through the ether and see,
With the eyes of the brain, not the optics,
The comrades long departed from me.
And I hear a small voice that whispers,
“They seem to be beckoning thee.”

But the shadow still creeps on the dial,
The circle is not yet complete.
May the Lord help me through the last trial,

I know they won't have long to wait
Till I join them again in the spirit,
And the clay I must leave to its fate.
Now I look on the daisies, the flowers,
That bloom on the graves of my kin,
And I think of the dust underneath me,
That place where my clay will lie in.
And I think of the spirits above me,
And my footsteps entrace with a sigh,
Or will privilege be granted unto me,
To gaze on that dust from on High?
Where the surges their death songs are keening,
And the zephyrs keep pace in the trees,
And like angels the white birds on pinions
Keep gliding through space in the breeze.
Where a silence inspired by awe seems to reign,
Save the splash of the fisherman's oar,
In seeking the prey he oft fails to obtain,
And the surges acrooning on shore.
On that mound that contains my mortal remains,
Not the cypress but olive should wave,
As the peace that on earth was denied me in life,
Will abide in that house in the grave.

Life and Death (his last poem)

Why should 83 alarm me?
Sure death it cannot harm me,
And existence does not charm me,
And for death I've sometimes prayed.
On a journey long and dreary,
I have wandered till I'm weary;
Now my gait so worn and slow,
And my hair as white as snow,
I know I soon must go.
And I feel like Jephthah's daughter,
I am ready for the slaughter,
Though my tears may flow like water,
It isn't caused by fear.
And the years seem multiplying,
As I sit, half living, dying;
Still, Death's messengers deftling,
When'er they draw anear.
Of life! I know thou'lt fail me,
As you never won a battle;
Though you try to bar the gateway,
When you hear Death's engines rattle.
I know you're full of mettle,
And I know you're full of fight,
Though worsted in the battle,
You will strike with all your might.
There are soldiers trained and ready
To assist you in the fray;
They will use all arts and sciences
To chase the foe away,
For a little, very little, keep the enemy at bay.
But with tenfold force returning,

He will strike me when I'm low,
Though a soldier stands on sentry,
I then will have to go
To render up my stewardship,
Be it for weal or woe.
And I'll keep my Cross before me,
And I'll hang it on the wall,
To remind me of the Saviour
Who died for us all.
And I'll thank Him for His mercies
With my last dying breath,
Who broke the bonds of Satan,
And triumphed over Death.

Commentary of the Day

A Day on the Farm

Another year, and October's here; the sun shines
bright and warm,
The sweat pours down from face and brow, when
working on the farm.
Our number's few for the work to do, therefore we
sweat and toil,
For all things must return to dust, and all come from
the soil.
The sun is scarce so high at noon, as just a month ago;
The crops that were so verdant then have on an
autumn glow;
The reaper's ready in the field to cut the golden corn.
The sun has yet to lift the dew, 'tis early in the morn.
The horses and the driver are ready, standing there,
But more hands are wanting yet to follow in the rear;
And the master, waiting patiently, though showing no
alarm –
Thus is the way from day to day, when working on the
farm.
The flax is pulled and watered now, and ready for the
mill,
And when they start, it won't be long until the
scutchers will
Have the fibre tied in bundles, and ready for the mart,
For the owner, when he wishes, to put it in his cart.
And bring it to the market, and let him be e'er so poor,
They'll try to buy it cheap enough – of that you may be
sure.
And if they find the smallest flaw, or bundles not the
same

They'll throw it back into the cart, he may take it
home again.
So it is with the farmer in this land of milk and honey;
He produces food for everyone, but very little money
Finds its way into his pocket; the middleman comes in
And drinks the cream the farmer has fought so hard to
win.
His boots are not bedaubed with clay – cares not for
rain or shine –
And blight or flood don't worry him; he's waiting for
the time,
When the farmer, stiff and weary, after all his summer
toil,
Comes to realise the benefit of working on the soil.
'Tis then the sharks are watching; they try to take him
in –
Tell him his stuff's inferior; they think it not a sin.
The precepts of the Master they fail to keep in view,
That tell us "Do to others as you'd wish them do to
you."

(Changes Part 1)
Old Fashioned and the New

I am thinking o'er the changes I have seen, och! man
alive;
If I'd tell you wouldn't believe me since eighteen fifty
five;
But I couldn't tell the half of them, no matter how I'd
try,
And you need not ask the reason, for I cannot tell you
why.

There are changes in the air, there are changes on the
lan';
There are changes on the water, and changes too, with
man;
But if I'd name the ladies, perhaps I'd raise a din;
But they always get precedence, and with them I will
begin.

Well I am no ecclesiastic, therefore I do not rail
Against the ladies dresses, indeed I cannot fail,
(As I read a little sometimes, when my specs are on my
nose),
To see and read the sermons about the ladies clothes.

The fifties and the sixties are now a long way back,
But if my tongue was wagging well I'd tell you many a
crack,
About the ladies crinolines* – of one thing I am sure,
(* whooped skirt)
You wouldn't tramp their corns dancing with them on
the floor.

If you'd please you'd keep your distance, or else you'll
raise a fracas,
The would soon be after telling you were tipping with
*Baccus; * (wine god)
And all for fear the crinoline would maybe get a crash,
You'd be safer 'way in Jericho, ah! that would be a
smash.

But coming down to later days, it always raised my ire,
The lovely skirts with flounces on, atrailing in the
mire;
But nothing of that now-a-days, such lovely legs we
see,
With silken hose adorned, away up to the knee.

Some of them are not so high, and some of them are
higher,
A stimulant for other folk, to see their hearts on fire;
Of course to act the magnet, and show their pretty
legs,
There is something reaches near the knees, I'd call
them *philibegs. *(kilts)

We see them bobbed and shingled, now it used to make
us stare,
But now we're getting used to it, no lovely heads of
hair,
No lovely plaited tresses, we are nearly broken
hearted,
We can only answer, "I can't behold, its glory is
departed."

If I'd offer an opinion, I know 'twould make you laugh,
But I think the proper length for skirts is just down to
the calf,
The trailing skirt's repulsive whereas the philibegs too
high,
Steer a middle course between them you'll delight the
gentry's eye.

Blowing Bubbles

It was just the other day, as I passed along the way,
That I saw some little children on the roadside at their
play;
I was musing rather sadly, and thinking o'er my
troubles,
It was such a curious contrast, those children blowing
bubbles.
Old Sol was shining bright, and it was a lovely sight,
Those bubbles floating o'er them, and such laughter and
delight;
As they flew about and flickered, then dropped towards
the dust,
But like man's imagination those bubbles always burst.
I was plodding on quite slow, but I stopped to watch the
show,
I thought it well worth watching, see the colours come
and go;
A Raphael with his brushes on canvas might them draw,
And I asked myself the question, was it art or Nature's
law?
I soon came to the conclusion, and without the least
confusion,
That 'twas neither one nor other, but a mingling of the
two;
My thinking vein then shifted, in another channel
drifted,
As I watched the bubbles bursting, and the way the
children blew.
You may think I'm mad or wild, but I tell you it is true,
That though old, I'm still a child; I have comrades, so
have you;

For in all our joys and troubles we are always blowing
bubbles,
And the bubbles always bursting, they vanish from our
view.
The Ex-Kaiser blew a bubble, and old Bonny did the
same,
That brought the blowers trouble, although men of
mighty fame;
For the Kaiser's bubble blew him into Holland for a
while.
Whilst the other blew the Corsican to St. Helena's Isle.
They filled us all with dread, there were myriads of
dead.
Oh! they were mammoth bubbles, that brought with
them a curse;
We are still weeping for those dead, and the seas of blood
'twas shed.
If the bubbles hadn't burst, 'twould have been a great
deal worse,
There's another bubble blower that blew long, long
before.
He is suffering for his blowing, and will for ever more;
I had near forgot to tell, but it blew him down to Hell,
We are told there's no redemption, but we often hear his
roar.
It is Envy breeds those bubbles, that those bubble
blowers blow.
But like dreams they're oft contrary, and bring the
blowers low;
I won't lie, I must be just, they would blow you into dust.
I have seen them blowing bubbles, so then I surely know.

