

The
Dublin Book
Of Irish Verse

1728-1909

Edited by
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Dublin
Hodges, Figgis & Co., Ltd.
London

Henry Frowde, Oxford University Press
1909

WILLIAM CARLETON

How light my youthful visions shone,
 When spann'd by Fancy's radiant form ;
 But now her glittering bow is gone,
 And leaves me but the cloud and storm.
 With wasted form, and cheek all pale—
 With heart long seared by grief and pain ;
 Dunroe, I'll seek thy native gale,
 I'll tread my mountain glens again.

Thy breeze once more may fan my blood,
 Thy valleys all are lovely still ;
 And I may stand, where oft I stood,
 In lonely musings on thy hill.
 But, ah ! the spell is gone ;—no art
 In crowded town, or native plain,
 Can teach a crush'd and breaking heart
 To pipe the song of youth again.

JEREMIAH JOSEPH CALLANAN

56 *Dirge of O'Sullivan Bear* (6)

From the Irish

1795-1829

THE sun on Ivera¹
 No longer shines brightly ;
 The voice of her music
 No longer is sprightly ;
 No more to her maidens
 The light dance is dear,
 Since the death of our darling
 O'Sullivan Bear.

¹ The old name of Bearhaven ; it is still preserved in the name of the barony of Iveragh.

JEREMIAH JOSEPH CALLANAN

Scully ! thou false one,
 You basely betrayed him,
 In his strong hour of need,
 When thy right hand should aid him ;
 He fed thee—he clad thee—
 You had all could delight thee :
 You left him—you sold him—
 May heaven requite thee !

Scully ! may all kinds
 Of evil attend thee !
 On thy dark road of life
 May no kind one befriend thee !
 May fevers long burn thee,
 And agues long freeze thee !
 May the strong hand of God
 In his red anger seize thee !

Had he died calmly,
 I would not deplore him ;
 Or if the wild strife
 Of the sea-war closed o'er him :
 But with ropes round his white limbs
 Through ocean to trail him,
 Like a fish after slaughter—
 'Tis therefore I wail him.

Long may the curse
 Of his people pursue them ;
 Scully, that sold him,
 And soldier that slew him !
 One glimpse of heaven's light
 May they see never !
 May the hearthstone of hell
 Be their best bed for ever !

In the hole which the vile hands
 Of soldiers had made thee,
 Unhonour'd, unshrouded,
 And headless they laid thee ;
 No sigh to regret thee,
 No eye to rain o'er thee,
 No dirge to lament thee,
 No friend to deplore thee !

Dear head of my darling,
 How gory and pale,
 These aged eyes see thee,
 High spiked on their gaol !
 That cheek in the summer sun
 Ne'er shall grow warm ;
 Nor that eye e'er catch light,
 But the flash of the storm.

A curse, blessed ocean,
 Is on thy green water,
 From the haven of Cork,
 To Ivera of slaughter :
 Since thy billows were dyed
 With the red wounds of fear
 Of Muiertach Oge,¹
 Our O'Sullivan Bear !

57

Gougaune Barra (7)

THERE is a green island in lone Gougaune Barra,
 Where Allua of songs rushes forth as an arrow ;
 In deep-valley'd Desmond—a thousand wild fountains
 Come down to that lake, from their home in the
 mountains.

¹ Young Morty.

There grows the wild ash, and a time-stricken willow
 Looks chidingly down on the mirth of the billow ;
 As, like some gay child, that sad monitor scorning,
 It lightly laughs back to the laugh of the morning.

And its zone of dark hills—oh ! to see them all
 bright'ning,
 When the tempest flings out its red banner of
 lightning,
 And the waters rush down, 'mid the thunder's deep
 rattle,
 Like clans from their hills at the voice of the battle ;
 And brightly the fire-crested billows are gleaming,
 And wildly from Mullagh the eagles are screaming.
 Oh ! where is the dwelling in valley or highland,
 So meet for a bard as this lone little island ?

How oft when the summer sun rested on Clara,
 And lit the dark heath on the hills of Ivera,
 Have I sought thee, sweet spot, from my home by the
 ocean,
 And trod all thy wilds with a minstrel's devotion,
 And thought of thy bards, when assembling together,
 In the cleft of thy rocks, or the depth of thy heather ;
 They fled from the Saxon's dark bondage and slaughter,
 And waked their last song by the rush of thy
 water.

