Seventeen Nights
with the
Irish Story Tellers

EDMUND MURPHY

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To Mary —

From Herbert.

Seventeen Nights

with the

Irish Story Tellers

By EDMUND MURPHY

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EDMUND MURPHY

INTRODUCTION

The following tales I heard related when a boy; some of them are familiar to almost every village youth in the province of Munster, but I have tried to dress them in a new language, and to present them to the reader in a more attractive style than that in which he may have heard them related. If I have succeeded I shall feel repaid for my trouble.

E. MURPHY.

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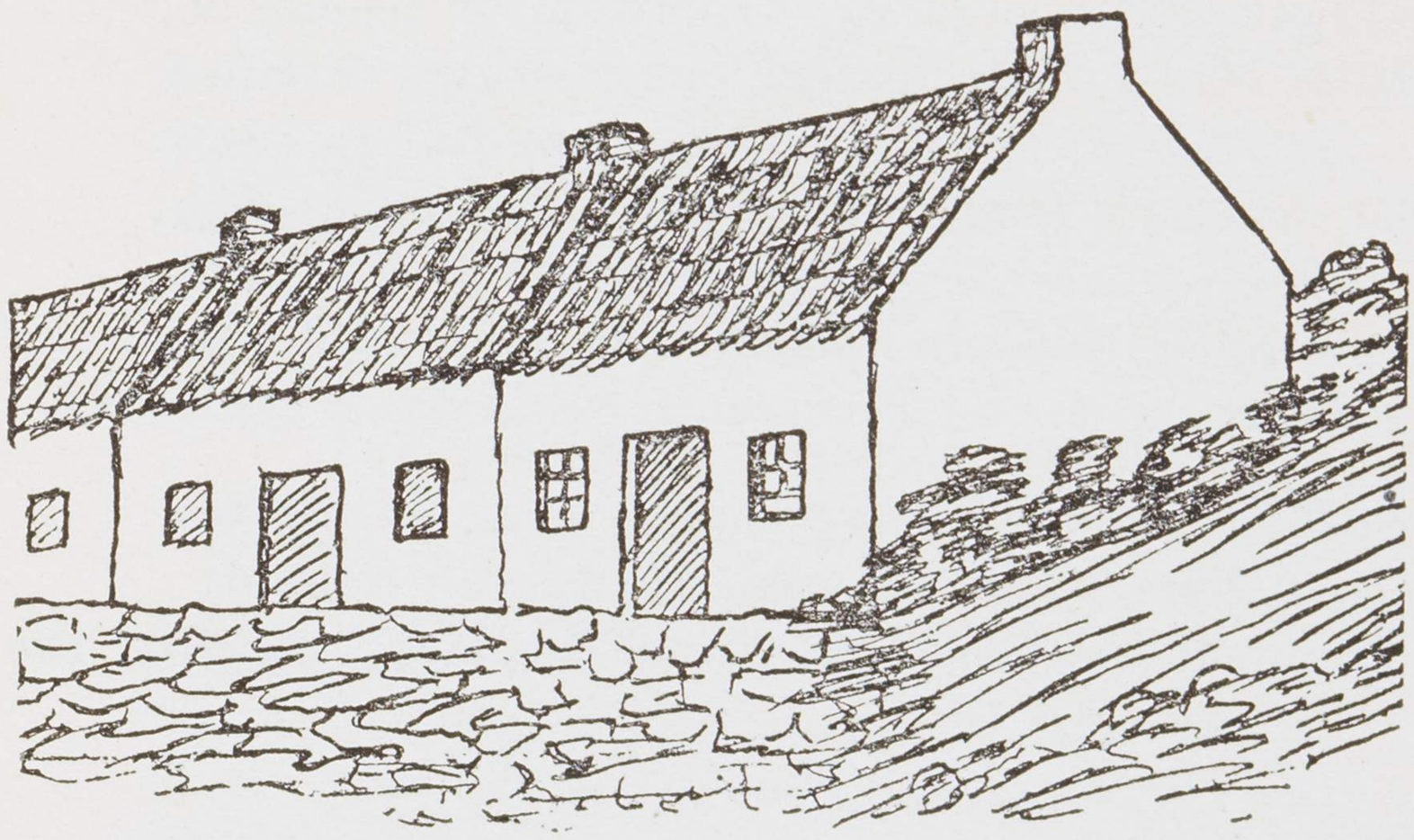

KILTEELY

Robert Dolan's humble dwelling.

There was a spot I loved in the dear old long ago,
  Whose recollection haunts my memory still;
Although here in a land where milk and honey flow,
  No thoughts like those of home my soul could thrill,
There seanachies told tales that threw over us a spell,
  And with what joy those stories we used to greet;
As they told of giants that, in castles used to dwell:
  In the little old thatched cabin down the street.

How eagerly we listened to them while they told
  Surprising tales of pookas and of ghosts;
The feats of rapparees, the deeds of robbers bold,
  Or yeomen who made good their savage boasts.
Sometimes in recklessness a joker felt inspired
  To play the ghost, wrapt in a winding sheet;
Then at his victim's fright we'd laugh till we grew tired,
  In the little old thatched cabin down the street.

But in the summer time we'd climb the steep hillside;
  Talk of Knockainey, Cromwell, or Knockroe;
Hills whose familiar lore our cravings satisfied,
  And whose legends all the story-tellers knew.
Or races we would run down in the shaky bog,
  Where each mishap we joyfully would greet;
Or wager we could hold by his greasy tail a hog,
  Near the little old thatched cabin down the street.

Such memories the years will ne'er obliterate;
  Unchanged the hill and village still remain:
The dear old schoolhouse and the playground by the
      gate,
  The forge and the chapel and the lane.
But of the seanachies, there scarcely is left one
  That cheered our youthful hours, we'll ever meet,
Who would tell us of Owen Roe and the battles that
      he won,
  In the little old thatched cabin down the street.

THE STORY TELLERS

FIRST NIGHT

The Fairies

When crisp October's on the wane,
When chill November comes again,
When shadows lengthen on the hill
And winter nights grow damp and chill;
The fires give forth both light and cheer,
And village gossips will appear,
Reciting tales we love to hear:
For 'tis in winter ghosts abound,
In winter fairy tales go round.
Each nook conveys a sense of gloom,
    Each ruin has a haunted look;
Each cave is an enchanted room,
    By all things else than ghosts forsook.
Don't wonder then if our discourse
Will treat of all that strange concourse—
    Of fairies, giants, gnomes;
Of witches, goblins, sprites morose,
    That haunt abandoned homes.
Of the grim pooka's dread approach
    Be sure to take good heed;
Of Will o' the Wisp, the headless Coach,
    That runs with reckless speed.
The elves come tripping o'er the heath
    When midnight hour is near;
The banshee's wail forebodes the death
    Of some friend we hold dear.

The mermaids love to sport and play
By towering rocks in sheltered bay
Amid its solitude,
And there while basking in the sun,
Some foolish swain's affections won
That chanced here to intrude,
And took him 'neath the crested wave,
To dwell in some deep ocean cave.

The Youths who climb the steep hillside
And follow some beaten path,
That's sure to lead them alongside
Of some lone moat or rath;
Invited by the soft sunshine,
Upon the green sward will recline
Heads pillowed in their hands;
Till strains of music round them flow,
Then in alarm off they go;
Such melody no artists know
Except the fairy bands.
Thus will those fairy tales of old
In youth that used our feelings sway
Please us again to hear them told
No less than in that olden day.

In summer ghosts cause little fright,
When day encroaches on the night;
For ghosts you know, avoid the light;
But whether summer or winter weather,
We oft would talk of them together.

For in each hamlet could be found,
Through Ireland's isle the whole way round,
Where story-telling used abound;
Some who'd amazing tales unfold,
About those elves in days of old;
When fairies used appear to men
By forest, hill, and lonely glen.

Then Paddy Hackett took the word,
And said: "although 'twould seem absurd
To add one jot of praise,
To one whom we all knew so well,
Could talk of heaven and of hell,
And many a tale we heard him tell
That filled us with amaze.
Yes, here he comes, Ned Sullivan!
Well worthy of his name and clan;
For every glen and every down,
From Clogheen to Dungarvan town,
The diocese of Cashel Through,
Kilfeakle, and Knockainey too,
All of their fairy lore he knew.
With what delight he used inspire
Us, pressing round the cabin fire.

He scarce had time these words to speak,
To the young folks ere we
Heard the latch raised, and through the door
Advanced the seanachie.
Come Ned; Come Ned; a story tell
A story of some elf;
For no one here knows half so well
To tell it as yourself.
Of water then he takes a swipe,
And knocks the ashes from his pipe;
He wipes his brow, his hat moves back,
And starts upon the fairies track.

Knockmeldown

Where Tar's swift river marks the base
Of frowning Knockmeldown;
From its wooded slopes a noisy race
To Newcastle ran down.
'Twas in this glen so closely shut
By steep impending heights,

Stood Andy Whelan's little hut,
Frequented by those sprites.
Three stalwart sons that hut contained,
Now only one of them remained.
The oldest Will o' the Wisp did follow
And lost his life in yonder hollow
When oe'r Breen's cliff he fell.
To Carrick-Pooka the other went,
On Hallowe'en, on pleasure bent,
Met with a fatal accident,
That's all that I can tell.

But now the third was taken ill,
When threatening clouds o'erhung the hill
Far down the mountain road;
A road they knew was haunted still,
Where winter's icy breezes chill;
The stoutest heart with fear 'twould fill
No good could it forebode.
But 'twas no time to hesitate,
Of skilful aid his need was great;
So pop hitched up his horse and car,
And for a doctor hastes away,
But had not travelled very far
Before a trace had given way,
And when the break he did repair,
The horse seemed to be anchored there.

On Knocknageeragh Hill he stands,
That such a lovely view commands
Of the strong Suir and winding Tar
And Nier that flows from Coumshingaur;
But in the moonlight's feeble ray,
All their attractions fade away.
Below the Tar in eddies flowed,
But twixt the river and the road
An awful noise he heard.

