

The Plains of Waterloo

“If you the wreath of laurel grasp
From yon usurper’s brow,
Through ages all, you shall be called
‘The Prince of Waterloo.’”

The bloody fight it then began.
The cannon loud did roar;
We, being short of cavalry,
They pressed us full sore.
Three British cheers we gave them,
With volleys not a few,
Which made them wish themselves in France,
And far from Waterloo.

For full four hours, or longer, we
Sustained the bloody fray;
And during a long, darksome night
Upon our arms we lay.
The orders of our General
Next day, we did pursue.
We retired in files for near six miles,
To the plains of Waterloo.

This day both armies kept their ground,
When scarce a shot was fired;
The French did boast a victory gained
Because we had retired.
This noble act of generalship
Them from their stronghold drew;
Then we’d some share by fighting fair
On the plains of Waterloo.

On the eighteenth, in the morning,
Both armies did advance;
On this side stood brave Albion’s sons,
On that, the pride of France.
The fate of Europe in his hands,
Each man his saber drew,
And “Death or Victory” was the word,
On the plains of Waterloo.

Upon our right they did begin,
Prince Jerome led the van,
With Imperial Guards and Cuirassiers,
Though none could them withstand;
But British steel soon made them yield,
Though our numbers were but few;
Prisoners we made, but more lay dead,
On the plains of Waterloo.

Then to our left they bent their course,
In disappointed rage;
The Belgian line fought for a time,
But could not stand the charge;
Then Caledon took up her drone,
And loud her chantie [sic] blew;
Played “Marshall Ney,” a new strathspey,
To the tune of “Waterloo.”

Before the tune was half played o’er
The French had danced their fill;
Ten thousand of their warriors
Lay dead upon the field.
Ten thousand prisoners we took,
Imperial eagles, too;
Oh! British valor was displayed
On the plains of Waterloo.

A health to George, our Royal King
And long may he govern;
Likewise, the Duke of Wellington
That noble son of Erin!
Two years they added to our time,
With pay and pension, too;
And now, we are recorded all,
As “Men of Waterloo.”

Father used to sing a scrap of a song to this same tune –

It would melt your heart to pity
To hear those Frenchmen’s wives
Likewise, their tender daughters,
And to hear their mournful cries;
Saying, “Mother, dearest Mother,
Forever may we rue-u-u
The losing of our dear papas
On the plains of Waterloo.”