Slaughter of the Innocent

For once, dear readers of the "Mail," with pain I lift the quill,

A story sore and hard to tell I speak against my will;

I am not the only mourner whose grief is very great,

Oh! what millions are affected by the story I'll relate!

"Conservative Majority," a lusty boy was he

So strong and well-developed, no more his like we'll see;

And he had his way in all things, and only over four,

He had doctors, he had nurses, he had medicine

galore.

At the inquest held upon him the doctor made reply,

"The boy so strong and healthy, I thought he would not die,

So sound in wind and limb he was, especially in wind,"

And doctor Stanley Baldwin to the boy was more than kind;

And then he told the Coroner some symptoms that alarmed him,

He gave treatment for to check it, and he thought it wouldn't harm him;

But weakness developed and each day he felt more tired,

Until on 30th day of May that lusty boy expired.

And oh! so many mourners, and they all seemed to be affected,

For to them it was a tragedy, it came so unexpected;

Now the nurses feel quite humbled, and the family physicians

Now, too late, are realising the very grave conditions

Under which the patient laboured, but they can't recall
him now.

They are sorry, very sorrow, there is sadness on their
brow,

They gave him an injection and they called it "Safety
First,"

But he swelled to large dimensions till they thought
the boy would burst;

They gave him a "De-rating" pill, they gave him this
and that,

They gave to him "Protection," and they gave him the
devil knows what.

And they gave soothing syrup his nerves to pacify,
Still thinking he would rally, and that he would not
die;

But they gave him too much coddling, now it does their
minds annoy,

For they know that too much cooking spoiled that
broth of a boy.

Doctor Davidson and Baldwin nursed the patient to
the finish,

But the swelling was beyond their skill, did never
quite diminish;

And the heart grew daily weaker, feeble pulse,
contracted breath,

With pain they stood and watched him there in the
throes of death.

Now he slumbers with his fathers, and we feel a pang
of pain,

It may be a very long time till we see his like again;
Now another baby's born and I think they call him
"Labour,"

There is great rejoicing o'er him, there is music on the
tabour.

But he isn't so lusty, he isn't near so strong,

But we know that doctor Ramsay of the baby will take
care,

For to him he is devoted, he will give him sun and air.

He has pledged his word to care for him, he to us did
plight his troth,

Unless his cook, like Baldwin's, do spoil the baby
broth;

And that would be a tragedy, but suchlike things will
be -

Don't pry into the future, we'll like Asquith "Wait and
See."

Buy British Goods

This world is always moving though to us 'tis not
apparent,
There are many things in nature of which we have not
learned;
And we're reading and we're musing and it does my
mind annoy,
When I think of all the changes since I was a little boy.

When we went unto a market, be the distance near or
far,
No bicycle to ride upon, no bus, or motorcar;
But we started out determined, and we somehow
managed there,
Through suffering from corns as we jogged upon
"shank's mare"

Now everything is changing we've the bus the
motorcar,
The "Fords" came here in thousands from o'er the
ocean far;
And how oft we hear the slogan nought but "British
goods to buy,"
And we're bringing from America and do not heed the
cry.

We buy their fruit – canned peaches, we buy their oats
and wheat,
And when we buy Manhattan's highball, in Britain 'tis
a treat;
And they imitate the Yanks in every thing they do,

Their telephones, their typewriters, from Yankee land
come through.

And now the Yankee habit is in England all the go,
For a pound down you buy everything, and own while
you owe;
And Britons now are getting to be quite Americanized,
Has the habit wowed, are they ill or well advised?

The B.L Company's programme is not itself a ball
Without a dose of Yankee songs to please the Britons
all;
When they rise up in the morning shave with a safety
razor,
The alarm clock that calls them to another Yankee
raiser.

Those soft collars, do you wear them when you board a
bus or train?
But perhaps you didn't know it that's America's again;
The "cash register", "cheap can openers", "electric
irons" too,
All came across the ocean, were things to Britain new.
And we'll have a baby aeroplane, it's coming very soon,
The children fly to school and back and that'll be a
boon;
Now we see the petrol pumps installed in Britain and
elsewhere,
But Britain never thought of it, the idea came from
there.

And Yankee cars on British roads, has Britain got the
dumps,
And driven by the Britons and fed from Yankee
pumps;
And their talk and their palaver all British goods to
buy,
Let them set us the example, and to follow we will try.

Reflections (or Facts Verified)

When the nations war no more,
And the cannon cease to roar,
That left millions in their gore,
We'll have peace.

When that thing we call ambition,
That so often brings contrition,
And has caused so much affliction
And disgrace.

And they spoke of a new world,
With the old in abyss hurled,
And the new one then unfurled
In its place.

Land for heroes, so they said,
Who survived the mounds of dead,
When the rivers all ran red
With their gore.

But those heroes still are waitin'
For that world called the great'un,
But they keep on repeatin'
"Nevermore."

Not better now, but worse,
Is this world that war did curse,
Want of work, an empty purse,
We deplore.

Now in queues we have to stand
To solicit, not demand.
When we should be on the land
As of yore.

Or the shuttle should be guidin',
That we always took a pride in,
And competitors deridin'
Us no more.

But the shuttle's idle now,
And bad prospects for the plough;
Would some wizard tell us how
To restore.

Back to use our trade again,
That was filched across the main
As 'tis useless to complain,
Or implore.

And they send us in the "stuff"
Till we've got more than enough,
And we cannot then rebuff
As we keep an open door.

But we think it very hard,
Our success it does retard,
When we find our exports barred,
We feel sore

And we're waitin' and we're waitin'
For that world they called the great'un,
But may still keep on repeatin',
Like the raven, "Nevermore."

The Chase

(A description of a hunt by the writer on his way to
Cookstown)

It is winter and the fields are bare, no traces of the
plough,
The farmer's crops are gathered in, the huntsman's
busy now;
No corn or hay to bar their way, the greyhound's got
the sight,
The hare's in view, halloo! halloo! they're off in rapid
flight.

An open plain without a drain, the hedges far between,
A thrill of pain shoots through my frame at that
exciting scene;
I watch the hare and greyhound there, no bush to
mare the view,
How plain that strife, that fight for life being waged
between the two.

The huntsman stands, and in his hands a victim of the
chase,
Uncertain now, he can't tell how that hare still keeps
her place;
No nearer may the greyhound come, the quarry cannot
gain,
How oft the prey eludes the grey I hardly can explain.

As on that place I watch the chase, constrained to hold
my breath,
That monster greyhound close behind, whose every
spring meant death;

Across the plain they go again, with puss still in the front,
No closer can the greyhound gain, full well she bore the brunt.

Absorbed in deepest wonderment I see the huntsman stand;
He sees that hare still leading there, another in his hand;
In centre of the plain he stands, the quarry still in view,
With that one victim in his hands, but reckoned on the two.

The hedge is neared, and puss has cleared, the grey has lost a spring,
But now he's through, and a wild halloo does from the huntsman ring;
But puss's friends assistance lend, in vain that wild halloo,
Foe whins and rushes lend their aid, and the hound has lost the view.