The horse began to shy and prance,
But not a step would he advance,
And Andy greatly feared,
Although he lashed him with the rein,
That all his blows would be in vain.

The moon was hidden in a cloud
The night was growing cold and breezy,
The wintry storm was howling loud,
The carman getting more unseasy.
For often an unearthly sound
Would break upon his ear,
Uncanny shadows hovered round
That seemed this rustic to confound
And fill his heart with fear.
For though it was a chilly night,
His horse with foam was almost white,
And Andy sought to find a cause
To thus upset plain nature's laws.
As in amaze he then looked back,
To see what held them thus in check,
Behind him sat a ghost in black,
And he fell fainting on the neck
Of the half-jaded hack.

Quickly recovering from his fright,
He blamed at once the starless night,
That caused this strange hallucination,
Which filled his soul with consternation
And left him in a painful trance,
He means to solve with steady glance
If ghost it chanced to be:
But little comfort that glance brought,
It met the object that he sought,
But hoped he would not see.
For now the fiend revealed his form;
Shook over him his mighty arm,
Clad in a Danish coat of mail,
Ready the driver to assail.

The frightful sight his soul transfixed
The blazing eyes upon him fixed,
    The blood froze in his veins:
Under that fearful fairy spell,
Down from the horse's neck he fell;
    As dropped his hand the reins,
And their he stayed an hour or so,
Until he heard the first cockcrow;
    Then from his trance he woke;
The ghost seemed mounting on the wind,
But showers of leaves falling behind,
Rendered the carman almost blind,
    As through the woods he broke.

The Commeraghs

The goblins ever evil wrought,
But ghosts sometimes were friendly thought,
    When by churchyards they roam,
And when themselves they must betake
To forest, moat, or lonely lake,
Would view again for friendship sake
    Their old abandoned home.

Beside fair Kilmacthomas town,
Where Mahon flows, where mountains frown,
Where Commeraghs' peaks look threatening down
    On all that 'neath them lay:
There's many a darksome cave and den,
And many a rough and rugged glen,
Of which the fox is denizen,
    And hither brings his pray.
There's many a narrow pass within
The Mahon and the Araglin,
    Where cottiers reside;
There tributary stream and rill,
Make their way down from many a hill
    To swell Bunmahon's tide.

And in those wee secluded vales
You'll hear of many startling tales,
Of pooka, ghost, or elf:
The man who did the story tell,
The rapparee knew very well,
And vouched for it himself.

Ned Boyle once mounted on a steed
To Mahon Bridge proceeds with speed,
For 'twas a case of urgent need
To go without delay;
For the next morning at daybreak,
The sheriff would some peelers take,
To disposess the widow Blake
For rent she couldn't pay.
Her kindly neighbors all day spent
In trying to collect her rent;
Unless that very day 'twas sent,
Next morn she'd homeless be;
For the sheriff and "crowbar brigade"
On the coming day would ply their trade,
And roofless her cottage would be laid,
And woeful her misery.
But Ned declared 'twould be all right,
He'd reach the agent's house that night;
Up Carrick Road his horse did race,
To Ballyknock maintained the pace,
And left Rathgormuck on his right,
He scarce could see so dim the light;
That road he never could mistake,
It ran on straight to Crotty's Lake:
At Clodiagh River one look he cast;
The Commeraghs will soon be passed.
But turning round the Goblin's Bend,
Beyond the river Ire,
He felt his hair to stand on end,
His blood seemed all on fire.

Besides the horse that seemed so tame,
Unmanageable now became;
With head erect and eyes aflame
From side to side he swerved:
To check him up he tries in vain,
He disregards both bit and rein;
The goblin's there that's very plain
Although still unobserved;
To guide the steed no bridle rein
Could longer aught have served.

But when the horse cavorts in air,
The rider lost his balance there;
A stranger grasped him by the side,
And on his mount placed him astride,
And stroked the horse and curbed his pride,
And handed Ned the rein;
Who turned his thanks for to express,
To this good friend, but let's confess
His wonder he could scarce repress;
He looked for him in vain.
But still the print of hand and thumb
His side displayed for years to come,
And yet while vanishing into space,
A friend long dead he now could trace
In the fast fading fairy face.

But 'twere not for the friendly ghost
The widow surely had been lost;
But through his prompt and kindly aid
The house was reached, the rent was paid;
In spite of the malicious sprite
Who would have held him there all night.

Then Shawn-na-Bourke who tales oft told
Of rapparees, or rebel bold,
Or hardy villager;

Whose courage proved of slight avail
Against the forces of the Pale,
Drew closer in and told this tale
Of a mean officer.

Jack Burke's Story

There once was a bailiff, big, boastful and vain,
Who lived in Clonmel, in George the 3d's reign,
Who arrested a poacher, Tom Whalen by name,
And very soon after he paid for that same:
For the poacher one evening the bailiff surprised,
Who knew him not then for he was disguised;
So he took from his pocket a bottle of rye,
And invited the bailiff its contents to try:
Who drank half the rye, at least so it was said;
But the other half Whelan broke over his head,
And left the poor bailiff apparently dead;
At a point where some carters found him lying down,
And brought the poor guy with them back to town.

But after a while the story leaked out,
How Tom dealt the bailiff the devil's own clout;
While they took him at once to a hospital near,
The poacher the river could fish without fear.
But the Shoneen who purchased the fishing right
Complained to the Court of the overseer's plight,
And that his assailant more daring than ever,
Could be caught any day spearing fish in the river.

So a warrant was issued for Whelan's arrest;
But thought bailiffs and peelers this might interest,
In the light of a joke it appeared to the rest.
So the poacher was forced on his "keeping" to go.
Or a certain jail sentence he would undergo;
At least if they should but secure his arrest,
And both sheriff and bailiff swore they'd do their best.

For the latter now fully restored from his shock,
Swore he'd soon have the poacher arraigned in the
dock.
But Whelan they found wasn't easy to catch,
Though many a plot between them they hatch,
And though the cops chased him for many a mile,
At their very best efforts the poacher could smile;
He was so fleet of foot and so ready to dare,
But they caught him at last at Kilsheelan fair.

Now Whelan was jailed for the bailiff he trounced,
But when he got out, the detectives denounced,
And promised once more those curst spies to confound
But fell into the Suir where his body was found.
The bailiff the very next night came along,
So rejoiced at the news, he was lilting a song;
Till he neared his abode
On the old Carrick road,
Just above Condon's gate;
He thought as 'twas late
He'd take the shortcut
But he saw Whelan's ghost
Standing there by the post
And not moving a foot.

With a shuddering seized from his head to his feet,
He glanced toward the spectre he dreaded to meet;
For Whelan he long ago learned to fear,
Can you wonder he dreaded to see his ghost here?
So away back the road he instantly flies,
But just at that moment he heard a loud noise,
Saw of donkeys a drove and a number of boys;
Who were harnessing up to a ramshackle plough,
A long horned bull and an old brindled cow.

I'm lucky in having my pistol to-night;
If they want my cash I'll show them some fight,
Whenever they are ready to come;

For I know they are robbers in this queer disguise
Who'll ask for my money and tender advise,
And let me go penniless home.
Again looks in amazement and then rubs his eyes,
And continues to gaze in the greatest surprise,
As he finds himself there all alone.
Then wonders what must have got into his head,
Were those fellows he saw really living or dead,
Who for sins had come back to atone.
But there was not a soul when he looked back again
Although the road bordered a broad level plain,
Where the fairies were said to abide.
There wasn't a mortal could pass o'er the Green
Where the bailiff was standing he wouldn't have seen
So from terror he fainted and died.

When darkness overspreads the scene,
And hill and dale that looked so green
Are now in shadows wrapt:
The pooka's rock and cliff and cave
To the intruder warnings wave,
If life and limb he cares to save,
Ere the vital chord is snapt.

When fires upon the hearths grow low,
You'll see things in the embers glow;
Familiar forms that once you knew,
Impress themselves upon your view.
When rain comes sweeping down the hill
The cabin's shelter you'll desire;
And when the night is damp and chill,
Then doubly welcome is the fire
Pile on more turf and let it blaze,
No need to hurry so;
Come, make way there for long Jack Hayes,
Who knows more about ghosts and fays
Than any one I know.

A Legend Of Knockgraffon

Jack Hayes knew all the village swain,
And said in his familiar strain:
"When I was young I oft was told
A tale some critics call a farce —
There lived a king in days of old
With ears as hairy as a horse;
Knockgraffon long preserved his fame,
O'Leary was the monarch's name.
To hide his horrid ears, this law
On statute books he put;
That HAIR of head or BEARD of jaw
NO longer should be cut.

'Twas thus he hoped his ears to hide,
And thus preserve his kingly pride;
But every year at Christmas tide
A barber he brought in,
From whom the secret he can't hide,
While his tonsorial arts are plied
In shaving throat and chin.
But lest the king he might deceive,
Knockgraffon's halls he'll never leave
Except his lifeless clay:
For thus his highness will make sure
His secret will remain secure;
The corpse is cast into the Suir,
To sink or drift away.

At last the lot to shave the king
Fell on a widow's son;
A mother's Heart sore did it sting
As to her boy she clung.
"Oh royal messenger, come bring — "
(And loud her lamentations ring)

"My sole request to our great King
Or else I am undone;
My humble prayer before him fling;
Have mercy on my son!"

His highness soon was made aware
Of the poor frantic mother's prayer;
He saw her tears and her despair,
Which caused him her son's life to spare;
But still the king must pay good heed,
Or this might to exposure lead.

And lest the barber might betray
His secret, ere he got away
He touched a tiny bell:
Her son appeared whom he dismissed,
Then in his ear those words he hissed:
Come tonsor, to this warning list,
On pain of death don't tell!
Now go but keep this in your mind,
Though other shavers death might find,
On your discretion I rely.
Your kindness Sire calls for reply!
You saved my life, what less can I
Than guard your secret till I die?
Then bowing himself out of the place,
His steps at once he did retrace.

