

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.

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).