Speed or Miss England

Now I think we are all agreed that this is the age of
speed,
And men are going crazy everywhere;
On the road a mile a minute, and that is not near the
limit,
And away above our heads they are flying through the
air;
A hundred miles an hour on the sea to show their
power,
And break the world record-lose the life
Whene'er the crazy punt, forced into a flying stunt,
Turned somersault and made a widow of the wife.
But Miss England will again try her paces on the
main,
As although the record's broken they're uneasy;
And they think she'll do it better if obstructions do not
fetter,
But the prudent man would think that pilot crazy.
There's a mote in Britain's eye, and to take it out
they'll try,
Tho' so oft across the ocean they have sailed
Away to Sandy Hook, but in that wind screened nook
Sir Thomas and his Shamrocks have failed.
And Miss England without wing to Lough Neagh they
will bring,
Where obstructions will not fetter – well I know,
With Kaye Don at the wheel, and his nerves like bands
of steel,
Like a phantom on the surface she will go.
Like a phantom she will go, he will let her out I know,
For no tyro at the wheel is he – Kaye Don!

That will be a famous day, the first upon Lough
Neagh,
Oh! that will be a sight to gaze upon.
But of all the hundreds there, is there one will say a
prayer
To guard him from the dangers of the deep,
Until he gets away from his trials on Lough Neagh,
That loved ones won't have cause to wail and weep?
Not on a couch recline, but away to Argentine
To fight another battle on the main;
The record keep unbroken, and return with joy
unspoken,
With the Blue Riband of the ocean back again.

The Gold

I am reading about something that of late I have not
seen,
And I hear a lot of talk about it now;
And of course I'd love to see it, - tis yellow gold I mean;
But I hope they will not start another row.
Oh! that yellow shining gold, it brings misery untold,
If we have it, or we have not, 'tis the same;
It causes so much strife, and such loss of human life,
And they fight for its possession, oft in vain.

The "old lady" in Threadneedle street is lying sick to
death;
They are trying to revive her; they may say she's short
of breath;
But this is not the malady, for we know she's short of
cash,
And they're trying to revive her, as they fear another
crash.
Oh! that yellow shining gold, it brings misery untold,
It looks like that metal's dyed with blood;
It begets so much temptation, and such strife among
the nations,
Oh! what thousands on the scaffold for it stood.

That old lady now is sick, and she'd need a tonic quick,
To restore her to her former strength again;
If she looks towards the east, where before she freely
placed
Her millions and her millions, 'twill be vain.
Now we know that war's a rat; that Samaritan's forgot,
That let her gold like water run away;

And the Banque de France emboldened by her
scarcity, is holding
The hundreds of millions she should pay.

Oh! that yellow shining gold, it brings misery untold;
It's for who will have the most of it in store,
And they're cutting throats and shooting, and burglary
and looting,
And defying every law the world o'er.
In Wall Street, away west, they have more than all the
rest,
A thousand million sterling, - maybe more;
And still Uncle Sam keeps craving, but of late he is
behaving,
But he'll for another twelvemonth get no more.

The old lady I have mentioned, although so well
intentioned,
Need not let all her life blood run away;
She was too ready with transfusion, and her patients
hardly choosing,
And now they're not so ready to repay.
Oh! that yellow shining gold, it brings misery untold;
It starts with the prospector with his kit,
When he takes his way o'erland, to the Yukon or the
Rand,
And often finds his grave instead of it.

Micky and Barney

Micky-

“Well, I am glad to see you, Barney;
I’ve been waiting day by day:
We thought you had forgotten us you stopped so long
away,
We were wondering were you busy at the turf, or at
the hay.”

Barney-

“Well, I was at neither, Micky, for I wasn’t very well,
There was trouble in the cottage, I am sorry you to tell,
And Doctor Gray was out with me, he said I had the
flu;
He says, “Barney,’ fore I leave you, I will tell you what
to do;
Lie in that bed a fortnight or it may be worse for you,
And take some things to strengthen you like Bovril
and wine,
And get some barley water, and some milk and
Ovaltine,
Till you get a little stronger, for you seem as if run
down,
And I’ll call again to see you the next time I am round.
But Micky, where’s the use of that, how could I get the
dough
To buy the things he says I need, or else I’ll go below?”

Micky-

“Well, Barney, I was thinking sometimes, as well as you.

Where all the money’s going and it riles my temper too;

But maybe you can tell me , I am not as smart as you.”

Barney-

“Troth Micky, about some of it I’ll shortly let you know,
Do you mind ‘bout them ould fogeys down here in
Ardboe

That made away to Cookstown, and stuffed it in the
banks

For a handshake from the managers, and a few words
of thanks.

Come here, Mr So and So, and sit upon this chair,
And make yourself quite easy, of your money we’ll take
care,

And when you want it, come for it, you’ll get it any
day,

But instead of going to Cookstown they went the other
way.

Yes, they took a longer journey, left their money in the
banks,

And all they got for giving it were them few words of
thanks.”

Micky-

“Well, Barney will you tell me, where did all that
money go,

Or is it still in Cookstown banks? Of that I’d like to
know.

Are they keeping it in custody for Mr So and So?

Do they think they'll come to claim it from above or down below?"

Barney-

"Well Micky, its in custody, it's lying there in cog,
Till the lawyers have it finished, then they will divide
the prog,
Not with Micky or with Barney, maybe with the
legatees,
Sure we always heard the lawyers went to Heaven by
degrees,
That's a step in that direction without getting on their
knees."

Micky-

"And Barney do you tell me that the lawyers will
divide it.
Give each legatee his portion when the judge has it
decided?
Sure nothing could be fairer, will they keep none of the
pelf*?
Did you never hear that mandate, love your neighbour
as yourself?"
(*ill gotten gains)

Barney-

"Aye, but Micky they might change that, as they're
claiming for their labour,
Into the prevailing fashion, love yourself and hate your
neighbour."

Micky-

“Well Barney, there are two virtues, Faith and Hope,
and both akin,
But St Paul says without charity we cannot enter in,
Though our bodies should be burned to expunge away
the sin.”

Barney-

“Well, Micky, about that charity that is spoken of by
Paul,
If there has been no remission, and that extends to all,
There surely is a mighty crowd outside of Heaven’s
gate,
If there was no mediator, God’s anger to abate.
But did you read of Moses in his wandering with the
Jews,
When he led them to the Promised Land and that they
did refuse,
Save Joshua and Caleb, to enter it through their fears,
They were condemned to wander in the desert forty
years?
And how ‘oft as mediator he turned God’s wrath away.
When he threatened to destroy them? Then Micky, let
us pray,
When in the final moment we yield to Him our breath,
We will have a mediator in Heaven as on earth.

Unemployment

Now we all seem unconcerned, but perhaps we have
not learned
What the nations of the world mean to do;
They are plotting and they're planning, and each other
sharply scanning;
This is a curious world we are trying to live through.

And our wages now are lower than for many years
before,
That is, if we can get the work to do;
But we very often can't, and the alternative is want,
And there's very little ruth for me and you.

Now they're piling on the taxes, well aware how it does
vex us,
But "the Budget must be balanced" is their cry;
But what about our own, our wee budget here at home,
We must sink our independence or the children will
die.

And we stand in rows or queues, not in fours, or
threes, or twos,
But in hundreds we are waiting for admission through
the door;
For the charity they're doing, we are waiting, we are
tholing,
It's a slur upon our manhood, and it often makes me
sore.