The barber's mother wept with joy,
As in her arms she clasped her boy,
Whose secret did him so annoy,
He soon became unwell.
He pines away the mother thought;
A druid's advice at once she sought,
And this the message that she brought:
Seek Drum where four roads meet,
Where formerly two chieftains fought,
A willow there you'll greet;

And there upon your bended knee
Your secret whisper to the tree;
Obey the Fates and you'll be free.
The youth obeyed advice received
And much he found his mind relieved.

One day an accident befell
The harper of the king;
The harp from his attendant fell
And broken was its ring;
So to obtain another frame,
To this same willow tree they came.

A branch from it at once they lopped
And when to fitting length 'twas chopped,
And rounded into proper form
That with the other 'twould conform
A harp they very quickly made
But every time the harper played,
As o'er the strings his fingers strayed;
This was its singular discourse:
"The King has ears like any horse."

This news was to the king conveyed;
The latter angered and dismayed
At what they said his harper played,
Became at once so mighty wroth
The player was before him brought
Who used him entertain,
With soothing strains that well he knew,
When close the shades of evening drew;
Now wore his brow the ashy hue
Of terror and of pain;
For every time he touched a string,
Came forth the secret of the king;
Who though hurt in his inmost soul,
Still held his passions in control

Until the strings he had essayed,
And when the self same tune they played;
He paused a while, dismissed his fears,
And never after hid his ears;
    But others tell this tale —
That rather than his looks endure,
He cast himself into the Suir;
Unwept alike by rich and poor,
    Save the lone banshee's wail.
Where Dragan House at present stands,
A lovely view its site commands,
Where the mad rushing Aherlow
Mingles with Suir's impetuous flow.
On that swift rolling, winding river,
The king has disappeared forever.

While thus engaged at story-telling,
In Robert Dolan's humble dwelling;
There oft would gather knaves and fools
Who most amazing tales would tell,
And jokers found them ready tools,
Who knew the moats and fairies well.
Slim Jim from Doon, the "omadhaun,"
Who twice had seen a cluricaune;
And Denny Kelly, who had a trick
Of jumping 'tween his hands a stick,
And saw where frightful shadows fall
The devil himself, head, horns and all;
Beside the moat down in Kildunning,
He saw him plain but kept on running.
There sat half-witted Bill Manogue,
    So active and so strong;
Through Golden Vale that playful rogue
    Will be remembered long;
For strange adventures he did share,
With ghosts and pookas everywhere:

In Diarmid's cave he'd often lie,
His ear upon the ground;
To find if Shawn, the cluricaune,
Was anywhere around.
Who now will seek the leprechaun,
Through heath and furze at early dawn,
To get a pot o' "goold" from Shawn,
Can any still be found?

SECOND NIGHT

Knockshigowna

Oh here comes William Lundon, Will!
Come tell that tale about the hill
You promised us last night;
For we are anxious now to hear
How any place could rouse such fear,
In men who loved to fight?"
Most strange it seems that you don't know
About that famous hill, although
Shinrone, Cloghjordan, Borrisokane,
And even Birr itself might claim
Neighborship to the fairy mound,
Of which so many tales go round.

'Tis a century if 'tis a day,
Since ghosts and pookas used to stray,
On top of Knockshigowna Hill,
That looks so lonely and so still.
Here once was an enchanted calf,
That robbed the farmers of fully half
Of all their stock, for while they sleep,
The bulls and cows, the lambs and sheep,
Browse through the furze and stones
But long before they reach the top,
Some down the precipice would drop,
A mass of broken bones.

And so the poor got cheaper meat,
And ate more than they used to eat
Before such things occurred;
But ghosts or men, whoever hatched
Such mischief, surely should be watched,
The neighborhood was stirred.

The farmers, shepherds quickly hired
To watch the ghosts and mob;
But of the place they soon grew tired,
Though not a soul was ever fired,
Who cared to hold the job.

Though other herdsmen were secured,
None of them very long endured,
Such pranks the goblins used to play,
Who'd frolic round them bark and bray;
Half dog, half ass, you may be sure,
No mortal could such sights endure.
At last no shepherds could be found,
Such stories were afloat,
To guard of herds the hill around,
A single bull or goat;
Till Paudheen Ruadh brought them a man,
'Twas game old Larry Holohan,
Who said: no ghost this side of Clare,
Was able his four bones to scare.
The farmers hearing this, declared
That double pay they were prepared
To slap down for this fearless man,
The pride of Clan O'Holohan.

The first night Larry came around
(Now mark well what I tell)
To watch this uninviting ground,
He didn't hear a single sound
Till fast asleep he fell;
Until a donkey past him strayed,
And woke him up so loud he brayed.

The herdsman waking, was amazed,
On looking where the cattle grazed,
To see whole bands their music play,
Through the wee hours, long before day.

Then towards him came a great black cat,
That savage looked and fiercely spat,
Making a noise like a buzz saw,
Then struck at Larry with his paw,
Knocking the hat around his ears,
That sheltered him so many years.

Then with a loud, unearthly yell,
On the poor herd this warning fell:
I have you now, you imp of hell!
And I will put you through.
From me expect no peace, no rest,
For I was once a Shanavest,*
And beaten black and blue.
"Hurrah," says Larry, "a caravat*
Don't care a straw about his hat.
Take that! and that, I've more to spare,
But all his blows were spent on air,
Or else the spook he'd surely kill,
That disappeared behind the hill.
Scarce had it vanished, when a calf,
Larger than any cow by half,
Asked Holohan if he would dare
On her back to ride to county Clare?
Before the herd could quite decide,
He was carried off on a midnight ride;
And many a hill exceeding fair,
And many a mountain steep and bare
And many a rill and river too,
Were there exposed to his wondering view.

Perhaps you'll want to hear me tell
The way he went and what befell
The herd, on this strange trip:

---

* See notes

To Borrisokane they took their way,
Which place they reached without delay;
Saw Tom McGrath's where he used stay
And often took a nip.
Starting straight down the Nenagh pike,
They took their lonely midnight hike,
Until they reached that place.

Then viewed the town hall and round tower,
Indicative of strength and power,
And noble manse and lovely bower,
He easily could trace.

Then did this demon of the night
Fly with him, till he's out of sight
Of the last dwindling city light;
Then did his spirits fall.
Through lonesome paths the fairy fled,
O'er Arra's mountains on she sped,
Weird shadows o'er the waters shed,
That might him well appall.

Then hovered over Lough Derg's shore,
That never looked so small before.
Made light of it, though somewhat strange,
But as they neared Slieve Bernagh's range,
The cold air made him shiver:
Then skirting by that lofty ridge,
They kept on south to Six Mile Bridge,
And crossed Bunratty River.

They passed Kilkishen's fairy lakes,
And barren moors, and fens and brakes,
And many a brawling rill;
To Tulla town, the north wind braves,
And views the wonderful arched caves
Of Tomeen, when Quin River raves,
Through limestone caverns still.

And after resting there a while,
They seek Quin Abbey's noble pile,
    Where some short time they stay.
Without, there was a fortress tall,
Within it abbey, cloisters, all,
Ten arches pierce its somber wall,
    Through which the moonbeams play.
For through each arch, the faint light stealing,
Was half revealing, half concealing,
The tracery of shrines and ceiling,
    And wall flowers grew all round;
The convent bell now began pealing,
    And at its shrilly sound,
The calf was frightened, that's a cinch,
But didn't make the herdsman flinch.

The moon sank in a fleecy cloud,
    The light was growing dim and faint,
And Larry saw what seemed a shroud,
Within the shroud a saint.
And then a note rung in his ear —
Beware; Beware! approach not here;
He who would desecrate this hall,
On earth or heaven will vainly call.
The calf herself with terror shook,
The abbey walls at once forsook,
And straight her charge to Ennis took,
    Who gladly would betake
Himself again to Arra's side,
And watch the streamlets downward glide
Along its slopes, to Shannon's tide,
    Or to Derg's winding lake.

Now from his reverie he starts,
And at the calf a stern glance darts,
    Then pauses for a while;

Short time was left him for reflection,
The calf flew on in the direction
Of Ennis Abbey's pile,
And halted at the intersection
Of the square tower and aisle.

Thomond ne'er claimed abbey more grand,
Its fame extended far beyond
It, roofless now he sees it stand,
To Clare's eternal shame.
Then gazed upon its lofty tower,
That once defied the Saxon power,
When those intruders came;
It was of Thomond long the flower,
And widespread was its fame.

Its princes tombs they here behold,
The famed Dalcassian chiefs of old,
Whose deeds the seanachies have told,
And Larry stood amazed.
The calf still seeking pastures new
Of Ennis took a passing view,
And then flew south a mile or two
And on Clare village gazed.
Clare Castle seemed exceeding high,
Outlined against the cloudy sky,
Exposed to every breeze:
So here the calf would not remain,
But sought Dromoland's fine demesne,
Alighting at her ease.
Then raced along the shady lawn,
And jumped the ramparts of Moghane,
Where three great walls and stone forts yawn
Defying all enemies.
Close to Newmarket now they draw,
And a neat village here they saw,
Near Fergus estuary;

Though here the fairy did not wait,
But spread her wings and kept on straight
Northwestward to the sea.

They passed by Lisdoonvarna's ridge,
A glimpse caught of Spectacle Bridge,
And of the Corkscrew Road,
And flew o'er Ennistymon's falls,
And stood upon the frightful walls
Of the sea-nymphs abode.

On Moher's cliffs they don't delay,
But passing o'er Liscannor Bay,
They stop at Lahinch on their way,
And as they passed it on their rounds,
Found both golf links and cricket grounds,
And every English sport.

In this most Irish town of all
There was no hurling or football,
Nor far as he can now recall,
Trace of a handball court.
They leave this place without regret,
That seems completely to forget
What every schoolboy knows;
That it owes faith to Ireland yet,
Forgiveness to our foes.

