

6  
Peter O'Brien

from the author

ODDS AND ENDS  
(NUMBER ONE)



# ODDS AND ENDS

(NUMBER ONE)

BY

WELLINGTON COLOMB

ILLUSTRATIONS

BY

WELLINGTON COLOMB

(ALL RIGHTS RESERVED)



*"Odds and Ends" was at first intended for private circulation only, and was printed for that purpose alone.*

# CONTENTS

## OF

### NUMBER ONE.

	Page
PREFACE, . . . . .	1
LURLINE, . . . . .	3
A BALLAD, . . . . .	5
DESPAIR, . . . . .	7
A BALLAD OF SCREAMLAND, . . . . .	9
THE LAY OF THE ELLIS BROTHERS, . . . . .	11
THE OLD, OLD STORIES, . . . . .	15
THE LAY OF THE MAY WASP, . . . . .	18
ON THE BEACH, . . . . .	21
THE TEA-SWALLOWS, . . . . .	23
ELACKIE'S DRIVE, . . . . .	27
JEANIE'S FAREWELL, . . . . .	34
IN THE TRAIN, . . . . .	36





## Preface.

As when a boatman, from the shore,  
Pushes his skiff, or shallop ;  
Or jockey shoves his horse before  
He settles to his gallop ;

Or dog starts partridge with a whirr,  
From the September stubble ;  
Or schoolboy, dirty little cur,  
Launches his thin soap bubble ;

So, just like any one of these,  
I shove, start, launch the verses,  
Which like boat, bubble, what you please,  
Must trust to tender mercies.

The boat may sink, the striding horse  
May be upset, poor hobby,  
By an old woman on the course,  
Or by a dog, or bobby.

The partridges may, having first  
    Been shot, be cooked and eaten ;  
The soap bubble is born to burst,  
    The schoolboy to be beaten.

Away you go, my "Odds and Ends,"  
    Than bubbles, things far slighter,  
I'm glad to think that absent friends  
    Cannot assault the writer.



## LURLINE.

(Suggested by a statuette by a Danish Sculptor.)

Half woman, half spirit, so lovely, so still,  
What thought in thy gentle breast saddens thy face?  
Has the harp thou hast touched waked some exquisite  
thrill,

Some vision, unseen before, lent thee fresh grace?

Has music, "dear music," aroused in thy mind  
A feeling unknown and undreamt of before,  
And brought thee a longing—unfelt by thy kind—  
That, unsatisfied, henceforth may live evermore?

What is it thou hearest? or what hast thou seen,  
That moves thine expectancy? fair tender dove;  
If speech could be granted thee, gentle Lurline,  
Would it be like thy form, but expressive of love?

Till touched by some spell, wert thou callous and cold—  
Thy spirit untaught by the magic of love?  
Didst thou spring into being, as Eve did, of old,  
Filled with life and affection, at once, from above?

But still may we perceive the balm  
That even unkindness with it brings ;  
For cold is friendship, always calm,  
Compared to that which sometimes stings.  
Then let us not—while still we keep  
Soft calmness as a welcome guest—  
Forget that friendship, strong and deep,  
Too often wounds those loved the best.

A mountain's wooded side is fair  
When bathed in noontide's cloudless light,  
But still we miss a something there  
That steals out under rays less bright ;  
Let but a silver shower descend  
Between us and the feathered hill,  
Then softened tenderness will blend  
Its loveliness with sunlight still.

When all is calm, and bright, and fair,  
Affection's beauty is not known  
As truly as when doubt and care  
With friendship may dispute the throne.  
And so when kindness seems to fail,  
And saddened is our friendship's day,  
Look through the cold descending veil  
For softened warmth and purer ray.



### DESPAIR.

Upon the shore, upon the shore,  
While crested waves were onward dashing,  
With loud reverberating roar,  
To foam and spray the water lashing,

We sat together, he and I,  
And watched the white-topped ponderous breakers  
That rose against the evening sky,  
Up-starting from the watery acres.

