

## A Passage Paid

Mid the forests grand & trackless  
Far away within the West  
Where the settler built his log hut  
And the mocking bird her nest  
Lay a poor young Irish woods man  
Sick with fever with pain  
All his brow was flushed to crimson  
All his life - sweat poured like rain.

There was need of careful nursing & the stranger  
Was most kind  
Tending to the dry lips burning - to the restless  
Wandering mind  
He had hewn the mighty timbers  
He had cleared the lonely glade  
For long months the echoes trembled  
To his axe's sounding blade

All his work was for his dear ones - for the mother whose  
Has been cheered with many comforts (old days  
And relieved in many ways



Thayl shi d feel, I know, more happy  
And have made more thankful prayer  
Just to hear his glad laugh near her  
To stroke down his dark-brown hair:

III

Just to catch his step at evening, As he came before the door  
Or to mark him in his manhood, like his father years before  
When she died, they found a paper, stained with tears  
hid in a box -  
One brown lock of hair, some letters - and a child's  
Small faded socks.

She was sleeping in Kilsheelan, and last week a letter went  
Taking home two sisters' passage, & a year's hard earned rent  
But another ship was sailing, guided by an angel hand  
Sailing fast to bear him onwards, to a fairer better land

Ah! thou said to hear him raving of the old familiar hills  
Where the music of his childhood sang in fifty murmuring  
Of his home in far Tipperary (rills  
And the winding wild bores  
When the brown thrush sang the sweetest  
When the leaves kept longest-green:  
Of the football the hurling, of the dance of the fair  
Talking of the pleasant places the kindly neighbours there



## VI

During hours the cows for milking, And as slow  
they browsing came  
In the dear old West language  
Checking each with some pet-name.

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Saw the plough sunk in the fallow  
Stiff with weeds & damp & brown  
And he softly urged the horses  
As they toiled the long field down  
Ah! 'twas sad to see him trying  
The poor fellow in his pain  
To rise up & stroke the fore head  
To smooth back the tangled mane.

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They were simple things he clung to  
And his life was much the same  
Yet I think God loved to see him  
When the summons later came  
'twas an hour before the dawning  
As his white lips moved in prayer  
That the angels softly called him  
To that land where all is fair



And I question maybe I know not.  
When the angels call the roll  
'Mid the martyrs bearing branches  
Shall we see this poor boy's soul;  
I am sure his hands were spotless  
All his heart was clean & true  
And he gave his life for others  
Not much more might martyr do.

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