Miltown they reach without delay,
They view the town, then view the bay,
From Spanish Point to Caherrush,
A place in which the herd would stay,
If he were free and flush.
From Annagh bridge they onward go,
And many streams to Annagh flow,
But not a tree seems there to grow,
So strong the howling west winds blow.

They chill the trees but not the rose,
For in profusion here it grows.
They see thatched houses everywhere,
They seem peculiar to West Clare.

Now a romantic place they see,
Built round a cliff-locked bay, Kilkee;
The finest bathing town of all,
From Cork as far as Donegal.
But who e'er climbed famed Lookout Cliff,
Or ventured to it in a skiff?

But here the fairy flew across,
Upon the natural bridge of Ross;
'Tis nature's arch and at its feet,
The Shannon and the ocean meet.

What pleasure 'tis a boat to guide
Upon the Shannon's gentle tide,
    Its waves bathed in light;
But here who'd care the oar to ply,
Where waves are beating mountains high,
And spectral forms sweep o'er the sky,
    Like demons of the night?

'Mid such wild scenes 'tis surely meet,
The Shannon should the ocean greet,
    Beneath those dreadful banks;
While yet a mile or two ahead,
They see the light upon Loop Head,
And Larry showing no signs of dread,
    The fairy changed her pranks;
And said: if it is still your will
    To seek your native place,
I'll take you back to the fairy hill
    And this time when you face
The farmers, they will pay you rent,
    To save their stock from accident.

Says Larry, "I'd be very glad
To get back I'll go bail,
Though all my friends would think me mad,
Were I to tell this tale;
I'll get the cash unless perhaps,
While I am far away,
There may have been some more mishaps,
If so I'll get no pay."

"Hear me;" the fairy then replied,
"No accident can them betide,
My promise I'll fulfill;
The herds that you take in your care,
My subjects promise me to spare,
While grass grows on the hill.

The fairy seemed to grow more kind,
And Larry home-bound, more resigned.
The river's course they now pursue,
From Shannon's mouth to Killaloe.

O'er Scattery's isle their flight they lower,
To view its churches and round tower.
They pass by in a lightning rush,
The town and harbor of Kilrush;
Nor wait the Limerick boat to see,
Nor pleasure seekers from Kilkee;
But Larry mounted on his nag,
Passes the Fergus, Deele and Maigue;
That from their channels deep and wide,
Pour floods to swell the Shannon's tide.

Still onward they keep going,
Nor stop at Garryowen;
But to the hill straightway they go,
And reached it by the first cock crow.
Then Larry yawned and rubbed his eyes,
And looked around in great surprise;
Yet not a thing was there, he swore,
But stock he watched the night before.

Let people talk as talk they will,
Dispute me they cannot,
That here round Knockshigowna Hill,
Each year they poorer got;
For wicked elves such havoc wrought,
That farmers herdsmen vainly sought,
Till Larry showed the fairies there,
How much a mortal man could dare,
And by his nerve got them so stirred,
No accident has since occurred.

'Tis thus the story of the calf
To tell which I made bold,
Although I've scarcely told the half
Of what our fathers told;
Has with the years that roll round still,
Become the Legend of the Hill.

THIRD NIGHT

Kilfeakle

Although I searched for moats and raths
This province all around,
Kilfeakle is the finest
That I have ever found;
For round it fields and orchards smile,
The richest, loveliest in our isle,
When summer's sunshine glows;
Fields daisy-clad mix green with white,
The blackthorns with red blooms delight,
And thrushes sing till falling night
Invites them seek repose.

To Shawn Murnane's old rookery
The boys and girls retire,
There gathered many a seanachie
Around the blazing fire.

Then Rory Ogue was called upon
As he had travelled far,
And knew the moats, and raths and forts,
From Howth Head to Kilgar.
The seanachie then took the chair
Surrounded by a crowd,
And thus commenced to talk to them
In accents clear and loud.

Knockgraffon's rich in fairy tales,
And stories quaint and old,
And Knockshigowna's fairy hill
Does many a legend hold;
Despite of all Kilfeakle's moat
Could beat them both hands down,
Where the Goblin Queen was often seen
Trailing a satin gown,
And in her hand a silver wand,
On her head a golden crown.

Though I was deemed a plucky youth
With robust manhood blest;
The fairies of Kilfeakle
Oft put it to the test.
While working in a quarry
Out on the Cashel road,
Our powder was so very damp
That it would not explode.
They sent me back to town that night
To get a fresh supply;
I took some liquor while up there
As I was feeling dry;
Then felt like some wild Indian
Upon the warpath bent;
To beat whoever crossed my path,
Was fully my intent.
The night was dark and sultry,
I was in a fighting mood,

And shouted: "Here's a Four Year Old!"*
As loud as ever I could.
I was as happy as a lord
And off and on would shout,
But they must have deemed me crazy,
For not a soul came out.
And still once more I bawled outright:
Hurrah for Quirk and Cappawhite!
Now let the Brawns come on and fight;
We'll beat them till they're stiff and cold,
Every son of a "Three Year Old!"*

The shout was heard in a short while,
I saw a man come o'er the stile;
Approaching with a threatening look,
As straight towards me his way he took.

Oh such a face I never saw!
I own that it filled me with awe.
Ah sure that face I once did know,
But heard he died long years ago;
True a good name he never bore,
But here he shook his stick before
My eyes, I struck at him, alack!
My foot got caught in the car track
And I fell helpless on my back.

He shook his stick above my head,
And then he shook his chains;
Then left me feeling almost dead
The blood froze in my veins.
I often fought, the truth to tell,
At pattern and at fair,
And always fought both hard and well;
But pitted 'gainst some fiend of hell
How could I better fare.
My arm, my will no longer serves,
His looks had paralized my nerves.

---

* Three year old and four year old were faction cries. See notes.

Before another year passed by
As strange a sight I saw;
I spent the afternoon in town*
The night was cold and raw.
Proceeding home by Sadleir's Well
To make a friendly call;
Then took the byway on the right
That led to Grantstown Hall.
Strange noises seemed to fill the air,
But I saw nothing anywhere;
Still more distinct the noises grew,
Till nearing my abode,
I chanced to see a funeral
Come hastening up the road.

Black were the coats the coachmen wore,
The mounted men wore red;
But when I heard the banshees wail
Across the fields I fled;
Until I reached the Golden pike,
Scarce halted in my flight,
Before I witnessed once again
A more surprising sight.
Another funeral passed me by,
And I could hear the mourners sigh,
Half hid in clouds of dust;
As they would soon be side by side,
'Twas plain each with the other vied
To reach Kilfeakle first.
"Why should they hurry, I don't see?"
I'll tell you as 'twas told to me.

According to those legends old
That should us interest,
The latest tenant of a grave
Draws water for the rest:

---

*Tipperary

Hence each hearse strives to pass its neighbor
To save the corpse from grievous labor.
So too whene'er you chance to see
Two funerals for one cemetery;
They'll stop the caoine,* put on a burst
Of speed, to reach the graveyard first.
But when I got up to the moat,
    Imagine my surprise,
Of that vast cortege none appeared
    Before my wondering eyes,
Though I could see five miles around
    Just as the swallow flies.

Another night I plainly heard
    As I approached the moat,
The strains of music soft and sweet,
    On the midnight breezes float.
I gazed long in astonishment,
    Till through the narrow gate,
Full fifty horsemen sally forth,
    And in the roadway wait.
Their suits of green were trimmed with gold,
    Their well groomed steeds looked gay;
Proud Shetlands with long flowing manes,
    That bore them fast away.
But some of them perceived me
    While I watched their airy stunt,
And quickly placed me on a horse,
    And took me to the hunt.

The faded town of Golden then
    Seemed powerless to allure
Those elves, who wheeled round at the bridge,
    And coursed along the Suir;

---

*Gaelic keen

Until they reached those ruins grand,
Above the river's pebbly strand,
Where long Athassel stood
An abbey famed in other days,
Where monks sent up their hymns of praise
And wrote their legends and their lays
In the surrounding wood.

Around the abbey was built a town,
That some time after was burned down,
And though rebuilt, sad to relate
It met again a sadder fate.
But not a house at present stands,
But the river is there and the fertile lands.

We next traversed well fenced Rathduff,
But through its broad domain,
This time they searched the copse and furze
For fox or hare in vain.
Then they set out for Thomastown,
A grand old Irish seat,
And well they knew each walk and drive,
Each pathway and each beat.

At their command the mansion house
Threw open all its doors,
And through its stately rooms and halls,
The fairy cortege pours;
To dine upon rich viands that
Were left from last night's feast,
The remnants of that supper, were
Served up to elf and beast.
Then round the noble mansion grounds
Their tiny horns they blow,
And how delighted I was when
I heard the first cock-crow;
For instantly they disappeared
And left me free to go.

But then I ought to have some lunch
Before I went away;
Perhaps I'd find a jug of punch,
Or a well loaded tray.
But when I sought the dining room,
I tell you I was shocked,
To find the windows closed and barred,
The doors all double locked;
And the chanticleer was crowing
At such an awful rate,
I thought I'd better beat it
Before it was too late.

Some people laughed at Rory's tale
And thought it a good joke;
So when he came down to the forge,
Their jests at him they poke;
Said he was drunk that very night,
Down by the railroad switch,
And rode Mick Lynch's bob-tailed mule,
That threw him in the ditch.

Oh you're a lot of jokers
Said Rory laughing loud,
But if you were with me that night
Among that elfin crowd,
And see us ride around the moat
Before we started out,
You would have credited my tale
Without the slightest doubt.
If further proofs are needed now
Go question Shawn the Goat,
Who searched the place and found fresh tracks
Of ponies round the moat.

The seanachie now closed his tale
And said to those around:

Tyrconnell is a long way off,
The place for which I'm bound,
And while I search that northern land
I wish you safe and sound!

Well Rory we will miss you,
Of that you may be sure;
For here you're always welcome
Alike to rich and poor.
May our best wishes tend you
Upon your lonely walk,
Till favoring breezes bring you
To give another talk.

A health to Rory on his way
But as for us who here must stay,
A quart of sparkling Burton ale
To him who tells another tale.

