

Folk & Traditional Song Lyrics

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Are Ye Right There, Michael?

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(Percy French, 1902)

You may talk of Columbus's sailing
Across the Atlantical sea
But he never tried to go railing
From Ennis as far as Kilkee
You may run for the train in the mornin'
The excursion TRAIN starting at eight
You're there when the clock gives the warnin'
And there for an hour you'll wait

(Spoken)

And as you're waiting in the train
You'll hear the guard sing this refrain

"Are ye right there, Michael? Are ye right?
Do you think that we'll be there before the night?
Ye've been so long in startin'
That you couldn't say for sartin' (certain)
Still ye might now, Michael, so ye might!"

They find out where the engine's been hiding
And it drags you to Sweet Corofin
Says the guard "Back her down on the siding
There's the goods from Kilrush coming in"
Perhaps in comes in in two hours
Perhaps it breaks down on the way
"If it does," says the guard, "by the powers
We're here for the rest of the day"

(Spoken)

And while you sit and curse your luck
The train backs down into a truck

"Are ye right there, Michael? Are ye right?
Have ye got the parcel there for Mrs. White
Ye haven't, Oh begorra
Say it's comin' down tomorra
And it might now, Michael, so it might!"

At Lahinch the sea shines like a jewel
With joy you are ready to shout,
When the stoker cries out "There no fuel

And the fire's taytotally out.
"But hand up that bit of log there
I'll soon have ye out of the fix
There's a fine clamp of turf in the bog there
And the rest go a-gatherin' sticks

(Spoken)

And while you're breakin' bits of trees
You'll hear some wise remarks like these

"Are you right there, Michael? Are ye right?
Do ye think that ye can get the fire to light?"

"Oh, an hour you'll require
For the turf it might be drier"

"Well it might now, Michael, so it might!"

Kilkee! Oh you never get near it!
You're in luck if the train brings you back
For the permanent way is so queer
It spends most of it's time off the track
Uphill the old engine is climbin'
While the passengers push with a will
You're in luck when you reach Ennistymon
For all the way home is down hill

(That's all I have.....I'm presuming that these come next....)

"Are you right there, Michael, are ye right?
Do you think that we'll be there before it's light?"

"Tis all dependin' whether
The ould engine howlds together -"

"And it might now, Michael, so it might!"

Are you right there Michael are you right?
Do you think we'll make it home before the night
Ah, with all the stoppin' and startin'
Sure you never can be certain,
So we might now Michael so we might.

The owners of the railway entered an action for libel against Percy French (the writer) who entered a counter claim - for being the cause of making him late for a professional engagement. The railway company backed down and made a payment in his favour. The West Clare Railway is now defunct. The engine was called "Bessborough" still stands at Ennis station. The original "Michael" is said to have been Michael Talty who died aged 99 in 1957.

Percy French actually won the case and was awarded one penny by the judge. he had to pay his own legal costs. The West Clare Railway closed in 1957. the tracks

taken up and the land sold back to farmers. What a pity?

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