High sons of the lyre, oh ! how proud was the feeling,
 To think while alone through that solitude stealing,
 Though loftier Minstrels green Erin can number,
 I only awoke your wild harp from its slumber,

JEREMIAH JOSEPH CALLANAN

And mingled once more with the voice of those
fountains

The songs even Echo forgot on her mountains ;
And glean'd each grey legend, that darkly was sleeping
Where the mist and the rain o'er their beauty were
creeping.

Least bard of the hills ! were it mine to inherit
The fire of thy harp, and the wing of thy spirit,
With the wrongs which like thee to our country have
bound me,

Did your mantle of song fling its radiance around me,
Still, still in those wilds might young liberty rally,
And send her strong shout over mountain and valley,
The star of the west might yet rise in its glory,
And the land that was darkest be brightest in story.

I too shall be gone ;—but my name shall be spoken
When Erin awakes, and her fetters are broken ;
Some Minstrel will come, in the summer eve's gleaming,
When Freedom's young light on his spirit is beaming,
And bend o'er my grave with a tear of emotion,
Where calm Avon-Bwee seeks the kisses of ocean,
Or plant a wild wreath, from the banks of that river,
O'er the heart and the harp that are sleeping for ever.

58 *The Lament of O'Gnive*¹

From the Irish

HOW dimm'd is the glory that circled the Gael,
And fall'n the high people of green Innisfail !
The sword of the Saxon is red with their gore,
And the mighty of nations is mighty no more.

¹ O'Gnive was bard to the O'Neill of Clandeboy about 1556.

JEREMIAH JOSEPH CALLANAN

Like a bark on the ocean long shatter'd and tost,
On the land of your fathers at length you are lost,
The hand of the spoiler is stretch'd on your plains,
And you're doomed from your cradles to bondage and
chains.

Oh where is the beauty that beam'd on thy brow ?
Strong hand in the battle, how weak art thou now !
That heart is now broken that never would quail,
And thy high songs are turn'd into weeping and wail.

Bright shades of our sires ! from your home in the skies
Oh blast not your sons with the scorn of your eyes !
Proud spirit of Gollamh, how red is thy cheek !
For thy freemen are slaves, and thy mighty are weak !

O'Neill of the Hostages, Con, whose high name
On a hundred red battles has floated to fame,
Let the long grass still sigh undisturbed o'er thy sleep,
Arise not to shame us, awake not to weep !

In thy broad wing of darkness infold us, oh night ?
Withhold, oh bright sun, the reproach of thy light !
For freedom or valour no more canst thou see,
In the home of the Brave, in the isle of the Free.

Affliction's dark waters your spirits have bow'd,
And oppression hath wrapped all your land in its shroud,
Since first from the Brehons' pure justice you stray'd,
And bent to those laws the proud Saxon has made.

We know not our country, so strange is her face,
Her sons once her glory are now her disgrace ;
Gone, gone is the beauty of fair Innisfail,
For the stranger now rules in the land of the Gael.

Where, were are the woods that oft rung to your
cheer,
Where you waked the wild chase of the wolf and the
deer?
Can those lark heights, with ramparts all frowning
and rien,
Be the his where your forests waved brightly in
Heaven?

Oh bondsman of Egypt, no Moses appears
To light your dark steps thro' this desert of tears;
Degraded and lost ones, no Hector is nigh,
To lead you to freedom, or teach you to die!

59 *The Outlaw of Loch Lene*

From the Irish

OH, may a day have I made good ale in the glen,
Thou came not of stream or malt—like the
brewig of men.
My bed was the ground; my roof, the greenwood
above
And the wealth that I sought, one far kind glance
from thy love.

Alas! on that night when the horses I drove from the
field,
That I was not near from terror my angel to shield.
She stretched forth her arms—her mantle she flung to
the wind,
And swam 'er Loch Lene her outlawed lover to find.

Oh would that a freezing, sleet-wing'd tempest did
sweep,
And I and my love were alone, far off on the deep!
I'd ask not a ship, or a bark, or pinnacle, to save,—
With her hand round my waist I'd fear not the wind
or the wave.

'Tis down by the lake where the wild-tree fringes its
sides
The maid of my heart, my fair one of Heaven resides;
I think as at eve she wanders its mazes along,
The birds go to sleep by the sweet, wild twist of her
song.

60 *Oh Say, my Brown Drimin*¹

OH say, my brown Drimin, thou 'Silk of the Kine,'²
Where, where are thy strong ones, last hope of
thy line?

