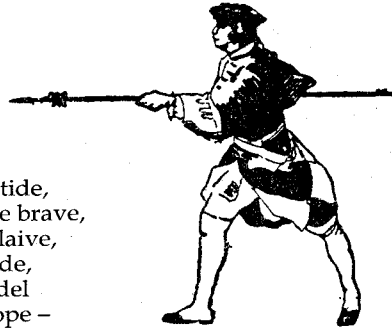




## From LIMERICK

by John Francis O'Donnell

Dear city of the tributary wave,  
 Rolled past thy bastions by the warring tide,  
 From fields where fortune fell, and sleep the brave,  
 Buried with trampled flag, and broken glaive,  
 Under rent canopies which, waved aside,  
 Show thee, as once thou wast, the citadel  
 Within whose walls a nation dared to hope –  
 Within whose walls a nation's soul found scope  
 For conflict's farthest issue, good or ill.



Thy towers upon the midmost torrent cast  
 The lightnings, darknesses, of centuries, –  
 War's pitiless and trebly-breasted blast,  
 Heroic figures, shapen of the past,  
 And counsellings of foreign lands and seas:  
 There rallied Ireland round her final stake,  
 Ringed by alliances that grudged no cost;  
 'Twas thrown, 'twas doubly chanced, and it was  
 As one drop bosomed in the league-long lake.



Slain was the cause, but thou remainest still,  
 Gray, by the white hem of the refluent flood,  
 Having in thee what years can never kill,  
 Strong courage, and inexorable will,  
 Challenge of sacrifice, and scorn of blood.  
 The storm dissolved, yet still St. Mary's threw  
 Her latticed splendours through the southern air –  
 A lance of iron-stone austere bare –  
 Yet kindly kindled by the wind and dew.

And, as I pace each still and storied street,  
 The pageants of forgotten days arise;  
 I feel the tumult and the gathering heat,  
 I hear the measured fall of warrior feet,  
 I see the banners in the narrow skies.  
 Cries and rejoicings burthen the warm air –  
 Some foe has perished, some good deed been done,  
 Some toil has borrowed comfort of the sun,  
 And poured a moment's light upon despair.



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 So flashed thy story by me, city mine,  
 As leaning over Thomond's memoried bridge,  
 I saw, gold-fired, upon the peaceful ridge,  
 The banners and the spears of autumn shine,  
 And heard behind me the town's murmurous tune,  
 And watched afar, all violet, or bare,  
 The sea-declining hills of breezy Clare,  
 And deep in heaven, the shadow of the moon.



**EDITORS:** JIM KEMMY AND LARRY WALSH.  
**CONSULTANT EDITOR:** KEVIN HANNAN.  
**EDITORIAL COMMITTEE:** PAT FEELEY, PATSY HARROLD, DESMOND O'GRADY, BOB KELLY,  
 JOE HARTNETT AND MICHAEL McCARTHY.  
**DESIGN AND LAYOUT:** KEVIN FITZGERALD.  
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