

THE DROMAKEENAN POET

Frank Canning hailed from a little homestead in Conicker Lane, Dromakeenan, Roscrea, educated in Dromakeenan National School and was an outstanding scholar and an excellent handwriter. He was also an accomplished fife player and played in the Dromakeenan Fife and Drum band and later joined the British Army. I was introduced to Frank's poetry by Danny McGee (Moynure) and subsequently to Frank's niece Imelda Matthews, Roscrea who very kindly gave me permission to publish two of his poems. In Franks own words "When tonight you kneel to say your prayers remember this wee note, and offer up an Ave for, the Dromakeenan Poet."



**Frank Canning – The Dromakeenan Poet – pictured in Germany in 1914.
Frank is shown highlighted in the middle.**



**Left: Frank Canning as
seen in the photograph
above.**

PERRY'S OVERFLOW



It was on a summers evening, in the lovely month of June,
The little birds in bush and tree, their notes did sweetly tune.
With rod and line, in spirits fine, a-fishing I did go,
And the path I took, it led me down, to Perry's Overflow.

Ah, when I gazed upon the scene, my heart with grief was sore,
No dashing waves did welcome me, as they did in days of yore,
A little shallow streamlet runs a through the gates below,
Where once great waves did crash and roar, at Perry's Overflow.

The sound of those great waters, once, was heard for miles around,
And fish of all varieties were in those waters found.
The Trout the Pike, the Perch and Roach would swim about below,
And the Salmon shoot the rapids at Perry's Overflow.

My pals and I, did of times lie upon its mossy banks,
And on its little footbridge we would play our youthful pranks.
When passers-by would stand to watch, our best we'd always show,
We would imitate the circus man at Perry's Overflow.

I had two pals, one Michael M, the other Billie C,
They always were, and always will be very dear to me.
And sometimes we would have tiff, but never strike a blow,
For we were reared like brothers, down at Perry's Overflow.

Then after school it was the rule, to the orchard we would lie
And one would act as scout, in case the owner he was nigh,
And every pocket we would fill, and back again we'd go
And in comfort we would have a meal at Perry's Overflow.

Then crowds would often gather when they'd hear about the sport,
Sometimes it would remind you of a holiday resort,
When Billie tuned his vocal chords with his doh-ray-me-fa-so,
Twas like a night in Paradise at Perry's Overflow.

And when a song was ended, the crowd would shout encore,
For Billie in those bygone days would sing them songs galore.
And when he'd sing a love song, twas then you'd see the glow,
On the faces of young lovers at Perry's Overflow.

Oh God be with those grand old times when everyone was gay,
And God be with our dear old friends, who long have passed away,
And God be with the girls who came to tend their cows below,
They would often share our happiness at Perry's Overflow.

Farewell dear river of my youth, I bid you sad adieu,
For I may never stand again above your waters blue,
Oh if I was a Poet like Moore, or a Writer like Defoe,
I would sing and write in praise of you, my Perry's Overflow.

AMONGST THE FLOWERS IN MAY



Orange Hill in May

One morning in the month of May, as to my place of toil,
I walked along the winding lane, and through the little stile.
I passed through valleys rich and green, where lovely flowers abound,
And where the busy humming bee, a harvest rich had found.
The morning air was fresh and cool; the sun was beaming down,
It made the crystal dew drops shine, like diamonds in a crown.
This lovely valley was a place, where Angels they might stray,
For the nearest place to Heaven is, amongst the flowers in May.

The Lark on high did sweetly sing, the Birds in bush and tree,
As if to greet me on my way, poured out their melody.
I stood a while in silence, to thank the Lord above,
As I gazed upon the product, of His Everlasting Love.
The Violet blue, the Primrose too, bedecked this lovely scene,
I plucked a bunch for Mary, our Mother and our Queen.
And as the time to part drew nigh, I was loath to go away,
For the nearest place to Heaven is amongst the flowers in May.