

humour from roles that lent themselves to mirth, such as Myles na-gCopaleen in *The Lily of Killarney* and Mike Murphy in Stanford's *Shamus O'Brien*. Sir Charles Stanford told of one occasion when he was conducting his opera and O'Mara was in exuberant form and so funny were his antics that Sir Charles became quite doubled up with laughter and unable to conduct. He had to lay down his baton, the orchestra ceased playing and also commenced to roar with laughter along with the entire audience; and only when all had recovered and the uproar ceased could the opera proceed . . .

Altogether he sang in 67 operas. A prodigious worker, he was blessed with an exceptional musical memory. He could prompt either soprano, contralto, baritone or bass in any one of the operas in which he sang. Because of his innate acting ability it was agreed that if he ever lost his voice he could have earned a good living as an actor . . .

When he died in Dublin on 5 August 1927 the newspapers stated, 'Death has removed the greatest figure in the Irish musical world, a great singer and the greatest force behind grand opera in Ireland.' . . .

In Limerick his name is not entirely forgotten, though he is surely worthy of greater recognition. A small plaque on the facade of the house where he was born, and which today is known as Ozanam House, the headquarters of the local St Vincent de Paul Society, is the only reminder of one of Limerick's most famous sons.

Would not a bursary in his name, awarded, say, annually to a talented young Limerick singer or instrumentalist, be more lasting and appropriate?

Limerick, You're a Lady

Denis Allen

Limerick, you're a lady,
Your Shannon waters, tears of joy that flow,
The beauty that surrounds you,
I'll take it with me love where e'er I go.
While waking in the arms of distant waters,
A new day finds me far away from home,
And Limerick you're a lady,
The one true love that I have ever known.

As children you and I spent endless days of fun,
In winter's snow or summer's golden sun,
We fished in silver streams,
The fabric of my dreams
Was fashioned by your loveliness,
And so I have to say:

Chorus

A gift that time has made to travellers on their way,
Seeking out the beauty of our land,
A shrine where children pray,
And bells ring out to say,
Thank God we're living just to feel
The freedom of each day . . .

Chorus

THE LIMERICK COMPENDIUM

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