He sought my hand, he sought my eye ;  
Then gazed out o'er the waste of water ;  
I heard a melancholy sigh,  
Which seemed to say, "In vain I sought her."

Then starting up he left my side ;  
With bounding step he sprang despairing,  
And plunged into the raging tide,  
For life, it seemed, no longer caring.



Is there scent of food on the wild night's breezes?

A sound of beasts going into the ark?

He marks me not, for at night chemises

That are hanging up airing he turns to bark.

Why should he howl at a midnight-sark?

Why should his tail stand stiff and unstirred?

Is he setting a hare, or a partridge, or lark?

Only the smell of a roasted bird.

ENVOI.

In a drunken dream I had chosen to snore,

While cream and lemon juice turn to curd,

And what came in at the open door?

Only the smell of a roasted bird.

EPILOGUE.

A black retriever sat at my table,

A poem of Swinburne's lay on my lap,

With my waking thoughts being quite unable

To guess what it meant I had taken a nap.

I cannot quite tell if "A Ballad of dreamland,"

Or *this* sweet poem's the more absurd,

But I think you'll agree that both "Dreamland and  
Screamland"

Are as horrible nonsense as ever was heard.

## THE LAY OF THE ELLIS BROTHERS.

(See the *East London Advertiser*, 17th Oct., '86.)

ELLIS BROTHERS, ELLIS BROTHERS, 6 AND 7, WHITE-  
CHAPEL-ROAD,

Better far than any other's wine our stately ships  
unload ;

For such wine as our *Champagne* is, *Claret*, bottled  
and in wood,

Search the town, your labour vain is, none you'll find  
one-half as good.

We've no secret: our device is  
*Finest Brands and lowest Prices.*

*Whiskey*, that will make you frisky, bottles each at  
two and six.

*Brandy*—you should have some handy, always, when  
you're in a fix,

Sickness 'twill remove with quickness—try it, that  
is all we ask ;

Buy it, try it, do not shy it—Brandy three and two  
a flask.



## THE LAY OF THE MAY WASP.

Died the wasp? The wasp was laid  
On the plate of that fair lady,  
Who the very deuce had played  
With Lieutenant James O'Grady.

There with one leg in the grave,  
And another in the gravy,  
While his life he sought to save,  
He was murdered by the Navy.

Whence that drowsy wasp had come,  
If a late or early comer,  
None could tell; but there were some  
Said he was a sign of Summer.

Some years after, like a shade  
Of herself, there was a shady  
Thing, but <sup>of</sup> a higher grade,  
"Mrs. *Admiral*" O'Grady.



And she always told, at lunch,  
How "the Admiral when lunching  
Years ago, had stopped to scrunch  
The wasp ;" and how she "heard the scrunching."

"James," that good wife "recollects,"  
Did, just after he'd collected  
Wasp's, remains, "(now she reflects)"  
Propose, and he was not rejected.

And the Admiral, who swore  
Like a gallant Briton, swore he  
"Would not have it any more,"  
And he said, "O drat that story."

But though years that lady wear,  
She is still her husband wearing  
With "that story." If you care  
To know ; the Admiral's still swearing.

Haply that old story brings  
To the Admiral a stinging  
Thought, that wives, like wasps, have stings,  
While that lady's voice is ringing.

But you should that lady see,  
Now, she is a sight worth seeing.  
For her husband's K.C.B.,  
She a still more stately being.

And Harry became a steady young man,  
White rose leaves will never make tea,  
And before very long he had hit on a plan,  
Of making some money at sea.

And he never drank now, as much as a drop,  
White rose leaves will never make tea,  
(It is easier far to go on than to stop,  
Inditing this nonsense ; dear me,

I ought to have stopped at verse sixteen,  
White rose leaves will never make tea,  
For that that is the number can plainly be seen,  
Of verses in "Swallows of Sea.")

To resume ; young Harry at length returned,  
White rose leaves will never make tea,  
And saw by a candle that dimly burned,  
The girl he had thought on at sea.