And our heads are downward bowed as we stand
among that crowd,
If we see a neighbour we turn our face away,
For we have a creepy feeling as if that money we are
stealing,
And our spirit of independence fain would stay.

Ah! I now have got admission, and that feeling of
contrition,
That seems to make me guilty my face suffuses o'er;
I am abject, I am pleading, but if anything misleading,
I leave it empty-handed; I am turned from the door.

Now a mist before my eyes, and I see a spectre rise,
A spectre that I dreaded before I entered there;
And my eyes are moist; no wonder, as I view that
spectre, hunger;
For I left the children crying, for myself I do not care.

And the children stand and wait for their daddy at the
gate,
They are watching for his coming, and the mother's at
the door;
But no money, no employment, and there's hunger, not
enjoyment,
And this a "land of heroes" – will this crisis e'er be
o'er?

The General Election

There is war again in England, but not with swords
and guns,
No warships in the offing now, no fighting with the
huns;
But from John O'Groats to Land's End they're
preparing for the fray,
For who will gain the victory upon the battle day.
They have mustered all their forces now, twelve
hundred guns do roar,
Discharging blanks among the ranks, they're heard
from shore to shore;
And those blanks are meant for targets, they're not
discharged for sport,
Twelve hundred guns in action, for those who will take
the fort.
There are marshals and commanders, there are
officers galore,
Compressed air for propulsion, and they make the
welkin roar:
There is Marshal George and Ramsay, and Marshal
Baldwin too,
They have buckled on their armour like warriors, tried
and true;
And thirty million fighters do, I think, a record make;
Divided in divisions for those who will the fortress
take.
See George harangue the multitude to fight for him
again,
Behold his coat of arms 'tis a ship upon the main;

And he won't put on the tariff, though the English
farmers squeal,
And Britain may go bankrupt if he gets at the wheel.
Now Marshal Ramsay bide a wee, though Baldwin's at
your side,
We know you're sure of victory, but still you can't
decide
On the issue of the battle yet, between that mighty
throng.
The race not always to the swift, nor the battle to the
strong,
But nail your colours to the mast, and sport your coat
of arms,
And the stalks of wheat bind round you, that came
from British farms;
And tell the English farmer that suffered long and
sore,
He'll get something for his labour, that foreign
dumping's o'er.
But fifteen million amazons are sure a mighty lot,
And they'll plump for cheaper pabulum – let the
farmers go to pot;
And they'll run the risk of bankruptcy, and the fall of
sterling too,
And 'twill finish where it started; I will say no more –
adieu.

The £ s d

It's a long time now since I first was funny, Since
first I knew that the bees made honey;
And the wee round shining coins were money.
But that was the time I was mammy's sonny.

If that long past time would come back to me,
When I first learned the A.B.C.,
Oh! how I would laugh with a he, he, he,
And would now know the worth of the £ s d.

That I didn't know then, nor for long time after,
When I'd let it fly with the fun and laughter;
When the wine got in, sure the coins I'd barter,
For another dose of the poison plaster.

Like another "Burns," but I could not shine
Like the Scottish bard, in that far off time,
When he got mixed up with the women and wine,
His language was grand, he could cut it fine.

And in love with them all, - not one or two,
With Mary, and Jeannie, and Armour and Sue;
To Betty and Peggy and Nannie was true,
He'd a way with the ladies, and the rhythm too.

But that long past time won't come back to me,
Nor the ha, ha, ha, nor the he, he, he;
Though I'd love its return, for don't you see
I would stick far closer to the £ s d.

And I read and I muse on the lust for gold
That the nations imbibe, and how tight they hold
In their steel-clad vaults, but for you and me
A good substitute is the £ s d.

If we buy from the merchant, he is pleasant and free,
And the publican scorns to see us T.T. ;
And the lawyer is watching to earn his fee,
And its all for the sake of the £ s d.

The £ s d that keeps all things in motion,
The bus on the highway, the ship on the ocean;
In the fields daubed with mire, the farmers we see,
And its all for the sake of the £ s d.

The £ s d, though I don't complain,
I have gone without it, and I'll go again;
Though I often work hard with both pen and brain,
And the referee tells me that it's a shame.

Now a Rip Van Winkle you before ye see,
That slept an age till the sleep left me;
And wherever I wander, or wherever I be,
All things seem strange but the £ s d.

The Hare

Mankind still fights for freedom, it is dearer far than
life,
If we gauge it by the millions that have lost theirs in
the strife;
We have to wander blithe and free, no prison bars
around us,
We love the name of liberty, no enemy to impound us.
We are freedom loving people, and we pride on being
humane,
We've the scientific killer to mitigate the pain,
Fur and feather we protect them in river, lake and air,
Then why do we neglect it, the lovely little hare.
The animal that we love to see, that should wander
wild and free,
Barred from its native element, kept in captivity,
To satisfy the craving for inhuman cruelty.
When will they have compassion on the lovely little
hare,
With no destructive qualities, they should wander free
as air;
The blades of grass, the nips of kale we should give it
without spleen,
And admire "mankin's presence in our kale yards
green."
It burrows not into the earth, on speed it does rely,
Withhold the hail, give it fair play, and 'oft it will defy
Man's scent-hounds and his gaze-hounds, his every art
and snare,
To subject to mutilation, the lovely little hare.

I have seen man at his hellish work, I've watched him
use his gun,
To take away that little life, not even on the run;
And he calls himself a sportsman, that murder he calls
fun.
But the instinct of the savage, with the cruel scalping
knife,
That to take another trophy seeks to take another life,
Is still handed down the ages, is not yet eradicated;
Ah! how often do we see it, and it's scarcely mitigated.
And another millennium may come on Time's wing,
And man still a slave to that terrible thing,
Descendant of Adam, still bound with a chain,
That was forged in Eden by Satan and Cain.

War

Changes Part 2 Earth – Air – Water

I spoke about the water, and I spoke about the air,
But very few things are exempt, there are changes
everywhere;
No ships decked out with canvas sheets, we see them
grim and black,
And smoke ascending up in clouds from every
smokestack.

To see them cleave the waters you would think they
are alive,
No snail pace there; oh! such a change since eighteen
fifty-five;
No rockets fired, no flags aloft to indicate distress.
Electric waves are speeding oft they call it S.O.S.

Away it goes at lightning speed, it seeks and finds its
goal,
And help arrives at railway pace, and often ever soul;
They looked on death with frantic gaze, that helping
vessel saves,
There's joy again, and life's prolonged, they're saved
from watery graves.

And science triumphs once again, man's genius and his
skill,
Displayed to save his fellow man, not engines made to
kill;

Oh! but that monster of the deep, we hear of, seldom
seen,
That lurking foe keeps watch and ward, the hellish
submarine.

That paralyses commerce, and keeps us in a scare,
A mammoth whale spouts death around when nations
are at war;
Its belly filled with Jonas's but not so well inclined,
It vomits death, not preachers to Christianize
mankind.

And who of all the aged, that though the years survive,
Will deny the mighty changes since eighteen fifty-five;
Oh war, the curse of nations, how horrible become,
We read of fearful battles fought with pistol, sword
and gun.

But of all the forms that Mars has worn, the last one is
the worst,
It drifts along before the wind, that vapour most
accursed;
They see it come, they know not what, a flag of
greenish blue,
They're soon informed, the frothing mouth, the face of
livid hue.

Or grasping breath, and heavy chest, their strength
and functions fail,
Heroic deeds of daring against it won't avail;
No maddening rush, no clash of steel, they see or hear
no foe,

The gas is doing the devil's work, the enemy lies low.

