

a limerick christmas

"Limerick?" Dirty and priest-ridden", he said-
The taximan speeding to Heuston.
"Twill stop at the Junction. You'll be in by ten,"
The checker, strong-smelling of porter.
A seat by the window, the jolt as we leave;
The sea-crossing's lingering tiredness.
Dark, ghostly hedgerows recede in the night,
And Christmas scenes steal through the darkness.

O'Connell surveying his Georgian world -
Echoes of great crowds with torches.
Tinkers at corners, with holly and fir,
And blessings to loosen the purse-strings.
Carols at Cannock's, fasting at Todd's,
"Remember the poor", "Buy a line, Sir",
Reaping the harvest of hope-filled hearts,
High on the tide of festive fervour.

Ubiquitous Bethlehem, cotton-wool snow,
Sacristans grappling with statues,
Dutiful families trooping down aisles,
Homecoming crowds filling churches.
Noisy pubs brimming with boisterous song,
Card playing, porter-filled laughter,
Red noses nodding in solemn conclave
"Bob's sound, lads, we'll get in the back door"!

Bells at the natal hour, bells at noontide,
Sweet-sounding bells, o'er the city,
Catholic, Protestant, Mary's and John's.
Tonight, 'tis Christ's birth they're pealing.
"Fall on your knees, O hear the angels voices!"
"Wake up, Sir! We're there, Sir!" - the porter.
A loudspeaker carolling "O Holy Night" -
And the Railway Inn welcomes the stranger.

