



PARK GATE, HALIFAX, N.S.

•• Got Left. ••

The woman was tall and wan, and thin,
With a scraggy beardlet upon her chin,
The man was short, and thick and stout,
His stomach was built so it rounded out.
His face was pleasant and all the while
He wore a kindly and genial smile.
The choirs in the distance the echoes woke,
And the man kept still while the woman spoke.

"Oh, thou who guardest the gate," said she,
"We two come hither, beseeching thee
To let us enter the heavenly land,
And play our harps with the angel band,
Of me, St. Peter, there is no doubt,
There's nothing from heaven to bar me out.
I've been to meetings three times a week,
And almost always I'd rise and speak.

I've told the sinner about the day
When they'd repent of their evil way,
I've told my neighbors—I've told them all
'Bout Adam and Eve, and the Primal Fall,
I've shown them what they'd have to do
If they'd pass in with the chosen few.
I've marked their path of duty clear
Laid out the plan for their whole career.

I've talked and talked to 'em loud and long,
For my lungs are good and my voice is strong.
So good St. Peter you'll clearly see
The gate of heaven is open to me,
But my old man, I regret to say,
Hasn't walked in exactly the narrow way,
He smokes and he swears and grave faults he's got
And I don't know whether he'll pass or not.

He never would pray with an earnest vim,
Or go to revival, or join in a hymn,
So I had to leave him in sorrow there
While I with the chosen, united in prayer,

He ate what the pantry chanced to afford,
While I in my purity sang to the Lord,
And if cucumbers were all he got
It's a chance if he merited them or not.

But oh, St. Peter, I love him so!
To the pleasures of heaven please let him go!
I've done enough—a saint I've been,
Won't that atone? Can't you let him in?
By my grim gospel I know 'tis so
That the unrepentant must fry below.
But isn't there some way you can see
That he may enter who's dear to me?

It's a narrow gospel by which I pray
But the chosen expect to find some way
Of coaxing, or fooling, or bribing you
So that their relation can amblo through.
And say, St. Peter, it seems to me
This gate isn't kept as it ought to be.
You ought to stand by that opening there
And never sit down in that easy chair.

And say, St. Peter my sight is dimmed,
But I don't like the way your whiskers are trimmed:
They're cut too wide and outward toss,
They'd look better narrow, cut straight across.
Well, we must be going our crowns to win,
So open, St. Peter, and we'll pass in!"

St. Peter sat quiet and stroked his staff
But, spite of his office, he had to laugh,
Then said, with a fiery gleam in his eye,
"Who's tending this gateway—you or I?"
And then he arose in his stature tall,
And pressed a button upon the wall,
And said to the imp who answered the bell:
"Escort this lady around to hell!"

The man stood still as a piece of stone—
Stood sadly, gloomily there alone.
A life long, settled idea he had
That his wife was good and he was bad.

He thought if the woman went down below
That he would certainly have to go—
That if she went to the region dim
There wasn't the ghost of a show for him.

Slowly he turned by habit bent
To follow wherever the woman went;
St. Peter standing on duty there,
Observed that the top of his head was bare.
He called the gentleman back, and said:
"Friend, how long have you been wed?"
"Thirty years" (with a weary sigh)
And then he thoughtfully added, "Why?"

St. Peter was silent. With head bent down
He raised his hand and scratched his crown.
Then, seeming a different thought to take,
Slowly, half to himself, he spake—
"Thirty years with that woman there!
No wonder the man hasn't any hair!
Swearing is wicked. Smoke's not good.
He smoked and swore—I should think he would.

Thirty years with that tongue so sharp?
Ho! Angel Gabriel! Give him a harp!
A jeweled harp with a golden string!
Good sir, pass in where the angels sing!
Gabriel, give him a seat alone—
One with a cushion—up near the throne!
Call up some angels to play their best,
Let him enjoy the music and rest!

See that on finest Ambrosia he feeds,
He's had about all the hell he needs.
It isn't just hardly the thing to do
To roast him on earth and the future too."

They gave him a harp with golden strings,
A glittering robe and a pair of wings,
And he said as he entered the Realm of Day,
"Well, this beats cucumbers, anyway!"
And so the Scriptures had come to pass;
"The last shall be first and the first shall be last."