And safe within the trenches, their victims get no
chance,
Its work is done, there's no defence against the foe's
advance;
We see men flying through the air, their speed
outstrips the wind,
The gale that havoc makes below, they leave it far
behind.

When war is raging o'er the land, those vultures soar
around,
From high in air their victims seem like insects on the
ground;
When used for friendly intercourse, we hail them with
goodwill.
Not birds of evil omen amongst us sent to kill.

That voice we thought so short lived, continues on its
race,
And through the boundless ether it rushes on through
space;
Man sits in ease and comfort, he hears them sing and
play,
Aye, from far off Antipodes, twelve thousand miles
away.

Holds converse with his quondam friends, and far off
lands come near,
Past happy days are back again, he's whispering in
their ear;
Vast oceans change to rivulets, vast continents are nil,

The voice o'erleaps all barriers, it's the Almighty's will.

Can man defy its boundaries; will any man deny
That every word we utter is ascending up on high;
Before the Throne in Heaven, to be recorded there,
The good word, the bad word, the falsehood and the
prayer.

Oh! when will Science ever cry pause, behold that ship
on high,
Oh no! 'ts not a mirage between us and the sky;
But an engine of destruction, not sent by God, but
man,
To desolate our cities, to desolate our lan'.

In the guise of the surroundings it is stealing through
the air,
To leave the children fatherless, the widows in despair;
Oh! may it never come our way, for peace 'tween
nations strive,
You'll all agree, there changes are, since eighteen fifty-
five.

**A Soldier's Story,
or An Incident of the Great War**

You ask how did I get my wound, well I've told the tale
before,
I think at least a hundred times, but I'll tell it to you
once more;
But something seems to rise in my breast, as if all
would come back again,
When I think of the sights I saw out there on that God
forsaken plain.
You can sit at your ease and talk of war as if 'was
child's play,
But the sights I saw would give you a scare, God keep
them forever away;
Kill plenty of men, you're a hero then, but that you'll
try to do,
To save your life in that horrid strife, or they'll very
soon kill you.
And life is sweet, and when foemen meet it's for who
will give the first thrust,
You'll make every plan to kill your man, oh! war is a
thing accurs'd;
We lay in the trenches there all night, in the slime and
mud and clay,
With thousands in front, on left and right, how we
longed for the break of day.
We had held the position for two long days, the third
one was coming then,
We never receded, we kept them at bay, with scarce
five hundred men;

Then daylight broke, and the sun awoke, emerged
from his misty bed;
And still in the trenches there we lay, among our dying
and dead.
Put up your head, the foe to scan, how quickly you
would rue it,
You'd answer a different roll call then, they'd soon let
daylight through it;
No succour coming to give us relief, our men were far
away,
The bread running short, and no bully beef, we could
not long delay.
The enemy sappers busy at work, we were in a sorry
plight,
We were picking them off, but they still closed in on
front, on left and right;
Can you imagine our feelings then in the trenches
lying low,
We had not then five hundred men, and thousands
around of the foe.
But we never wavered, we still held out, oh! it takes
away my breath,
To think of us then, and the lust for blood, but we
never thought of death;
As those thousands still kept closing around, just a
mile of open space
Behind us in which to make our escape, 'twould have
been a fatal race.
When our officer cries take courage my boys, I hear a
noise 'way yonder
Like the sound of guns, it can't be the Huns, we stick it
a little longer;

And the noise grew louder, and our men got prouder,
as that noise to us came near,
And never a noise in all our lives did ever we love so
dear.

The noise got clearer and our men came nearer, we
could hear the shells whiz past,
With a message of death, as we held our breath, the
relief had come at last;

And the shells kept pounding them, and our men
surrounding them,

'Twas diamond cut diamond then.

Then into the fight, 'twas a bloody sight, oh! how we
did cheer our men,

Then we out of the trenches, with stiffened shins, and
watched the fight for a minute,

When our officer cries, boys they've saved our skins
and I think we should be in it;

We are too long here, and then with a cheer and a
bound he the breastwork speels,

With a jump and a hop I went over the top and away
at my officer's heels.

But the very worst part of my story comes, that
movement was seen by those lynx-eyed Huns,

And down he dropped like a stone;

I knelt by his side, and believe me I cried when I heard
that boy give a moan.

Our men ran on for the lust, was only to get in the
fighting line,

Never stopped nor stayed, nor the least afraid, and left
me alone behind;

I have roughed it through life in many a strife, I have
been where the savage reigns;

Where a vertical sun shines down upon those far off
arid plains;
Where the beasts of prey prowl night and day, their
carnal food to find,
But never before did I feel so sore as kneeling there
behind.
And there as I knelt and pondered, I felt that sadness
o'er me stealing,
With that boy in his bloom, cut down so soon, it gave
me a creepy feeling;
Watching him there so young and fair with a heart so
true and kind,
Will war never cease, will we never have peace, was
the uppermost thought in my mind.
The first thing I did was staunch the wound,
and then round it a bandage bound as he lay there in
pain;
Then he opened his eyes and my hand he pressed,
As I folded the officer close to my breast and made for
the trench again;
But fate that good fortune did not decree, another one
came and shattered my knee
And down we went, and there we lay 'neath a broiling
sun through that live long day;
May I never see such a sight again, alongside lying
and writhing in pain;
And I never knew that boy had gone west, though
alongside lying against my breast, till the good
Samaritans came.
And they took him away and he lies at rest
Far from his home, strange soil on his breast, his
company's pride and joy;
So good and so brave, and they loved him so well,

They'd have followed him right to the gates of Hell;
So well did they love that boy.
Now here I am with a wooden leg, not able to work,
and too proud to beg,
I fought for my country when aid was needed; now I
hobble along by all unheeded,
But if ever again that call should come I'd rally again
to the fife and drum;
I might not be able to run or jump, but in a great crisis
I'd fight on a stump.

On War

Oh war, the curse of nations, how horrible the thought,
For fame or territory how very dearly bought;
I've read war's battles, pondered o'er, my thoughts I
can't conceal
When brooding o'er those massacres, oh the anguish
that I feel.
Think on the desolated homes and all the blood and
tears,
Where peace before its coming had reigned so many
years;
A countryside in ruins, waste marks its ruthless track,
And for it what does victory, what does glory give us
back.
Contending hosts in warlike garb, encamped upon the
plain,
Death-dealing engines all around, and often mounds of
slain;
A sight once seen by those engaged time never can
efface,
Those mangled corpses lying round, the flower of all
the race.
Not age admitted on the lists, they're strong and full of
life,
To take away their fellowman's and lose theirs in the
strife;
They meet in mortal combat, where they cannot loudly
roar.
The dead and dying lie around in trampled clay and
gore.
On front and flank those monster guns are dealing
death around,

Now o'er the top columns meet, the air with shouts
resound;
Their spears are glancing in the sun, in deadly strife
they close,
They stab and hack with spear and lance, they're
mingled friends and foes.
Those spears that glancing in the sun a little time
before,
So bright shone, have changed their hue, now dyed
with clotted gore;
The wounded there in "No Man's Land" are lying on
the plain,
What thoughts recurring to their minds among those
heaps of slain.
Dead comrades lying by their side, they still have
hopes of life,
Oh! such a fervent longing now for mother, home and
wife;
Those wounded think they'll meet again, and for it
fondly pray
To see again the loved ones, they parted from in that
home far away.
A beardless youth lies bleeding there, a mother's only
boy,
He thinks she kneeling by his side, his mother's pride
and joy;
Death's film stealing o'er his eyes, that vision seems so
plain,
Now in that mother's fond embrace in the old home
again.
That home he loved so dearly, and mother good and
kind,
To fight his country's battles he left the twain behind;

The down of manhood on his cheek, in fighting garb
attired,
For freedom and for fatherland that brave young heart
was fired.
The hardened soldier lying there, a veteran in war,
“The death wound on his gallant breast, the last of
many a scar;”
The wife and child he left behind will long for him in
vain;
No more war’s bugle rouse him from his lowly bed
again.
The wound in that death struggle shows how that hero
died,
But both have paid the penalty, they’re lying side by
side;
The battle rages round them, they’ll hear it never
more,
Comrades will tread above their head, their fighting
days are o’er.
The dead and dying lie around, some minus legs and
arms,
Roll call will find them absent now, they’re deaf to
war’s alarm;
Those limbs so strong and supple were a little time
before,
In death are cold and rigid now, they’ll wield the spear
no more.
No more the tramp of foeman or sound of Reveille,
Will rouse them from their lowly bed within that house
of clay;

No more the dear ones far away will press the war
worn hand,
They sleep to-day far, far away, within a stranger's
land.

