

The Dying Telegrapher - song lyrics

American Old-time song lyrics from www.traditionalmusic.co.uk

THE DYING TELEGRAPHER.

By J. W. Quinn.

In a far-off Western city, did the last rays of the sun
Peep through the windows of a house where lay a dying one;
It seemed to linger 'round his bed to light life's dying day,
As fast were death's shades falling on the sick man as he lay.

A bunch of freshest flowers on a table near him stood,
Sweet-breathed as heaven air and fair as those of Eden's wood;
The rose, to fain hide beauty's thorn, did bend its head so fair,
And the lily pale to whiteness at the secret hidden there.

The light within the man's dark eyes belied the gray-streaked hair,
And showed through dissipation age had stolen his seat there.
The wise, old sage, experience, had taught (though now in vain)
That pleasures bought by bartered youth are all alloyed with pain.

Fond memory's torch did brighten as he lay with dreamy eyes,
And his mind went back to other days of fairer, sunnier skies;
No clouds of trouble threw their shadows cross his path, but then
A mother's hand did guide him from the paths of erring men.

Once more he sees the moonlight sleeping on the river's bank;
And also where the green moss crept down to its edge and drank;
The garden that he called his own-his birds that sang of love-
Ah! seemed it all a vision of the future home above?

The dark-eyed, sweet-faced mother that seemed ever by his side-
The little cot at which he knelt and prayed at eventide-
His sister-how the sunshine loved to linger in her hair;
He wondered was she living yet, or waiting over there.

Once more upon the college-grounds he stands with tearful eye,
And bids the friends around him each a loving last, good-bye.
Expelled, disgraced, he would not-no he could not turn to home-
A word-a look-a sob-a step, then-in the world alone!

A few more turns of memory's leaves and then he sees again
The Western Union office, and the blanks, the ink and pen;
The ticker he invented, the money it brought him-
Then dissipation, gambling, wine-all agents of deep sin.

The last page of life's book is turned, and here-the death-bed scene.
The man whose star unheeded set without the faintest gleam;
No brightness of I lie past to light the future's unknown shore:
A few more fleeting moments will life's more than dream be o'er.

For he's dying, dying, dying, and the current's growing weak;
Life's jars are surely broken and the fluid fast does leak;
Through storms of fitful passion its supports had weaker grown,
And the failing body-prison shortly finds the soul has flown.

In a corner of the grave-yard is a mound that's brier-strewn;
On a simple board above it are these words so roughly hewn:
"Should a brother chance to pass this spot, then let him drop a tear,
For unknown, unloved, forgotten lies an operator here."