Shawn Smulk's Story

"Said Shawn Smulk I, was in my prime
During the awful famine time,
When men were hanged for the slightest crime,
If crime it were to steal
Enough to keep yourself alive,
Where flocks of sheep and cattle thrive,
But these more prized than men survive,
And we had no appeal.

Whatever road you might pursue,
Sad sights were sure to meet your view,
In starving women and children too,
While men with hunger drop:
Though fields of barley, oats and wheat
Might furnish them plenty to eat,
But as the rents they could not meet,
The landlords took the crop.

As I was sad some thought me mad,
I had a little and ought be glad;
I didn't fare one half as bad
As my neighbor Shawn the Bear.
His courage, who could help admire?
'Twas dead of winter and what fire
Lit up his hearth, about to expire;
Nor food nor fuel was there.

Shawn had endured much poverty,
When a hawthorn bush he chanced to see,
In a lonely gap in Rosnaree
That bordered Chadwick's lawn.
A lot of firewood it would make,
So that big bush he starts to take,
But Chadwick's ghost began to shake
And pull it back from Shawn.

Now Shawn the Bear was a daring man,
But when this Tug o' War began,
From Chadwick's ghost away he ran
In famishing forty-eight;
But balked in the bush, he stole a sheep,
And though with hunger his children weep,
One quarter barely would he keep,
The rest the neighbors ate.

While his starving neighbors were feeling gay,
The herd to his master hastes to say:
"Faith one of your sheep they stole away;
To that I am willing to swear.
Go search every house the parish round,
Where'er that sheepskin will be found,
He'll hang as high as the wall of the pound,
I solemnly do declare.

A warrant he took to search each cot,
And certainly he searched a lot;
But not a trace in them he got,
They hadn't touched a hair

Of a sheep, or a lamb, 'twas very plain,
And so his search seemed all in vain,
Till he entered a hut in a shady lane,
The cabin of Shawn the Bear.

But there he noticed a clumsy heap,
That into the ashpit Shawn did sweep,
But it proved to be the skin of the sheep,
So he put it in his sack,
And placing Shawn under arrest,
Of Blennerhassett went in quest;
Who at Squire Chadwick's bare request,
Would send him to the "rack";

But Blennerhassett chanced to be
At home, and heard with due gravity,
The herdsman's tale; "now mark you," said he:
"On the gallows that fellow will swing,
Now sit you down to the table there,
Eat plenty, I'll attend to Shawn Bear!
Is this the bag at the foot of the stair
That you were forced to bring?"

"Yes, that's the bag contains the skin."
"All right, your dinner grows cold, begin!"
And he took the sack while a roguish grin
O'erspread Squire Hassett's face.
Out to the stable the squire did go,
And the sheep's skin away did throw,
And put in its stead the skin of a doe
That had lain in the place:

Back to the house Blennerhassett came,
And called squire Chadwick's herd by name:
"Now are you sure this holds the same
Sheep's skin, that Shawn the Bear

Stole from your master three days ago?"
"As sure as I'm standing here below."
'Tis well you positively know,
Of mistakes you must beware.

Now open the sack and dump it clear!
"Thanamon deoul"! What have we here?
You cheat! this is the skin of a deer
You told me was a sheep.
Begone from here, you heartless liar!
You'd hang this man, I'll hang you higher,
If e'er I catch you again conspire;
My soul! but you will weep.

Now Shawn sit down you need the meal,
I know you never again will steal;
For I will give you work to do.
And you won't need his mutton stew.
These words did Shawn somewhat annoy,
He was so overcome with joy
That he could scarce repress a tear,
And he worked there for many a year.
Although his life was saved through fraud,
May God the kindly act reward.

FOURTH NIGHT

Knockgraffon

(A popular fairy tale in the south of Ireland)

"Well I heard things seem stranger still
Than those of Knockshigowna Hill;"
Said Billy Ryan, "the goat"
Although you may have heard them told,
They're worth ten times their weight in gold,
The tales our fathers used unfold
About Knockgraffon's moat.

In ancient times the bards used tell
Surprising tales, that oft befell
The peasantry, who chanced to dwell
Around Knockgraffon.
Tales you'll find hard to reconcile
With dull events, that hap the while;
But at them you'll be forced to smile,
And burst out laughin'.

For on the moat 'twas claimed, were seen
The elves in natty suits of green,
To urge their steeds with relish keen,
What! mortals dare ye
List music's strains, or elfin songs,
That here the midnight hour prolongs;
To glad the mingled airy throngs
In old Tipperary!

A hunchback once, the legends say,
Tramped from Clonmel one summer's day,
And on the moat unconscious lay
In slumber deep;
Until aroused by some soft strain,
He wonders much from whence it came;
He looks and lists, but all in vain,
Then tries to sleep.

Behind the bush, beside the tree,
Strange voices hears, and merrily
The words, one, two; one, two; two, three;
He hears them sing.
Then he attempts a strange encore—
One, two; two, three; two, three; three, four.
Delighted elves repeat it o'er
With joyous ring.
And ask, who thus improved their song?
Thus cheered, the hunchback comes along,
Bowed, hoped they would his life prolong;
And eyeing their staffs

Says: "Take from me this hump so vile!
And then he adds with a grim smile;
"Jack Madden 'twould become in style
Who at me laughs.

The fairy king addressed his court:
The hunchback merits our support;
Henceforth Lushmore shall proudly sport
A neater figure.
The fairies shouted their applause;
The hunchback guessing at the cause,
Finds himself rid of all his flaws,
A full foot bigger.

When home next day poor Lushmore comes,
He scared the "'kids" in Clonmel's slums,
Surprised the liquor men and "bums."
His mother's eyes
As they surveyed him straight and tall,
She crossed herself with her old shawl,
And nearly fell against the wall,
In her surprise
His neighbors all were quite uncivil;
Said Lushmore bargained with the devil,
Had sold his soul and full of evil,
Would them annoy:
But Lush his story told so plain,
They could no longer entertain
Doubts of its truth, so they exclaim:
"Long life and joy!"

And so it happened that Jack Madden,
Whose hideous hump his days did sadden,
Till later news his heart did gladden;
News of Lushmore.
Resolves to meet him face to face,
And from his lips to hear him trace
The things that in the moat took place,
And talk them o'er.

"Some being possessing powers great,
Has made you perfect, tall and straight,
A hunchback that I used to rate
Below myself,
And whom I never failed to chaff;
On you alone I had the laugh,
But now to business let's be off,
Whence comes this pelf?

You raise their numbers three to four?
And favors on you thus they pour;
Should I see them I'd add a score
And be a king;"
So Jack sees money round him float,
He'll go back to Knockgraffon's moat,
Where wrapt in slumbers and his coat;
Lush heard them sing.

So to Clonmel his back he shows,
And straight to Poulnamucky goes,
Long famed for hogs, but I suppose
The hunchback doesn't care;
From Outeragh the moat's in sight,
And he's in raptures of delight;
They'll sing upon that mound tonight,
And he might catch the air.

He feels his heart within him throb,
As he thinks that this fairy mob,
Will greet his song, and fill his fob
With lumps of gold.
And though success attends Lushmore,
He ought to meet with ten times more,
To his one word he would add four
In accents bold.

So fickle fortune he will tempt,
On the moat's side at once he leant,
Sleepless, on fairy songs intent,
Hark, What's that ring?
Resolves at once the elves to bait;
"One, two; three, four; five, six; seven, eight;"
He sings, and then the postern gate,
They open fling.

Then out rushed all the fairy train;
"Who spoils our song, he toils in vain;
Jack Madden come up and explain,
Or you'll regret!"
His song entirely fails to charm,
Malicious elves now bent on harm;
Whose threatening looks cause him alarm,
And make him fret;

Enraged they looked around once more,
And on the wall behind the door,
They found the hump of young Lushmore
That did him sadden,
And picking up the horrid lump,
They hurled it at the hunchback's bump.
And there it stuck—another hump
On poor Jack Madden.

While Billy's tale is greeted
With clapping and with cheers,
That lasted for some minutes,
A well known guest appears.
Then Paddy Hackett promptly left
His seat beside the fire,
And welcoming the seanachie,
Expressed the crowd's desire.

"We heard so many fairy tales,
I surely wish you would
Recite some ancient prophecy,
'Twould make us all feel good;
For there are lots of prophecies;
I'm sure Pat Duggan will
Tell something to those youngsters,
From our own Colombkille.
Said Higgins: Pat, come over here!
Then with his chair he parted;
This put the old man in good cheer,
And thus the story started.

The Prophecy

Now heed me well
And I will tell
A story, singular and true;
'Twas on the night
Old Terry White
Chased Will o' the Wisp the country through.
As from the fair
Held over there,
Beside Athy, on Barrow's beach;
He sought his home
In the midnight gloam,
And followed a light he could not reach.
But happy sight,
Another light
Did plainer on his vision beam;
For he was tired,
And much desired
To reach the spot where he saw it gleam.

He did not find
Much peace of mind
When this bright light he reached at last;
There was none here
To offer cheer,
'Twas the big moat of Mullaghmast.
But he'll go there
Howe'er he'll fare
He feels too tired to further stray;
Besides the light
Seems to invite
Him to step in without delay.
With fear and awe
In there he saw
Tables that seemed for an army meant;
While troops all around
In sleep profound,
And fully armed, upon them leant.
And in the stalls
Along the walls,
Were horses standing in a line,
The intruder stept
Where a warrior slept,
Who waking asked: "Is it yet the time?"
No, no, not yet,
But don't forget!
And then he gazed at the sinking moon—
Columbkille well
Did this foretell,
The dreadful battle begins at noon.

By that seer of old
Was this foretold,
Who did the future understand:
When a miller rose
With a hooked nose,
And with six fingers on each hand,

And a bugle blew
The cavern through,
Then would each trooper a steed obtain,
And Gerald would ride
In all his pride,
To end the bloody Saxons' reign.
Him, pray excuse
Till his horse's shoes,
Which were in thickness a half inch clear;
Shall be worn round,
And the silver ground
To the thickness of a kitten's ear.
Then the miller's note
Will sweep the moat,
Far louder than the storm's wild blast;
To rouse each clan
And each fighting man,
Against the fiends of Mullaghmast.