The Rage for Conquest Spoken in Present Tense

Great is the fame of the conqueror, o'er earth it travels
far,
Bringing fear to the heart of the enemy, a terror in
time of war;
To himself bringing gratification, an inordinate lust for
fame,
No thoughts of the nations wasted so that it extends
his name.
He looks on the bloody shambles, he sees the
thousands that lie
In their last long sleep on the battlefield, it doesn't cost
him a sigh;
No thoughts of the sorrowing homestead, no thoughts
of the vacant chairs,
Nor of all tears that flowing are, nor the widow's and
mother's prayers.
Ambition urges him onward the goal he seeks is fame,
To be gained by the slaughter of myriads, to bring him
a deathless name;
And the blood of the nations is flowing to stem the
conqueror's path,
And the nations are banded together with engines of
death in their wrath.
Thus far shalt thou go and no farther, say those
messengers, shot and shell.
And the conquerors stemmed in his onward march as
he views the modern hell;
And he sees the dead and the dying in thousands lie
o'er the plain,
He's sorry his onward march is barred, but not for the
heaps of slain.

His passage barred to the goal of fame, he views the
foe with regret,
But other plans are maturing now, he will force that
passage yet;
He is bringing fresh legions forward, preparing again
for the strife,
He will pierce that front, he will reach that goal
regardless of human life.
And the armies are lying like watch dogs, as ominous
silence reigns,
The thunder has ceased on the battlefronts that shook
the hills and plains;
No signs of life o'er the landscape though thousands
are lying there,
But a stir in the western trenches there's a smell of
death in the air.
Far worse than the bayonet or bullet, it travels along
the ground,
No cranny or nook escapes it the corpses are lying
around;
Is it a message sent from the Mighty One to take away
their breath,
And open a path for the conqueror, or the work of a
friend on earth.
And the soldiers are fleeing in terror, with more than a
mortal dread,
With livid faces and choking throats, behind them are
lying their dead;
And the battlefront's pierced by the conqueror without
a shot from his men,
No not by bullet or bayonet pierced, but by something
beyond their ken.

And his legions advancing onward, with a conquering
mien they tread,
Where shortly before the foe had been, they trample
o'er dying and dead;
With livid faces and frothing mouths, the living
writhing in pain,
Could the devils in hell that deed excel, are they going
to try it again?
And the enemy's massed on another front, still onward
the conquerors go,
That devilish trick to try again but the wind has
rebelled and said "No."
And their march stayed on that battle plain, will the
conqueror reach the goal?
To which he aspires, with such fond desire, for which
he would pawn his soul;
He has launched his last great offensive now, will he
gain his heart's desire,
Will he reach the goal he bargained for after setting
the world afire?
For the very oceans are blazing, the old world's all
aflake.
And what the reward, were success attained, that
empty phantom called fame;
Is it worth it to try to conquer, does it bring him
pleasure or pain
To view the wasted nations, to think of the millions of
slain,
To look on the ruined homesteads lying dotted o'er the
land;
And the beautiful buildings tumbled, the work and the
pride of man.

Since the doings in Sarajevo the world's in mourning
and tears,
For the sake of fame and a deathless name we are
doing penance for years;
For the sins of a few we suffer as the world never
suffered before,
For the living are bled as well as the dead we feel it
the Old World o'er.
Will the conqueror lie forever, will he conquer death as
well,
When he gets that final summons that leads to Heaven
or Hell?
Will the arts of war that enemy scare, will the poison
gas prevail
To chase that foe, or must he go, and his conquests all
bewail?
No, death has conquered the conqueror to earth he
must bid adieu,
Of that earth he tried to conquer death grants him six
foot by two;
Such a little space for a conqueror that conquered the
world o'er,
But he lies at peace in that little space, he has ceased
to fight for more.

The Poet's Dream

When at night I go to rest, with the blanket on my
breast,
Old Somnus* keeps away from me when I begin to
think; (*God of sleep, myth.)
And what thoughts come in mind as on my pillow I
recline,
And sometimes speaking to it for I cannot "sleep a
wink."

No matter what I'm thinking, eyes either closed or
winking,
Makes no difference to Somnus, I think he surely sees;
Though his eyes are shut or closing, still he knows I
am not dozing,
And he steals upon me gently by very slow degrees.

I was thinking when he came, that's before I 'gan to
dream,
That a celestial being with a halo round his head
Come to me creeping slowly, seemed so holy and so
lowly,
And stood gazing down upon me as I lay upon my bed.

There upon me he stood gazing, and his visage seemed
so pleasing,
As forth he stretched his arm, laid a wand upon my
breast;
Says to me "Cease your winking, close your eyes and
stop your winking,
I've dominion over sleepers, I have come to give you
rest.

I am a friend to all in creation, great and small,
I seemed to hear him saying in a semiconscious state;
I'll be better unto thee if you do not idle be,
I will pay you more attention than I do the rich and
great.

Although you don't see me, I will not be far from thee,
And when at your daily labour I will a vigil keep;
To be at your beck and call, for I am a friend to all,
And when weary after labour I will seal your eyes with
sleep.”

Then I could hear no more, as the voice grew faint and
lower,
He had cast his spell upon me, I was in the land of
dreams;
And away we went together, over moss and over
heather,
He brought me into foreign lands, and we flew like
aeroplanes.

Then he looked at me and smiled, and he says “We've
come some miles,
But I want to show you sights that you never saw
before;
Now we're at the seat of war, and I hope it won't you
scare,
Here are British, French and Germans, and a dozen
nations more.”

They were at it pell-mell, and we stopped to watch that
hell,
It made me sick to see it, and I never will forget
That sight; the dead and dying on the ground beneath
us lying,
And the whistling of the bullets is in my ears yet.

It was at Delville wood that on our flight we stood,
To watch them at the killing that I told you made me
sick;
There were arms and legs flying, and soldiers
screaming, dying,
And I said to old Somnus, "Let us get from here quick."

Then away we went again, over land and over main,
We left that place behind us very quick;
For we went as fast as light, and we saw a stranger
sight
Than the one we left behind that made me sick.

Now we're on a ship of war on that southern ocean far,
Away from habitation, where it swells and rolls
forever;
Here Beatty and Sturdee, and the German Admiral
Spee,
Fight out a naval dual that makes my reason quiver.

It is not like Trafalgar, with the vessels locked in war,
A deadly dual rages, and miles between the foe;
There is courage to admire, there are warships now on
fire,
But the fighting never ceases till they to the bottom go.

Not on terra firma now, we are on a warships prow,
And the shells are dropping round us, their objective
they have found;
Around are dead and dying on the deck beside us
lying,
I would give half the world now to be on solid ground.