Too deep and too long is the slumber they take,
At the loud call of freedom why don't they awake?

My strong ones have fallen—from the bright eye of day
All darkly they sleep in their dwelling of clay;
The cold turf is o'er them—they hear not my cries,
And since Lewis no aid gives, I cannot arise.

Oh! where art thou, Lewis? our eyes are on thee—
Are thy lofty ships walking in strength o'er the sea?
In freedom's last strife, if you linger or quail,
No morn e'er shall break on the night of the Gael.

¹ Ireland is spoken of here under 'Drimin,' the favourite name
of a cow.

² Another name for Ireland.

But should he King's son, now bereft of his right,
Come proud in his strength for his country to fight;
Like leaves on the trees, will new people arise,
And deep from their mountains shout back to my
cries.

When the Prince, now an exile, shall come for his
own,
The Isles of his father, his rights, and his throne,
My people in battle the Saxons will meet,
And kick them before, like old shoes from their feet.

O'er mountains and valleys they'll press on their
rout,
The five eids of Erin shall ring to their shout;
My sons reunited, shall bless the glad day
When the int-hearted Saxon they've chased far away.

61

*The Convict of Clonmel**From the Irish*

HOW hard is my fortune,
And vain my repining!
The strong rope of fate
For this young neck is twining.
My strength is departed;
My cheek sunk and fallow;
While I languish in chains,
In the gaol of Clonmala.¹

¹ Ir. *cluain-meala* = field of honey.

No boy in the village
Was ever yet milder,
I'd play with a child,
And my sport would be wilder.
I'd dance without tiring
From morning till even,
And the goal-ball I'd strike
To the lightning of Heaven.

At my bed-foot decaying,
My hurlbat is lying,
Through the boys of the village
My goal-ball is flying;
My horse 'mong the neighbours
Neglected may fallow,—
While I pine in my chains,
In the gaol of Clonmala.

Next Sunday the patron
At home will be keeping,
And the young active hurlers
The field will be sweeping.
With the dance of fair maidens
The evening they'll hallow,
While this heart, once so gay,
Shall be cold in Clonmala.

62 *On Cleada's Hill the Moon is Bright*

ON Cleada's¹ hill the moon is bright,
Dark Avondu still rolls in light,
All changeless in that mountain's head,
That river still seeks ocean's bed:

¹ One of the mountain ranges between Millstreet and Killarney.

Thalm blue waters of Loch Lene
Still miss their own sweet isles of green,
But where's the heart as firm and true
As ll, or lake, or Avondu?¹

It ny not be, the firmest heart
Fro all it loves must often part,
A lk, a word, will quench the flame
Th time or fate could never tame;
An there are feelings proud and high
Th through all changes cannot die,
Th strive with love, and conquer too;
I kr w them all by Avondu.

Ho cross and wayward still is fate
I've earned at last, but learned too late.
I n'er spoke of love, 'twere vain;
I kr w it, still I dragg'd my chain.
I h not, never had a hope—
But who 'gainst passion's tide can cope?
He llong it swept this bosom through,
An left it waste by Avondu.

Oh Avondu! I wish I were
As nce upon that mountain bare,
Wpre thy young waters laugh and shine
On the wild breast of Meenganine;
I wsh I were by Cleada's hill,
Or y Glenluachra's rushy rill.
Bu no!—I never more shall view
Thse scenes I loved by Avondu.

Farwell, ye soft and purple streaks
Of evening on the beauteous Reeks;

¹ The Munster Blackwater.

Farewell, ye mists that loved to ride
On Cahir-bearna's stormy side;
Farewell, November's moaning breeze,
Wild minstrel of the dying trees;
Clara! a fond farewell to you,
No more we meet by Avondu.

No more—but thou, O glorious hill!
Lift to the moon thy forehead still;
Flow on, flow on, thou dark swift river,
Upon thy free wild course for ever.
Exult, young heart, in lifetime's spring,
And taste the joys pure love can bring;
But, wanderer, go—they're not for you!
Farewell, farewell, sweet Avondu!

GEORGE DARLEY

Osme's Song

From "Sylvia"

63

1795-1846

HITHER! hither!
O come hither!

Lads and lasses come and see!
Trip it neatly,
Foot it feately,
O'er the grassy turf to me!

Here are bowers
Hung with flowers,
Richly curtain'd halls for you!
Meads for rovers,
Shades for lovers,
Violet beds, and pillows too!