

# Ode to a well loved Limerick light-keeper

In February 1916, Thomas Hourigan, 'an old and esteemed employee' of Limerick Corporation died. He was caretaker of the Corkanree Bank, and also light-keeper of Spillane's Tower for forty years. He was a very popular with the public and a reader of the *Limerick Chronicle*,<sup>1</sup> using the pseudonym 'Amicus' recorded his feelings on hearing the sad news of Tom's death.

"Poor Tom Hourigan, no more! Alas that it is so? 'Tis true - and pity tis, tis true."

Tonight, Tom, - poor fellow, sleeps his long and peaceful sleep

with his fathers beneath the Mungret Churchyard sod.

The "Snuff-Box" is lonesome-looking this evening, and "the banks," too, look sad.

Never again by Tom will Spillane's Tower be tended, and its light be lit.

No more shall Tom's familiar figure saunter along at sunset eve.

No more he'll greet us. Never again shall he inveigh against juvenile depravity

or bemoan the pulled-up seats, or trampled hay.

The cattle on the Corkanree will, by some one else be counted, admitted, and set free.

The halyard on the Tower top at Spillane's on Regatta day by strange hands must be hauled,

and Limerick crews by unfamiliar voice be greeted. For Tom has lowered his flag.

At half-mast is our own. His task is done, and done right nobly. Poor Tom!

Many a one in Limerick will miss your cheery, kindly presence and your welcome word at leisured eve.

And many an exile from old Garryowen in distant lands shall shed a tear to know that you are gone;

and breathe a prayer, "The Heavens be your bed" tonight, "God rest your soul!"

And may He who tempers the wind and comforts the afflicted soothe and support those

nearest and dearest, whom, for a short space, you have left in sorrow behind.



1. *Limerick Chronicle* 24 February, 1916