We are forging now ahead 'mong our wounded and our
dead,
And smoke screens we are throwing out to hide us
from the foe;
Still enough of manly ones on the deck to man the
guns,
And before the battle's over send another ship below.

Oh! there's another shell, we may now bid earth
farewell,
We will soon be at the bottom, it has pierced our
magazine;
There is shouting, there is screaming – it has waked
me, I was dreaming,
And I'm joyous, I am happy, that the whole thing was
a dream.

Grandfather's Watch

That is grandfather's watch on that nail in the wall,
So be careful my boy, it got many a fall,
And always survived them, but if it should drop
On that hard cement floor its life it might stop.
Ah! what changes I've seen, and how many's gone west
Since first I have worn it close to my breast;
How many full moons have gone over my head,
And how often the earth for ambition is dyed red.
What monarchs have reigned, some dead, some
deposed,
Some slaughtered instead by their friends turned foes,
And I gaze through the vista of time and recall.
What climbers have dropped like that watch on the
wall;
With ambition their ladder, and when at the top,
They strove to climb higher, and then came the drop.
So proud and so high, and so far they dropped down,
On the earth some lie now minus sceptre and crown.
If that old watch could speak, it could tell unto thee
That it pointed the hours when at the Crimea,
The Frank and the Briton and Turk gathered there,
Not for love, but for gain, to be hugged by the bear.
And how often since then has Ambition held sway,
What mountains of dead it consigned to the clay,
Oft the victor a loser, but the loser lost all
When he dropped to the earth like that watch on the
wall.
Now the Russ and the Turk, and the Frank and the
Hun,
And the Roman and Briton, and them everyone,
Are conferring for peace, whilst preparing the gun.

And they'd march to the slaughter, and cast to the
wind,
After years conferring that paper they signed.
They thought they could rise, but more often they fall
And grovel on earth, like that watch on the wall.
As the wounds aren't healed that they got in their
teens,
When the earth went on fire, how foolish it seems,
The dead to disturb now at rest on the plain,
And the wounds of the living to fester again;
Forgive us the wish then, forgive us the sigh,
If we don't want to fight, if we don't want to die,
We are fighting a battle for children and wife,
For father, for mother, the battle of life;
But not with the poison, revolver or gun,
The ploughshare's the weapon to fight with the Hun.

The Battle of Waterloo

(Spoken in all the Tenses)

Now the eighteenth of June, and I think it came soon,
When the farmers have not in their spuds,
Not like Waterloo, they've no fighting to do,
Though they have to relinquish their duds.

The long thin red line comes not into their minds,
As the "old guard" keeps mounting the hill,
With their heads down they're busy till they
sometimes get dizzy,
Though they often watch up for the spill.

And it comes, yes it comes, and sometimes like guns,
To tell us that wars never cease,
Either shooting men dead, or fighting for bread,
In our lifetimes we never get peace.

When I think of that date, it comes into my pate,
'bout that row on that long vanished morn,
Of shooting and slaying when they should have been
praying,
Holding Sunday's observance in scorn.

Preceded by bliss, and the dance, and the kiss,
In the ballroom elite of the land,
Ah! hard 'twas to part from their lovers, their
sweethearts,
When the General gave the command.

But that far away boom sounded many a doom,
That with love thrilled a short time before,
That last fond embrace, and that tearful face,
Now they're parting to meet nevermore.

The husband from wife, gone to lay down his life,
For his name, and the land he holds dear,
And the lover is gone that she doted upon,
That she next may behold on his bier.

That handclasp, that sigh, and her eyes aren't dry
That shortly before were so gay,
And he whispers take this, and he slips her a kiss,
Alternative none; he's away.

Now that booming is nearer, more defined, it sounds
clearer,
And they know 'tis an army come seeking a foe,
There is riding in haste, there are big guns being
placed
By many now eager who will shortly lie low.

Now they meet on the plain, and the blood flows like
rain,
No trenches the bullets to wile;
Mont St. Jean, Mont St. Jean, you're the stronghold
between,
That each one enjoys for a while.

Now the sun seems to frown on that plain, looking
down
At the horses and men lying stretched in their gore;
Ah! It gives us a shock that each tick of the clock
See two drop to earth that will rise nevermore.

Hugomont, Hugomont, on this day you have got,
And without a font, your baptism of war,
With shot and with shell they are at you pell mell,
Your old walls are dented with many a scar.

How often those walls, perforated with balls,
On that eighteenth of June changed hands in the
battle,
Advancing, receding, their officers leading,
Where the strife was the fiercest midst musketry's
rattle.

No trenches for cover for husband or lover,
The two great Commanders not even a phone,
To direct operations from safety stations,
But we know they would have scorned a safety zone.

Now the moonday is past, the sun is sinking at last,
But at Midsummer time he keeps long in our view,
Ah! what blood will they spill ere he sinks 'hind the
hill,
What widows, what mothers that battle will rue.

Now around thick are lying the dead and the dying,
And cannon and carriages lie smashed o'er the plain,
And still no respite from that terrible sight,
Like rocks they are firm their ground to maintain.

But hark! when a pause, there is something because
There's a far away noise like the roar of a gun,
There was succour expected, and they have not
neglected,
The squadrons are marching, they come, now they
come.

Bonny's last card is played, and that famous brigade,
The Old Guards never beaten, are moved upto the
front,
Again to uphold their great fame as of old,
They march up the slope, but they can't bear the
brunt.

At the back of that crest, the Red Line on their
breasts,
Lie awaiting the Guards as above it they show,
Then a shower of lead, and they reel on the grade,
Their good name has vanished, they backwards must
go.

And Blucher is there, but away in the rear,
With full thirty thousand the French to assail,
And Bonny's defeated, the victor elated,
That battle is over, I will now draw the veil.

Have They Died in Vain?

When the world was down and out, and the war its
course had run,
When the victors and the vanquished both their
tether's length had spun,
And the world was hushed from hearing the thunder of
the gun,
And they saw fair Peace descending like a goddess
from the sun.
There was music, there was rapture, there was silence
caused by joys;
They were wearied out with slaughter, had lost
millions of their boys,
Sons of Britains, sons of Germans, and the fiery sons
of Gaul,
And to the far away Pacific, sure I couldn't name them
all.
And I don't forget old Erin, always foremost in the van,
Thought outnumbered never fearing, sure her soldiers
never ran.
And such a little spark it was to start so great a blaze,
The earth was then a tinderbox, it fled so many ways,
Sure it set the oceans blazing, and the seas and gulfs
and bays.
There were ugly monsters creeping on the bottoms of
the seas,
And repulsive vultures sweeping through the air above
the trees,
To gorge themselves with human blood as do the
Carribees.
Were men endowed with vision to take in as with a
glance,

To the Indian, the Pacific, from some eminence in
France,
See the whites with whites contending, watch the
Zulus with the lance,
Through the tall grass creeping, bending at the foe to
get a chance.
And have heard the roar of cannon, and of star shells
seen the glare,
With the groans of maimed and dying, come like
wireless through the air,
See his kind become more savage than the lion and the
bear,
And have seen the ships come stealing from the
countries far away,
With protectors close beside them to keep the foe at
bay,
With the food for babes, for mothers, and their sons
then in the fray,
As a sacrifice to Moloch* they were offered o'er the
land,
From the far away Pacific into dear old Ireland;
And the earth went on its journey without one to stay
Mars* hand;
And the sacrifice continued and their blood the earth
dyed red,
No Aaron with his censer then 'twixt living and the
dead.
And the millions for that idol, there they found their
earthly bell,
And the land was lying fallow, save where ploughed by
shot and shell,
And the mothers, wives and babies knew so little of
that hell,

Where the fathers, husbands, suffered ere to earth
they bade farewell.
And is that now all forgotten, all those millions of the
slain,
Doing homage to Moloch, and preparing once again,
For the sacrifice, the slaughter, for the world once
more aflame.

