

The Praises of Limerick

(author unknown)

Farewell sweet lovely fine town,
 When Pennywell road and famed Garryown,
 For its now I am going to leave my native home
 And roue (roam) to a foreign nation;
 Farewell to the strand to the mill and the square
 To the grand canal and salmon wyre (weir).
 Where I oftentimes roved through each shady grove
 Enjoying the girl I dearly love in mutual conversation.

Farewell to the tap-rooms and bustling noise
 To any sweet comerades and the Garryown boys,
 For its oftentimes I crowned my joys.
 In drinking stout punch and porter,
 Where is the musick would so sweetly play,
 We never would depart until we'd see day,
 But we roar and rap for more,
 And like jovial souls pay off our score,
 And drink until we'd get sober.

Farewell to the parade and all therein,
 To the nice fair maids and sweet young men
 For its oftentimes I have been with them,
 And in their lovely nabitatione (habitations),
 For its inside the walls we'd hear the band,
 Leading our charmers by the hand,
 From thence we'd walk to Thomon gate strand
 To receive sweet recreationf(s)

Farewell to th' river Shannon clear,
 Wherein our boots (boats) we oftentimes did steer,
 The eiel the trout & salmon all seasons of the year,
 Is there to be had in plenty
 Where the verdant banls (banks) are overspread,
 With lilies pink and roses red,
 The river Thames exceeds the plains
 The river Nile with pride and style,
 There are none of, these can be compared,
 To our lovely nabitation (habitation);

Farewell to my parents whose heart do grieve,
 May the great God guard me in my course,
 For if I had a fortune shining purse,
 Its then I would seek out my honour,
 For Its here at home I wont remain,
 I will steer my cource (course) to France or Spain,
 But until the day I die I ne'er will deny,
 That I was rear'd a Garryown boy,
 And a reving sporting hero.

This poem was published by Peter Brereton, a Dublin based ballad-sheet printer, operating from various addresses, including 1 Lower Exchange Street and 55 and 56 Cooke Street in Dublin city. He was one of the most prolific printers of ballad-sheets in the second half of the nineteenth century. The Brereton ballad sheets are quite distinct in style. Poor paper, poor print quality, misprints, misspellings and omissions are commonplace. This poem is a good example as many words are misprinted. It is transcribed from the sheet, including misprints and spelling errors. The suggested alternatives for some misprints are included in brackets.

Brereton ballads were illustrated with the same few pictorial woodcuts. More often than not, the woodcut bore no relation to the subject matter of the ballad and the same woodcut was often re-used many times on different sheets. The image accompanying this sheet is appropriate, as it depicts a romantic scene of 'the girl I dearly love'. Like many emigrants at that time, the unknown author also missed his home and recalled the place he left behind⁽¹⁾. It is believed that the ballad was written in the late 1860s⁽²⁾. There is a strong possibility it may have been by James Flynn of Limerick, who wrote many similar ballads at this time.

1. <http://www.itma.ie/digitalibrary/print-collection/brereton-ballad-sheets>
2. <http://catalogue.nli.ie/Record/vtls000089978>