Through the window he saw her, sitting alone,  
Faded white rose leaves were on her knee ;  
"My darling," he said in a soft low tone,  
"I have come back to you from sea."

Her words and her kiss were as soft as balm,  
No white rose leaves could sweeter be,  
And their life henceforth was as bright and as calm  
As moonlight's path on a summer sea.



## BLACKIE'S DRIVE.

"Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth ;"  
So, in sage counsel it is spoken.  
"Or ever silver cord be loosed,  
Or ever golden bowl be broken."

### PART I.

The snow lies deep on plain and steep,  
The stars on the black water quiver,  
The frozen ledge juts from the edge,  
Of the deep, slowly flowing river.

The rising moon's full orb will soon  
Above the distant line appear,  
Of the dark hill, that huge and still,  
Wakes in the traveller's mind a fear.

For he must seek, past snowy peak,  
His lonely way across the mountain,  
Where every cleft is filled with drift,  
And ice-bound every stream and fountain.



Although by day, his tangled way,  
The lonely traveller might unravel,  
To night he must the instinct trust,  
Of the companion of his travel.

And cold, intense, will dull the sense,  
And render horse and driver weary :  
Through the gaunt trees, the sighing breeze  
Will make the dreariness more dreary.

But not for long, the courage strong,  
Of the bold youth such thought oppresses ,  
His heart is light, by day or night,  
Even in dangers and distresses.

And now it swells, as Blackie's bells,  
Combining with the rapid motion,  
Are bringing back to beaten track,  
Thoughts deeply tinged with fond devotion.

His thoughts outrace poor Blackie's pace ;  
While Blackie, though both swift and steady,  
Is miles away from where, next day,  
Both hope to be, he's there already,

In spirit ; where a bashful air,  
A kindly, smiling, welcome greets him—  
Where promised wife—his more than life—  
In his imagination meets him.

'Twas in this sleigh, but yesterday,  
She deigned, from anxious doubt, to save him ;  
And here he pressed her to his breast,  
As she the long-wished promise gave him.

In Blackie's bells new music dwells  
Since yesterday's intense emotion.  
In Blackie, too, there's something new—  
Some consciousness of his devotion.

That Blackie goes as if he knows  
What thoughts enchain the happy lover,  
Indeed it seems ; but lover's dreams  
Often strange sympathies discover.

While under bright, new, blissful light  
All seems so fair—with much to blind him  
What deep thoughts rise, what happy ties,  
To heaven and earth alike now bind him.

How strange it seems, that one he deems  
So distant, and so far above him,  
With such sweet grace, in her dear face,  
Should, with such fervour, stoop to love him.

What glad surprise will fill her eyes,  
When in the morning she will greet him  
To rest to-night and wait for light  
To travel by, she did entreat him,



Yet the faint sound its way has found  
Into a happy dream she's weaving,  
Where a loved face holds welcome place,  
And real sound helps in deceiving.

At lover's side, with hidden pride  
She sits, while Blackie's bells are ringing,  
Summer's warm sun shines bright upon  
The leafy trees, while birds are singing.

Her lover speaks of snowy peaks,  
And of the dangers left behind him ;  
He tells her too, how deep, how true,  
Are the fond, loving thoughts that bind him.

#### PART IV.

While listening to the tale he tells,  
As loving interest still increases,  
Louder and nearer seem the bells ;  
But suddenly their music ceases.

Her eyelids part ; with sudden start  
She breaks away from sleep that bound her,  
And quickly throbs her beating heart,  
While a fur cloak she throws around her.



Hopeful surprise is in her eyes,  
As through the window she is peeping,  
But with a chill dread sense of ill,  
She sees, below, her lover sleeping.

Solemn and slow, some feathery snow  
Falls on the still form there reclining,  
And faintly bright, the morning light  
On the pale quiet face is shining.

The loving kiss, the dawning bliss—  
All, all, to her, is now forbidden,  
For he shall sleep until the deep  
Gives up the dead that there lie hidden.

Her own sweet life, the promised wife  
Would wildly give for his, to save it.  
The loved form must return to dust,  
The spirit unto God who gave it.