With hate inspired,
With fury fired,
Their country's enemies they'll seek;
Who'll make a stand
In that neck of land,
Between Roscrea and Slieve Bloom's peak.
There Eire's sons
With pikes and guns,
Will accomplish their overthrow;
And crush for all time
The murderous swine,
And deal death to their treacherous foe
Till not a man
Of the Saxon Clan,
Has been left to strike a blow.

FIFTH NIGHT

Now ranged around the blazing sods
Each got into his seat,
And gazed with plasure at the fire,
A cheerful fire of peat.
Then Paddy Hackett came straight in
To entertain the crowd,
And drew his chair close by the fire
And spoke in accents loud.

The Legend of Cromwell Hill

The moat on top of Cromwell Hill,
When I was young was haunted still;
So in expectancy I strayed
To hear the fairy music played:
For elfin strains in days of yore,
Quite well the herdsmen knew;
Oft as I heard their ancient lore,
I grew to love it more and more;
Were Robert Haily to the fore
You'd know this tale was true.

As on the moat he chanced to lie,
Intently gazing on the sky,
A flood of music charmed his ears,
Arousing no disquieting fears.
Thought 'twas a minstrel chanced to play
Upon the other side;

And as he listened to the lay
He now felt sad, and now felt gay,
For a master hand the strings did sway;
No longer could he hide.

So quickly he skippd o'er the moat,
And round him tightly drew his coat;
For in the evening, on the hill,
The cooling air is apt to chill;
But no one near the place had been,
Though plain he heard them say:
"Come, Robert Hailey! if you're seen
Again upon this hill so green;
We'll take you up before our queen,
And in the moat you'll stay.

Such words did Robert greatly scare,
Not knowing yet how he might fare:
He turned to flee, but turning slipped,
Else by the fairies was he tripped,
And headlong on the sward was flung,
Then burst their elfish roar:
As to the steep hillside he clung,
The moat with laughter fairly rung;
His ear some vicious insect stung,
And left him deaf and sore.

Pat Kenna raising up his head
Surveyed the crowd, and this much said:
"There stands Thade Callnan over there;
Come here Pat Burke, give him your chair!
And let him talk of Emly's fair,
Or race, or pattern, I don't care."
Thade Callnan was no bashful man,
But took the chair and thus began:

The Pattern of Emly

At Emlys' pattern you might see
Old maids their long beads telling,
And young ones moved with piety,
Flock from their humble dwelling.
And some were there the truth to tell,
Who did not know their prayers so well,
But merely out for pleasure;
Who sauntered through the streets all day,
Past tents where pipers used to play;
Where crowds were feeling very gay,
And drinking at their leisure.
Until they might their brains replace
With alcoholic germs;
And for "a scrap" each other face;
Excuse those yankee terms.
For when their heads were growing dizzy,
'Twas then their sticks were getting busy;
But athletes sway the crowd—
Jumps they'll contest, both broad and high,
The hurdle race they'll run close by;
But first the heavy weights they'll try.
For here are champions proud.

Both Ryan and Bradshaw, gossips claim
Were looking very sullen;
The one from Cloghaready came,
The other came from Cullen.
Then Jack McGrath, a stalworth lad,
To test their mettle seemed quite glad,
And said he'd yield to no man.
Jack Dingley too, well known to fame,
All-Ireland honors he could claim;
Such legs, such arms, such neck, such frame
Ne'er graced a Greek or Roman.

The workmen shouted out with pride:
"Come Judge! we're through preparin'
The place, where they must now decide
The championship of Erin.
But on the crowd that stood around,
Fell silence deep, prolonged, profound;
Showing interest ran high;
Though one small barony might them claim,
All Ireland could not bound their fame;
Well might Clanwilliam's sons exclaim:
"All Europe we defy."

Then Jack McGrath first toed the scratch,
The weight heaved yards eleven;
But William Ryan proved his match,
He stood just six feet seven.
Then Dingley massive, tall and grand,
The stone threw with his good right hand,
And shot it through the gate:
Tom Bradshaw grasped it in his hands,
His muscles firm as iron bands,
A foot past Dingley's mark it lands;
The cheering now was great.

Though Jack McGrath tried all his might,
'Twas plain his star was setting
But Jack Dunlea was out of sight,
On him the crowd were betting;
Though why should I attempt to tell
How far they threw, who threw so well,
Who filled us all with wonder;
Save that Will Ryan so tall and straight,
The capstone raised, nine hundred weight;
While Bradshaw jumped a six feet gate,
'Mid cheering loud as thunder.

But on the road returning home,
Just at the Hill of Cullen,

Some specter, whether ghost or gnome,
In accents gruff and sullen,
Said: Why do you with evil fate,
Pursue this lonely road so late,
When mortals should be sleeping?
Though you might throw a hundred weight,
And fling it through an iron gate;
If you're caught here again so late,
Good cause you'll have for weeping.

Neddy Kane's Story

Said Neddy Kane, "Though I don't know
Whence fairies come, nor where they go,
I worked three years for Johnny Crow
'Twas a long time to stay;
For in his house ghosts used convene,
On Wonder Hill, up a boreen,
Where old Hoar's ghost was often seen,
And frightened us away.

Nor would they stay on the outside;
Though barred, the door would open wide,
And they would come up alongside
The mattress where I lay:
I tell you 'twas an awful sight,
They'd rake the fire, put out the light,
Throw slippers at me half the night,
And laugh and chat away.

They hit Bob Hailey with a tray,
As in the settle there he lay,
He didn't close an eye till day
Roused up our wary host;
'Twas then you ought have seen poor Bob,
He tried to stand, gave up the job,
And turned the color of the hob;
You'd swear he was a ghost.

Oh, oftentimes we were in dread
Of ghosts, who ought to have been dead;
They'd shift the cupboard, chairs and bed,
And throw things on the floor;
Till all the doors would swing and creak
And cups and saucers seem to break,
When tired of play their leave they take
By the keyhole in the door.

Said Callinan: "Not one could fail,
To b'lieve in elves who heard that tale;
So for my part I think those right,
Who say that ghosts appear at night.
'Twas well I knew Bill Lonergan,
Who from a pooka often ran.

Bill Lonergan and the Pooka

A man he was of goodly height,
And drinking in the town one night,
His friends advised him there to stay,
Nor venture home 'fore break of day
Said Bill: "Hand me a flask of rye!
That's it, your ghosts I now defy.
When its contents I drink, 'tis plain
That not a shadow will remain,
Of what did spirits once contain."
And thus as at their fears he laughed,
Some of the beverage he quaffed.

At length he thinks of going home,
And is proceeding all alone.
The moon which erewhile brightly beamed,
Behind a sombre cloud is screened;
Reluctant to give forth its light,
And 'twas approaching dread midnight;
The elms that lined the lonely fence,
But made the darkness more intense.

Ha! now he feels a growing dread,
And thoughts of goblins fill his head.
He calls to mind their many tricks,
And witches riding on broomsticks.
Till passing by the pooka's rock;
Just fancy if you can the shock
He then received, as turning round,
A pooka by his side he found;
Who was no stranger to his name,
And quickly let him know that same.

"Come Bill repeat your sweeping boast—
That you don't care for any ghost!"
But Bill with terror overcome,
Could not for millions find his tongue.
"You're lucky that 'tis a fine night,
And such a one as must delight
Yourself to ride around;
For many a sight to you I'll show,
As skimming hill and dale we go;
So o'er my back your leg you'll throw,
While I lie on the ground.

Bill felt his courage all congeal,
As he surveyed from head to heel
This ugly looking beast:
Through fear he felt impelled to mount,
What then he felt—who can recount?
The pooka climbed up hill and mount
Nor was fatigued the least.
Naught cares he for the lovely scene,
But marks the flood in the ravine,
Jumping and prancing down they go
A rood at every bound:
Scarce a whole herd of buffalo
Descending on the vale below,
Mixed with the river's boisterous flow
Could make so loud a sound.

Still Bill gets a more dreadful shock,
Though fearing the fast pace;
When the spook drops him on a rock
'Mid the Falls of Dunaas.
Above the thunder of the falls
Louder and louder the demon bawls;
Till from his bed leaps up the hare;
The wary deer sniffs the cool air,
The startled crane forsakes the fen,
The fox is peeping from his den,
The dogs are barking loud;
The crows are cawing with vehemence,
The cows are huddled by the fence,
And there is every evidnce
That birds and beasts are cowed.

The pooka snorting and racing still,
Gains the top of Kilteely Hill
That he had long espied;
Girted around with cliffs so high,
At night they seem to touch the sky,
There witches might hold revel high,
The spook was satisfied.
Dismounts Bill on a precipice,
Where if but one step he should miss
To pieces he'd be dashed;
Then makes him to resume his seat,
Till over a big fire of peat,
He squirms and twists his burning feet
While to the chimney lashed.
Again flies with him through the air,
But this time lets him down with care,
'Twas at the first cockcrow;
How fortunate such sounds can scare
This frightful spectre of the air;
For awful sights gossips declare,
To Bill he meant to show.

Most of the boys round Cromwell Hill
On his adventure questioned Bill;
Who thought he rode the ghost all night,
But was not sure, so great the fright
Which he received, and hard he tried
Good holds to take upon each side.

Some simple folks that once I knew,
Asked wonderingly: Can this be true?
At all events his brother swore,
At daybreak as he oped the door,
He saw in a sad and sorry state,
Bill clutching both wings of the gate.

The story some would criticise,
And hinted Bill was telling lies;
But all admired both young and old
The charming tale Tade Callinan told.

SIXTH NIGHT

Of banshees you have heard a lot
In many rural rhymes;
But Paddy Burke Will tell you now
A story of old times.

