

THE FAMOUS FLASHING LANE

*'Twas a mellow morn of summer
And green was on the land.
I drove alone for Appleby
In ancient Westmoreland,
Until my sight with trailers bright
Was filled, and I lonely came
To where the famous horses run
The famous Flashing Lane.*

*The Travellers there from
every breed*

*Across the Isles were stood:
From Berwick old upon the Tweed
To Hampshire's royal wood.
From Dublin fair to the fields
of Blair
And the Dornoch's banks of Tain,
Each had his track that led
him back
To the famous Flashing Lane.*

*I walked among the fillies fine,
The geldings and the mares,
A-glistening with the river
Where the riders washed
them there.
And as I walked I heard them talk
The Gamin and Rum'ny plain,
And the thundering of hooves
did sing
Along the Flashing Lane.*

*The old did shout as the young
rode out
As brave as any I saw,
Yet among the glad I felt me sad
For a day they'd come no more.
'Til I caught the eye on a
stallion high
Of a maid, and she spoke
my name,
And a silence strange brang a
ghostly change
Along the Flashing Lane.*

*The faces bold of the young
and old
Were vanish-ed from there
As alone I stood in the
narrow road
With the maid and the
stallion fair.
My heart was took by her
piteous look
As she said, "What is your pain
To sadly stand on the sacred land
Of the famous Flashing Lane?"*

*And as she stared I remembered,
And I said "Such is my grief:
That my ancient race should
be disgraced
As none but tramps and thieves.
For I recall when we had fair all,
Our stories, and our good name,
And the right to stay by the
ancient way
Of the famous Flashing Lane.*

*"We went from North to the East
and South
And the West where the red
sun burned,
To anywhere with work to do
And money to be earned.
We made the best of every jest;
We were poor but 'twas no shame,
For we had our tales of the glens
and dales
And the famous Flashing Lane.*

*"A Tinker's graft was a skill
and craft
And it was no shaming word,
And we neither took from lord
nor serf
An insult that we heard.
They dealt us cards severe
and hard
But we laughed, and moved again,
For we could turn their trash
to gold
And we had the Flashing Lane.*

*"Now on the television screen
They laugh at us for fools,
For putting strength and shelter first
And failing in their schools.
No word get we of apology
For their crimes, and it stays the same,
And why should we vote when there's
no hope
For the famous Flashing Lane?"*

*She smiled at me, and said "Now see
I bring a secret word,
From those who sleep beneath your feet
Within the ancient earth.
What is success in your busyness
If all is stress and strain?
And who knows best but those
who rest
Beside the Flashing Lane?"*

*"For take the sunlight from the world
And gold no longer shines.
Take every chance you get in life,
But also take your time.
What use are tricks and politics
If you only see the rain?
And it's always summer somewhere
Flashing down the Flashing Lane.*

*"It won't be strength or cleverness
That helps us in the world,
But another strong young mother
Bringing up a little girl.
O don't despair as you stand there:
The future's not ordained,
And as long as there are Travellers
There will be a Flashing Lane."*

*She said these words and disappeared
From clean out of my sight,
And faces filled the lane again
With laughter in the light.
She might have been my imagining,
And I saw her ne'er again,
But I won't forget the one I met
On the famous Flashing Lane.*

