

"RODGER QUINN" - MILESTONE INSPECTOR ^{AND} POET.

Rodger Quinn - Travelled the Border Country side during the late twenties and early thirties. He was so very different from the modern tramp of today - who call themselves 'Travellers' in their modern cars and motor cars - Rodger had only "Shank's pony" - Well, I remember auld Quinn as we called him - perhaps he was not really old - but to a school girl - seeing him with his auld battered "farty hat" and long shabby coat - with all his worldly goods tied in a tattie sack on his back - he looked old, wi his bristles unshaven face and decay stained teeth, as he used to stand and chat to us barms on our way to or from school, by the loch side - asking us what we had learned "the day" and usually ended up before moving on. ^{breaking into} Song →

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2
OR a few of his verses he had composed
on his travels between the various farms
and road side houses, where folks know
him, and would give him a "piece"
and a jug o' tea, at their back door —
in return for a wee bit o' work about
the place — splitting logs — OR making
? out the byre, or hen houses — and
Maybe my Grandfather would give him
a file o' Bacon, for his clay pipe —
wi its broken stem and broon wi age
that he never seemed to be without.

As I remember he had bright and
twinkling eyes — and to us school
children, seemed to know — so much.
Some said he was an educated
man, maybe the Black Sheep o' a
respected family, who just wanted to
have the freedom and live the simple
way of life — and being close to nature
and to live his way. He was always
giver shelter & food at his places of
call, as he moved around the country.
side, through all seasons, his knowledge
of nature was great — He would write

a few lines of verse - on the byre or
 stable wall in appreciation. In
 these days we never ran off or feared a
 man we met on the road - looking as
 he did - he was a kindly and gentle
 tramp, who just loved the freedom to
 roam, with some nights in summer -
 with the sky for his roof - and the stars
 and moon for his lamp, - and as
 children he satisfied us in answering
 our many questions; and he ay had
 a joke or a riddle or a few lines of
 verse or song when he met us. -
 Unlike to day when one can hardly
 think to walk a quiet mile alone -
 in case you encounter a man who
 would not think twice of knocking
 you over; and stealing whatever
 you had. Months went by and
 folks wondered what had become of
 "Quinn" for his rounds were so regular
 - he never did hear what happened -
 but it was said that he was found
 dead in a wood, just sitting by his
 wee 'stick' fire wi' his black 'Billy Can'

4
Hanging on a wire - tri-pod - and
So could Roger travelled on the
The Land of the Seal "without anyone
ever knowing of his true place in
life or where he came from, he just
left this life in quietness and peace,
but I'm sure - that in many places -
his verses were to be found, scribbled
on many a shed wall, as he
sheltered for the night, and so, who
knows - perhaps he goes on, in some
great world in space, doing his
odd jobs and making his verses
and songs - aye, and maybe -
polishing the Harps - who knows!!

Jillie Scott Shaw

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