Such tales I gladly would relate,
Should they afford delight;
For many a story I have heard,
On many a winter night.
So now I wish you all to know,
The way we told them long ago.

In winter when the nights were long,
Around some neighbor's fire we'd throng;
Where gossips learned in ancient lore,
Into our ears would nightly pour
Strange legends, that might well surprise
More grown up persons and more wise.
Till in the dark returning home,
When ghosts and pookas love to roam;
We'd fancy any cry the wail,
They mentiond in the fairy tale.

Will o' the Wisp

Once Bill Murnane was on his way,
To Hayes's house where he used stay,
And hastened through the bog:
Although the hour was pretty late,
He saw a light inside the gate,
Though bothered with the fog.
He followed the light for quite a way,
For Will o' the Wisp led him astray,
Halfway to Cromwell Hill;
The luring light would make him see
Steep banks, where ditches ought to be,
And he kept following still.
Though 'twasn't Hayes's house he saw,
But Johnny Power's near the old rath;
About which Bill could easily quote
Many a stirring anecdote.

But after he had climbed the hill
When just beside the moat;
He plainly heard the words: "'Tis Bill!
Or else I am a goat."

These words did so alarm Bill
He wouldn't recognize the hill.

Oh sure the moat he ought to know,
For round it winds constantly blow,
And on it wild flowers never grow.
But woe to him, the gossips say,
Round Diarmid's Bed at night would stray;
Detained he'd be in lonely dell,
By witch or imp with magic spell.
Bill then looked up quite anxiously,
But nothing round the moat could see,
    Though he heard various sounds,
That didn't confidence inspire;
In fact his blood was now on fire,
And from the hill means to retire,
    For ghosts were on their rounds.
Well, well, he sees that wavy light,
That still might guide his steps aright.
Again he heard them call out: Bill!
"What are you doing on the hill?
But now his knees with terror bend,
His hair was standing upon end,
    As down its side he dashed;
Although he got many a jolt and fall,
He never blamed Will o' the Wisp at all,
Till passing by Tom Conway's wall,
    Into a fence he crashed.
Bruised and longing for the morn,
And smarting too from many a thorn,
    Bill made another dash;
Though he thought he was wide awake,
A ditch for a path he did mistake,
    And fell with an awful splash.
In vain Bill tries to clean his clothes,
For he's covered with mire up to his nose.
Then viewing his state in sad surprise,
He curses Will o' to the skies;
For sure it was his fickle glow
That made of Bill a holy show.

But Dave Mulcahy fared far worse,
The night he met that fairy curse
Who put him in a stew.
There was here then a vicious ass,
That strolled the road-side, cropped the grass,
And that could easily surpass
What beasts I ever knew.
The schoolboys who would often try.
To ride the donkeys passing by,
Of that stray ass were always shy;
For he as fiery as old mars,
Could very nearly kick the stars,
If aught did him assail.
But now my story to pursue,
And I can swear both black and blue,
That every word is strictly true
Or in my trust I fail.

The time Dave married Nelly Gray,
That very night he went astray.
Some people said it served him right,
He shouldn't leave his house that night;
But boys who for him long did labor,
Just now were working for his neighbor;
So he'll invite his neighbor's boys
For to be sharers in his joys;
Quite strangely too it came to pass,
Upon his way he met the ass
That on the roadside strayed;
And as it was a starless night,
He was deceived by Willo's light,
That through the hawthorns played.
And in the donkey made him see
His wife as plain as plain could be.
Embrace her then he mustn't fail,
But as he neared the donkeys tail
The latter kicked him on the head,
And left him lying there half dead.

Pettycoat Loose

Now Paddy Burke transferred the scene
From Cromwell to Ballyporeen,
Where most malicious acts had been
Committed by a ghost.
That haunted the valley up and down,
From Galty's base to Knockmeldown;
Beside some hamlet, house, or town,
The spectre would take her post.

Said the seanachie if any cared,
I'd tell you how my comrade fared,
When to run an errand he had dared,
Upon the Burncourt road;
And how he raced at breakneck speed,
Without sparing spur, or whip, or steed;
In a frantic effort to precede
Her, to his frind's abode.

Far down the road the shadows lie
Of Galty's summits towering high;
Where hawthorn hedges beautify,
At night obscure the way.
Swift mountain torrents there you see
In the Burncourt and Shanbally,
And over Duag flowing free,
Knockmeldown's range holds sway.

The swifter Funcheon too is seen
Beside the Caves, in a ravine;
Beneath the wood of Carrigeen,
Where Galty Castle stands.
High o'er it Galty's summit towers;
Here mountaineers in leisure hours
Along its slopes pluck the wild flowers,
In merry making bands.

And every tourist and exile
Will gladly travel many a mile,
To see those caves; throughout our isle
None with them can compare;
But who at midnight would explore
Those gloomy pits, or wander o'er,
Where wicked elves and torrents roar
Neath boulders stern and bare.

Beyond the lofty mountain's crest,
The hounds no longer will molest
The hunted stag, he'll safely rest
By Muskery's lonely lake.
Three mountain summits round it lie;
Farbreaga, Galtybeg, more nigh
Is Greenane's peak, so steep and high,
O'er which the fierce storms break.

Near Shanbally Castle he seems to wait;
What causes him to hesitate,
Or dreads he that some gloomy fate
Awaits him over there?
Take either road, he's just between
Clogheen town and Ballyporeen,
Where frightful ghosts were often seen,
And never failed to scare.

But he knew his friend was very low,
So for priest and doctor he must go;
'Twas three good miles from Carriganroe,
And the hour was very late;
So he kept on at his fastest pace,
And when he had almost won the race;
He met the demon face to face
Before the pastor's gate.

For unrelenting in her ire,
She mounted a steed that wouldn't tire,
That from his nostrils belched forth fire
    This demon of the night,
And though on a message of mercy bent,
That a dying sinner might repent;
Her weight on his saddlebow she leant,
    And he fainted at the sight.

But when a pater and ave he said,
This fiend of darkness quickly fled;
Down towards the Tar valley she sped,
    And his horse at once revived.
He reached the priest without delay,
And brought his reverence all the way,
Back to the house where the sick man lay
    Then was the sinner shrived.

The Leprechaun

The Leprechaun is often seen,
At early dawn upon the green,
    Or out among the heather;
Perhaps he's trying to amuse
Himself, by making summer shoes,
Of bats' wings that he'd rather use,
    Than a whole bale of leather.
But here last night I met Black Shawn,
Who claims he caught a leprechaun;
And made the little man come over,
And hand his stuff to Shawn the Rover;
Or there wouldn't be left of him enough,
A paltry sparrow cock to stuff.
The fairy shook in every limb;
Shawn took the crock away from him,
    And told him now to fly;

Or if again he should come round,
He'll drag him o'er a rood of ground,
And plug him in the eye.

The Leprechaun is very bright,
A cobbler and a rover;
But then from such a sudden fright,
He'll need time to recover.
But he's resourceful and he's quick,
And before Shawn detects it,
He's sure to play on him a trick,
Just when he least expects it.

Shawn left the sly and cunning elf,
To think it over for himself,
And go and nurse his spleen.
But he, of all his wealth despoiled.
Cries: "Shawn, the horse is running wild!
Quick! quick! or he will kill your child,
He's flying down the green.

Said Shawn: I long ago was schooled,
And will not be so easily fooled
By any fairy trick;
To take my eyes from off the crock,
And give you thus a chance to mock
Me, till I have it under lock,
Or I'm a lunatic.
But as he held it in his hands,
Putting the crock away;
Spurning the little man's demands,
Whate'er he had to say;
The latter uttered such a shout,
That Shawn forgetting turned about,
To see what was the matter.
The fairy seeing his surprise,
A fist of pepper threw in his eyes,
And wildly 'gan to clatter.

His hold on the elf still Shawn retains,
But blinded and maddened by his pains;
He lifts his hand to wipe his eyes;
Then instantly the fairy flies,
And before Shawn could close the door,
The elf was gone with all the ore.

And many another tale was told,
Of men who searched for crocks of gold;
Till goblins, ghosts, and pookas dread,
Had got into each youthful head.
On nights like this when primed with tales,
The winds would sound like banshee wails.
In ram or bull, or painted post,
We'd see some queer uncanny ghost.

SEVENTH NIGHT

Bill Manogue

Of dwarfed brain and capricious will,
Uneducated and untrained;
Kilteely has been looking still,
And oft searched village, vale and hill;
But athlete like half-witted Bill
She never since obtained.

The highest gate the parish round,
He could clear at a single bound;
But 'twold be useless to urge Bill
To jump unless he felt the will,
Though begged from day to dark;
Unless caught in a jumping mood
When on the game he might intrude
Then he'd surprise the multitude
And set them a new mark.

Great strength he also did possess,
Though very quiet, nevertheless,
If to annoy him some persist,
They'd find a rough antangonist;
For I have seen him in my time,
Toss Jimmy Moylan in his prime,
While with him Bill did simply toy,
As if he were a mere school boy;
A man who had been looked upon,
Of all the parish champion.
But now my story to pursue,
And I assure you it is true;
Nor will I soon forget the night
When Bill appeared o'ercome with fright:
"Declared the devil he had seen,
Head, horns and all, upon the green."

If any grounds for doubt remained,
He'd take an oath he saw him chained;
He could tell more, but feared his spite,
Yet told how he ate grass all night;
Enough to last a hundred steers
And more, for full a hundred years.
His hearers thought it rather queer,
The devil could find no better cheer,
And hinted quite as much to Bill,
Who oft before saw on the hill
Some ghostly form, and helter skelter,
He'd flee till he found friendly shelter.

My father who was wont to keep
The lazy knave, and let him sleep
Beneath his roof in shine or rain,
Threatened to turn him out again,
If to the hill he did not go
With Tommy Blake and Jerry Keough
From whom he'd learn if it were so.

Bill thought my father quite uncivil,
To order him to face the devil;
Which put the good man in a plight,
To keep from laughing at his fright.
Still he maintained a serious face,
Told Bill his steps he must retrace;
They might take each a trusty blade,
No need therefore, to be afraid.
Cowards! to stand and whine and snivel
When three to one against the devil.

