

Dan The Wreck

Slim Dusty

Tall, and stout, and solid-looking,
Yet a wreck;
None would think Death's finger's hooking
Him from deck.
Cause of half the fun that's started
'Hard-case' Dan,
Isn't like a broken-hearted,
Ruined man.

Wearing summer boots in June, or
Slippers worn and old,
Like a man whose other shoes are
Getting soled.
Pants? They're far from being recent
But, perhaps, I'd better not,
Say they are the only decent
Pair he's got.

And his hat, I am afraid, is
Troubling him,
Past all lifting to the ladies
By the brim.
But, although he'd hardly strike a
Girl, would Dan,
Yet he wears his wreckage like a
Gentleman!

Once, no matter how the rest dressed
Up or down,
Once, they say, he was the best-dressed
Man in town.
Must have been before I knew him
Now you'd scarcely care to meet
And be noticed talking to him
In the street.

Drink the cause, and dissipation,
That is clear
Maybe friend or kind relation
Cause of beer.
And the talking fool, who never
Reads or thinks,
Says, from hearsay: 'Yes, he's clever;
But, you know, he drinks.'

Where he lives, or how, or wherefore
No one knows;
Lost his real friends, and therefore
Lost his foes.
Had, no doubt, his own romances
Met his fate;
Tortured, doubtless, by the chances
And the luck that comes too late.

Now and then his boots are polished,
And collar clean,
And the worst grease stains abolished

With ammonia or benzine:
Hints of some attempt to shove him
From the taps,
Or of someone left to love him,
Sister, p'r'aps.

After all, he is a grafter,
Earns his cheer,
Keeps the room in roars of laughter
When he gets outside a beer.
Yarns that would fall flat from others
He can tell;
How he spent his `stuff', my brothers,
You can know well.

Manner puts a man in mind of
Old club balls and evening dress,
Ugly with a handsome kind of
Ugliness.
One of those we say of often,
While hearts swell,
Standing sadly by the coffin:
`He looks well.'

I may be, so goes a rumour,
Bad as Dan;
Oh, but we may not have the humour
Of that man;
Nor the sight – well, deem it blindness,
As the general public do,
And the love of human kindness,
Or the GRIT to see it through!

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Yet a wreck;
None would think Death's finger's hooking
Him from deck.
Cause of half the fun that's started [fade out]