Moloch* anything regarded as demanding a terrible
sacrifice.

Mars* the God of war.

Story Telling

A Dialogue with Calliope

S – Self: N – Nymph: M – Muse.

S. Dear fairy nymph you tell me tales I love so well to hear,
On wings of gauze you float around and whisper in my ear.

N. I am coming from the border land, where all is gloom and mist;
I've talked with Death, he tells me you are not upon his list;
He tells you not to worry, and to banish useless fears,
That although you're old and worn, he'll not visit you for years,
And that when he's coming for you, by a warning you will know,
To put your house in order, and be prepared to go.

S. Dear fairy nymph I thank you, your message brings me peace;
It has made me years younger, I have yet a little space,
And life may yet have charms that I did not see before,
On your journey through the ether can you tell me nothing more.

- N. Well distance is no object, I pass from land to land;
On whom I will, for good or ill, I wave my magic wand;
To some parties I bring pleasure, and to other parties pain;
To some I bring dishonour, and to others I bring fame;
I have chatted with the Muses, they to me unrolled a scroll,
And so many names upon it, also yours upon the roll;
And they say you're climbing upwards, and to keep astride Pegasus,
And although the steed is fiery he will land you on Parmasans.
- S. Dear nymph again accept my thanks for bringing such good news,
Of all things that I care for, 'tis the very thing I'd choose;
And I'll try and do their bidding for the pleasure that it brings,
Maybe land me on the summit for that fiery steed has wings.
- M. You've found favour with the Muses, and they will your mind infuse,
With ideals that are higher, I am Calliope the Muse;
And you thought I was a fairy nymph, I came your heart to cheer,
And do not relax your efforts, 'twas my sisters sent me here,

To encourage your endeavours, we have watched
you in the past,

We saw poesy* germs in you, they are fully fledged
at last.

But the incubation period caused a very long delay,
Still the honour's all the greater that your locks are
thin and gray.

S. Dear Muse I'm more than grateful, I thought you
were the queen

Of all the fairy world in that lovely garb of green,
But I am more than delighted to find you are the
Muse;

With your super-inspiration you already me
enthuse;

I'm infected with your ardour will with your
assistance shine,

In the realms of poesy, thanks to the Muses nine,
My very worthy patrons, I have faith now, I have
hope,

And you've the other virtue, my dear Calliope.

With no niggered hand you share it, on me it seems
to flow,

When deserving you confer it on us mortals here
below.

M. Our gratitude you've earned, wonder not that we
confer,

When we find a worthy subject we discriminate
with care,

You give pleasure unto mortals, and to yourself
bring fame;

You are on our roll of honour now, a halo round
your name;
Let nothing you discourage, let nothing you retard,
We admire your effusions you are now our chosen
bard,
We know the years are on you, we regret you're
past your prime,
You've earned the palm at weaving ideas into
rhyme.

S. Benignantly she gazed on me, a smile upon her
now,
From beneath her wings a chaplet drew and placed
it round my brow.

M. Wear this in appreciation, we bestow where
honour's due.

S. I raised my eyes to thank her, she had vanished
from my view.

(Calliope – The Muse of epic poetry - Greek mythology)
*poesy – the art of composing poetry

Manus O'Mallaghan and the Fairies

Where ghosts and goblins oft do stray
In country lanes ere breaking day,
A fearless wight* did take his way (*person)
Upon his homeward path.
And not perturbed by life or death,
The wight kept forging on ahead,
Unthinking that his journey led
Him past an ancient rath.

The rum was strong and the night was long,
And he felt no fear as he trudged along
As crooning a line of a favourite song,
On his homeward path he sped.
The rath came shortly into view,
Though the night was dark and the stars were few,
But something uncanny there made him rue,
Though he feared not life or death.

I had forgotten before to say
That the wrath lay close along the way,
Where the whitethorns stood like spectres grey,
And seemed to bar his pace.
A heap of stones was built around,
That rose six feet from the ground,
That showed it was the burial mound
Of a chief of an ancient race.
That in ages past mayhap has lied
And dyed the land a crimson red,
With the blood whose cry to Heaven has fled,
And like Abel's was heard above.

He looked through the trees and light did gleam,
With his hair like bristles he looked again,
And such a sight and such a scream,
As backward he tried to move.
He tried to move but his feet were bound;
They seemed as if fastened to the ground;
The thorns like spectres closed around,
And barred his backward path.

He looked again and among the trees
A crowd of dwarfs or fays* he sees,
(*resembling a fairy)
And scarce one higher than his knees,
In and around the wrath.
The fairies held a council there
To try how any mortal dare
Disturb their midnight revels where
They thought their home secure.
And some would hang him from a tree,
Whilst others would his butchers be,
And other some would set him free,
As being the only cure.

They then combined; him to a fright,
That ne'er again on revel night,
Would he, or any mortal wight
Disturb them at their play.
A horse! A horse cried everyone,
No sooner said than it was done,
And Manus, amazed, stood looking on
To see them in array.

The moon arising in the East,
Showed little imps on chargers placed,
And each one seemed in armour laced,
Though lower than his knee.
And since that night he ne'er could tell,
What magic art on him befell,
Or if they passed on him a spell,
He shouts "a horse for me."

That shout had scarcely ambit made
Around the rath, until arrayed,
He found himself on charger laid,
As black as jet was he.
I said he was a fearless wight,
That affix now is put to flight,
For ne'er before he saw a sight,
That roused him in such fears.
Impatient pranced that charger there,
Exhaling flames instead of air,
And from his head two horns were
Protruding as for ears.

He got command to keep his place,
And speak no word upon the pace,
If disobeyed some dire disgrace,
Whate'er he sees or hears.
They got command and oft did go,
With roars and shouts of tallyho,
And all the devils from down below
Seemed hunting at their heels.

The bay of hounds, behind, before,
A noise of as the battles roar,
And victims shrieking in their gore,
Commixed* with charger squeals (*blended together)
The moon now up for hours two,
Each object plainly came in view;
He saw the hounds, the horsemen too,
As o'er the plain they sped.

Not hill or river did them stay,
With fearful speed they took their way
With lances couched to kill and slay,
And horse and man lay dead.
And such a bloody battle plain,
He saw that night as ne'er again,
Till Etna spouts up ice and rain,
Or hart* becomes the hare. (*male red deer)
Unto a dyke both broad and deep,
High walls on either side to keep
Intruders out, they forward sweep,
What mortal would not dare.

The charger rose from off the ground,
And Manus, trembling gazed around;
Away he sailed and with that bound,
He crossed both walls and dyke.
As to the ground the charger came,
Unchecked by either curb or rein,
Did Manus with an oath exclaim,
"I never saw the like."

The charger gave another bound,
Left Manus lying on the ground, And
all the hounds did gather round, To
tear him bone from bone.
He raised his hand unto his head,
“May Heaven guard me,” all he said;
He looked again and all were fled,
And he was left alone.

Ah! Manus, foolish boy wert thou, To
ope thy mouth to tell him how
(That oath amounting to a vow),
That he did cross the dyke.
And if ‘twas real, or if a dream,
If e’er at night you come again
That way, you’ll listen for the scream
You heard from out the rath;
Or was it rum, or little imps,
That stopped you on your path?