

# THE DEVIL'S ADDRESS TO THE MERCHANTS OF LIMERICK

Well here ye are  
and ye didn't come far  
or need a car  
for the smell of hell  
is from Pennywell  
and out to the ridge  
of Thomond Bridge  
anyway I'm proud as hell  
to see ye so well  
but what makes ye so bold  
come out of the cold  
and not be shaking and chattering  
like a priest at a pattern  
come in a bit nigher  
and enjoy me fire  
not like boys in a quire  
wisha is that Sexton Pery  
with lashings of sherry  
and I suppose I can't avoid  
taking wine from Lord Lloyd  
or persuading Maggoty Quin  
to go slow with his gin  
and will ye look at Halpin and Spaight  
behind each side of the gate  
manufacturing mate  
and Bateman and Hogges  
with turf, coal and logs  
to drive off the fogs  
they're all here by dogs  
Boyle, Roche, and Fox  
the Halpins and Houghs  
with every fish  
your heart could wish.  
We're the grandest variety  
of Limerick society  
and we'll make it a feast  
to welcome ye east  
call up on the trumpets  
the best of my strumpets  
the Countess of Clare  
and Dame Castlereagh  
King James and King Bill  
can drink with a will  
Cromwell and Pitt  
and all that will fit.  
Then rubadubdub  
on the drum and the tub  
drink lads and be merry  
the finest of sherry  
but what the divil is that  
tastes like me ould hat



I'd rather a kick in the shin  
do you call that stuff gin?  
Come on Mister Pery  
out with yer sherry  
here's a can for it  
and I'm the man for it.  
Oh! may Cromwell then curse  
this stuff is worse on me  
And look at my fire  
is it the way ye desire  
for to make it expire  
it's as good as a byre  
what have I done  
to ask ye to come  
to my house was so spicy  
ye Limerick lice ye  
I'll teach ye be civil  
and not be cheating the divil  
let this be yeer fates  
ye Halpins and Spaights  
for selling bad meat  
both early and late  
to sit on yeer rumps  
under red-hot pumps  
with boiling stout  
into yeer mouth  
and ye Boyles and ye Roches  
ye Houghs in yeer coaches  
and Maggoty Quin  
with your gutrot gin  
and fine Sexton-Pery  
I'll make them merry  
in Broad Street and Dock Street  
and Bridge Street and John Street  
and Clare Street and where street  
to bate ye and rate ye  
down west Watergate with ye  
with yeer rumps in lumps  
and harrows for barrows  
boiling, smelling  
bubbling, yelling  
roasting, ghosting, toasting Limerick  
merchants to the Judgment Day.

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And so, in after years at night should men inquire  
What may it be that causes Limerick's smell,  
Point down the Shañnon to the ghostly fire  
Of the fifteen Limerick merchants burning out of hell.  
(From *A Nest of Simple Folk*, by Sean O'Faolain,  
*New York Viking*, 1934).

