

All Jobs did get in Belturbet, at threshing up their bedding,
And through Cavan I taught a plan, that took the best of trading,
I was three days in Ballibays, a month in Clownish work,
In Simithsborough I was not slow, in dressing up their shirting.

In Monaghan the lasses ran, I kindly was received,
And from Glasslough unto Armagh, both night and day I weaved,
And round Richhill I showed my skill, I though no crime to flatter,
I crossed the Bann to Ligo land, and spent the winter quarter.

I am roving Sheales that never fails, though Misers do employ me,
In Lurgan town I will sit down in back lane I'll tarry,
And with young maids I'll always trade, but hang me if I marry.

Although there is no demonstrable connection, a number of coincidences make plausible the idea that this song regarding the amorous ramblings of a journeyman weaver from Lurgan, Co Armagh was composed by the father of the Drogheda popular poet, John Sheil.

1. **Lurgan is six miles from Portadown, named by some as John Sheil's birthplace and confirmed by Sheil himself (Sheil's *Shamrock* p. 31)**
The Orangeman
"The hot-bed then of Orangemen,
It's there I first drew vital air;
In Lurgan town and Portadown,
And miles along the River Bann,
The hellish deeds would make you bleed
Of every bloody Orangeman.
2. **John Sheil was a weaver at a time when that trade commonly passed from father to son**
3. **The common pronunciation of Sheil in Drogheda was and is Shayle, phonetically, as in this song**
4. **The Shaile of this song is clearly familiar with many parts of Ireland and would have had no difficulty travelling to Killala (near Ballina, which is mentioned) in 1798, as, it is reported, he and his son did.**
5. **It would not be unusual for rhyming to occur in families.**

I've elaborated some of this idea in a chapter "The Best English-Irish Poetry Before Yeats" in *The Oxford Handbook of Irish Song, 1100 to 1900*. So far this has been published only online and only for subscribers but the presentation that preceded it can be found on my website - <http://moulden.org>—you're welcome!

From a song book
A New Song, on the Half-pence Cried Down,
or a Peep into a Whiskey-Shop.

To which is Added,
Shailes's Ramble,
Printed in the Year 1795

The booklet described above is in an uncatalogued volume of eleven song and other chapbooks in the Library of Trinity College Dublin. Its second song is of some interest! See, Andrew Carpenter Verse in English from Eighteenth-Century Ireland, for a slightly different version.

Shailes's Ramble, Or, the Lurgan Weaver



Done by John Moulden, Carndonagh, 2022
Broadside Extra Dublin Technological University, 15th October 2022.

You Lasses free of each degree, now hear my invitation,
I am a lad tho' trade is bad that's known by reputation,
If you comply and wont deny, and wants your work done neatly,
Your looms I'll square to half a hair, and wave your webs completely.

So now you maids that love the trade, and now has took the notion,
Apply to me we'll soon agree, I'll put your loom in motion,
If your geers be struck to fit the work, I'll do my best endeavour,
To raise a twill with art and skill, for I'm the Lurgan Weaver.

I your beams will stretch in the broad reach, I'll pick and dress your
yarn,
Your sliders raise will cloath with ease, in cellers shops or barns
One I have to graze [and]d stave, [I] use no comb or sheers,
My pullies hings your yarn springs, when o'er I touch your geers.

My s[l]ays will play without a stay, my head[le]ss falls a working,
Both right and left throws in the weft, without the temples bursting,
My bore staff's long both stiff and strong, my shuttle still in order,
With open shades I'll fall to trade, and selvege near your border.

You [dia]per boys that make such noise, with lambs coupers and pea-
cans
With rattling slates your works compleat, to dress fine parlour tables,
If one cord you stretch you make a breach, and hover round your bunch-
es,
But your toiling crafts and puzzling drafts, will never please the wench-
es,

For I served my time to coarse and fine, not like your stroling rakers,
That Shillaley clown I'll pull him down, likewise the dirty baker,
My plan is new both nice and true, I am the boy that's ready,
M'Cuskers plough is over now, and likewise treshing neddy.

If nea[l] appear or downey here, to sei[ze] up cloth or yarn,
I'm on my oath to break them both, their trade they have to learn,
Apply to me I ask no fee, your time is only wasting,
The work I [f/s]eal you shall have bail, will stand the winter bleaching.

When Flora queen with mantle green, bedecks the fields and meadows,
And Aurora fades in lonesome shades, I toy with buxom widows,

In house or tent I pay no rent, no dues or the to Rectors,
From hearth money I'm always free, I value no inspectors.

Last year mispent I ne'er resent, I think not on to-morrow,
Each blooming day brings in new pay, I'm free from care and sorrow,
But here and there among the fair, to rid myself of trouble,
If they do scold or be too bold, I give my usual double.

But soon my fame began to reign, all through this irish nation,
Through villages and seaport towns, [a]nd all the corporations,
From Bellisbough I then set off, to seek for new adventures,
Be not dismayed I'll show you trade, I carry my indentures,

To Hillsborough I then did go, and manly I behaved,
And in dromore both hard and sore, the yarn there I s[t/l]aved,
Then to Newry along the quay, the Sailors seemed to grumble,
But with surprize the maids did rise, their pride I soon did humble.

As for my walk unto Dundalk, I was a noted rangar
And from all round the mountains down, I dressed their danger,
To Drogheda I took my way, from that to Dublin city,
I was envy'd but still could hide, among the maidens pretty.

In the town of Naas as I did pass, I raised the lasses wages,
In Mayborough and through Carlow, I done my work courageous,
In Kikenny I wilt record, the maids was all apprized.

Then to Clonmell and through Cashel, I wetted up their sheetings,
On Youghall shore I drank galore, I use no thumbs or bating,
To Cork and Cove I there did rove, Bandon, Tralee and Dingle,
In Limerick I staid a week, and made their Looms to jingle.

To Iniss and Clare I did repair, I decently was used,
In Banagher I was Journeyman, My shuttle ne'er refused,
In Athlone when when I known, the men they strove to slay me.
Unto Loughreagh without delay, the females did convey me,

In Athrea and Golaway, I friendly there was treated.
Then through Headford and Balinnobe, my work I there completed.
Then to westport I did resort, and Bellinatirady.
All through Sligo my work did shew, the clowns I did not value.