The heart's warm throb—the nerve's deep thrill  
Through silver cord—in golden fountain,  
Now, ever, and forever still,  
Were stilled and lost on yonder mountain.

15th January, 1887.

## JEANIE'S FAREWELL.

(IN IMITATION OF BURNS).

“ I was aye but a saucy quean,  
I ken I didna treat you fairly,  
I crossed you sin' I was a wean,  
I rue it sairly.”

“ I mind the time, whan first o' a',  
I thought my bonnie laddie lo'ed me,  
I tauld ye, ye might gang awa',  
Anither woo'd me.”

“ I tauld ye that my heed was sair  
Wi' listenin to your nonsense clavers,  
I said I caredna see ye mair ;  
'Twas just my haivers.”

“ Lang, lang ago, whan in the shaw,  
I saw ye thick wi' cousin Pheme,  
I could hae smoord her in the snaw ;  
May Gude forgie me.”



'But Rob, I lo'ed ye a' my life ;  
I did in troth, I amna leein'.  
I surely meant to be yer wife,  
And noo—a'm deein'."

"Just but yersel' I wad hae nane,  
I never lo'ed anither ; never ;  
Ye maun forgie me when I'm ta'en  
Awa' for ever."

"I ca'ed for ye to tell you this,  
I ken you've had a hard time wi' me,  
Ye'll gie your Jeanie just ae kiss,  
And, Rob—forgie me."

"Ma bonnie Rob, ye maunna greet,  
We whiles had unco times thegither,  
And in the niest warld we may meet  
Wi' ane anither."

17th January, 1887.



And to plan how you'll discover,  
How to maid an ardent lover's  
Swearing, by the moon above her,  
That he's dying for her sake ;  
Or how, after he has carried  
All before him, and has married  
One who long for him has tarried,  
He discovers his mistake.

When for better, or for worse he's  
Bound to babies, and to nurses,  
And must even drop his verses  
For the future of his life ;  
For he finds his muse's soaring  
Is prevented by the roaring  
Of a child, or by the snoring  
Of his loved and loving wife.

When he'd give his eyes to smother  
The young wife and happy mother,  
Almost wishing that another  
Man had carried off his bride ;  
And he's looking back to leisure  
He enjoyed in scanty measure,  
Long before he won the treasure  
That is sleeping by his side.

Though in such distorted fancy  
 I confess I never *can* see  
 Aught but gross extravagancy  
     Calling loudly for reproof ;  
 Yet I own I like a ditty  
 Whether sorrowful, or pretty,  
 Bright, or fanciful, or witty,  
     Whatsoever be the woof.

But to rhyme about the snoring  
 Of bright beings, man, adoring,  
 Has through ages, been imploring  
     To compassionate his life,  
 Is indeed a desecration  
 Quite demanding condemnation  
 From the best part of creation,  
     Whether widow, maid, or wife.

To describe a nasty spiteful  
 Man who wishes that his rightful  
 Wife had not been such, is frightful  
     Waste, or worse, of precious time ;  
 And indeed it makes one shiver  
 Sending down one's back a river,  
 To imagine a full quiver  
     Can be ever thought a crime.



Yes, it's pleasant, and amusing,  
While the wheels, and rails, and you sing,  
For a time to stop abusing  
Your acquaintances and friends ;  
And for nephews, and for nieces  
(How relationship increases)  
Thus to jot down doggerel pieces,  
Scraps of nonsense, odds and ends

And I only trust my brothers,  
And my nieces, and their mothers,  
And my sisters, and the others  
Will excuse a man who spends  
His extremely scanty leisure  
Left by work, for sleep or pleasure  
(Work by no means short in measure)  
In inditing "Odds and Ends" ;

Who surrounded by the flurry,  
And the hurry, and the scurry,  
And the disappointing worry  
That attends official life ;  
Thus attempts to keep his temper,  
And his spirits *idem semper*  
In this worst bit of the Empire  
Torn to rags by civil (?) strife.

31st Jan., 1887.