Bill fearing he would not relent,
With a bad grace gave his consent;
And so they hasten on all three,
In hopes the specter they might see;
But soon their fears did on them gain,
As they heard something drag a chain.

"Keep still" said Bill, now listen, hell!
The devil is there I know full well;
I saw him eating up a tree,
And shake his horns excitedly;
And then he stood upon his head—
Do you suppose the devil is dead?
If so stay here and see what's in it;
But I am off this blessed minute.
And turning round upon his track,
Lo! Bill was gone nor once looked back,
Too long he waited here;
The others thought 'twould be a shame,
Were they in turn to do the same,
Although not free from fear.
So long and earnestly they gaze
To penetrate the murky haze;
Till there beside the stack of corn,
Thy felt quite sure they saw a horn;
Which caused them to be very civil,
Lest it should prove to be the devil.

While doubting which course to pursue
In their predicament;
The parting clouds relieve the view
And clear the firmament;
Admitting the moon's feeble light,
A thing they welcomed with delight,
That helped to set their minds aright.
For now some monster they descry,
Uncouth, grotsque, with head awry,
And horns that seemed with rubbish smeared
Wide circling o'er a flowing beard.

At first poor Blake felt much abashed,
But soon the truth upon him flashed,
Crying with a comic air,
"If 'tis the devil, who cares a pin!
Bill saw with whiskers on his chin,
And eating such humble fare.
Oh many a tale he'll set afloat,
More than John Banim ever wrote,
About what's but a thieving goat;
You see him over there!"
"A goat, you're right," his comrade cried,
"I felt Quite sure the villian lied;
The laugh's on us, but wait until
We get back home, we'll settle Bill."
So each has something to propose,
He warns the other not to disclose.

By this time Bill had told his host
Of his adventure with the ghost,
Who gave him such an awful look,
That dazed with terror he fairly shook;
Seeing him jump through hedge and rocks,
With head far larger than an ox:

Then to the devil he gave leg-bail,
While they stood there stiff as a rail,
Watching him eat up bush and thorns,
And wondering at his monstrous horns.

The story told, my brother Phil
Said he would go up to the hill,
And ascertain at the very least,
The shape and size of this strange beast,
Of which Bill vaguely told.
No sooner had he ope'd the door,
Than Bill's comrades who becked him o'er
A different tale unfold.
"What's this, said Phil, with feigned surprise!
Can I in truth believe my eyes?"
We pray you, don't his fears arouse;
For we think Bill is in the house.
"Of course, where would you have him stay;"
Then hear what we have got to say!
Bill danced and yelled, pulled off his coat;
Pointing widly at Doolin's goat;
With tethered legs and horns so thick,
We felt quite sure it was "old nick."
"He's there, said Bill, "now you look out!
Then started off with such a shout
As made the hillside ring.

I knew you'd laugh, still listen Phil;
You must go in and say to Bill;
There something you must bring!
You cannot sleep near Tommy Blake,
Your snoring keeps him wide awake,
If you lie near his bed;
So to the barn you now must go,
And fetch from thence a bag of tow,
And sleep out here instead.
When you return on that bench, mind!
Plenty of blankets you will find.

But ere you to him these words say,
Bring us two sheets without delay;
Also to heighten his alarm,
The fog-horn bring 'twill do no harm,
But bring them to us here:
Within the barn we'll take our posts,
And Bill will think we're real ghosts,
And almost die of fear.

All they desired they got from Phil,
Who then returned to speak to Bill;
He, not suspecting brother's yarn,
A lantern took out to the barn;
But scarcely had he touched the tow,
Than with a scream he let it go.
Behind it leaning 'gainst a post,
A tall and lank, and frightful ghost,
Was making faces at Manogue,
Who asked him in a trembling brogue:
"For mercy, sir; what would you do?
I never did a thing to you."
Naught spake the ghost, but snatched the light
Which added greatly to Bill's fright
For instntly he put it out,
Causing Manogue to scream and shout.

Bill was no coward, but you know,
He would not face a ghostly foe.
Thinks he, my only show is flight,
I know the door is to my right;
But then appeared with looks forlorn,
The other ghost with the fog horn;
Who blew a blast the roof might rend,
Which caused Bill's hair to stand on end;
Then threw at him a score or more
Of turnips he found on the floor;
So fast the blows, so sharp they stung,
His fears were by his pains o'ercome.

Not all the elves on Keeper Hill,
Could any longer manage Bill;
Who having now got o'er his fright,
Was mauling them both left and right;
Until Phil thought, as I suppose,
That Bill would kill his ghostly foes;
    Then open threw the door;
When Bill dashed out and raised a shout,
    Nor halted once before
He gained the house, and puffing told
How he had fought with spirits bold,
    That did the place infest;
And fairly whipped a unicorn,
That charged him with his shining horn;
    Although he did his best,
He hit him twice upon the nose,
Until the blood that from it flows
    Had stained his coat and vest.
But now appeared the other boys,
With battered heads and blackened eyes;
Whose looks explained th' unruly ghosts,
Who fought with Bill round sacks and posts.

EIGHTH NIGHT

Adventures of the Fianna Eireann

Pat Martin's house held the mixed crowd
    Who gathered tales to hear
In winter, when the nights were long,
    And the bright fire gave cheer.
'Twas here Pat Maher used to teach
    The languages called "dead"
And many a story he could tell,
    And many a tale he read.
So now the boys invited him
    To heighten their good cheer,

By telling them of mighty men,
Of whom they loved to hear.
For he would willingly discourse
Of heroic chiefs of old;
Of Finn McCool, and Oscar too,
Ossian, and Diarmid bold.
A legend old, he forthwith told,
That smacked of ancient Greece;
When Jason and the argonauts
Brought back the Golden Fleece.

The Story

The Fenians of the olden times,
Were celebrated in the rhymes
Which we have still at hand;
Matchless in strength, and skill, and speed
They had no equal, that's agreed,
In courage, or in daring deed,
Throughout their native land.

One day some chiefs tired from the chase,
Which they had followed to this place;
While taking a much needed draft
Of Glannarought's dark ale;
Stood gazing at a foreign craft,
That Kenmare's tide did safely waft,
Without a jib or sail;
To where the Sheen and Roughty meet,
Beside Kenmare well built and neat
In Kerry's brightest vale.
So when the cruiser seemed to lag,
Without a sail, without a flag,
The huntsmen seemed surprised,
Watching this vessel in her plight,
Her starboard black, her larboard white,
Presenting quite a curious sight;
Her object none surmised.

Now on the deck the ship's crew stand
Gazing around on every hand;
They view the town, they view the strand,
Just as the chiefs draw near;
The lovely sight has them allured,
At once the vessel fast is moored,
And by a hawser is secured
To Kenmare's ancient pier.

The pretty Finnihy flows down,
Beside Kenmare's romantic town;
But on the opposite side,
Comes tumbling in the boisterous Sheen,
While the strong Roughty flows between,
To swell the Kenmare's tide.

No finer river Ireland boasts,
No deeper glens, no grander coasts;
The oldest, grandest, circular fort,
Is Staigue, according to report,
Here is the gloomiest defile,
And loftiest mount search every mile,
From Malin Head to Blarney;
The grandest lakes in all our isle,
Are those around Killarney.
Here are lofty cliffs, castles and halls,
Frightful chasms and waterfalls;
The arbutus that never fades,
O'Sullivan's and Torc's cascades;
Glengariff wild, and Cromwell's Bridge;
Overhanging cliff and ridge.
Such charming scenes West Munster boasts,
Along her valleys and round her coasts.
Let Adrigole Fall on Hungry Hill,
Excite our admiration still;
Or rugged grandeur of hill and brake,
Surrounding lovely Caragh Lake.

The noble bridge o'er the Sneem I ween,
From Kenmare's banks is plainly seen;
Where mountain torents foam and brawl
O'er many a tiny waterfall.
And Waterville has a lovely site
If viewed from Caherdaniel height,
Upon that narrow way,
Where Commeragh a flood pours down
Through Lough Currane, thence through the town
To Ballinskellig's Bay.

Here nature would each spot adorn,
In what more fitting place,
Could the Liberator* have been born,
The champion of his race.
Were I to mention each grand scene,
From Kenmare round to Cahirciveen;
To describe their beauties I would fail,
And you'd grow weary of the tale.
So let's return to Kenmare's pier,
And learn what brought those strangers here.

"What seek you?" Oscar promptly cried;
"You are to us unknown,
And hope you long here to abide,
That thus you anchor close beside
Our docks and busy town.
What come you to this place to seek?
Speak captain, be not backward, speak!"
"My name is Lund, from Omar's Strand;
My country needs relief.
These are the nobles of that land,
And I their humble chief.
No standing army to protect
A prosperous state like ours,

*O'Connell

Invited the cupidity
Of greedy, border powers;
Although we peaceful paths pursued,
Till forced to take the field;
That field with corpses was bestrewed
Ere we were forced to yield.
But hearing of the mighty deeds
Achieved by Eire's band;
Against the world's best warriors,
On Ventry Harbor's strand;
We have come here to seek your aid,
And if successful in the raid,
Which our chief men have planned;
Eight casks of gold will be your share,
Which in this ship, you'll homeward bear
To your own native land."

The Fenians on excitement bent,
A ready ear to him they lent.
Aboard all went, they liked the trip,
And back the Bretons steered the ship.
They now unfurl great sheets of sail,
And fly before the freshening gale;
And ere the morrow's sun goes down,
They hail once more their native town.

They now appoint a festive rite,
And all the town grows gay;
The Fenian chiefs they now invite,
To pass with them a jolly night,
In feasting, song, and story light,
Until the coming day.
Then rest another day and night,
And all make ready for the fight.

On the third day their forces march
Against Tolchester town;

Whose people learning that their foe,
Was one they vanquished long ago;
Smile at their hopes to strike a blow,
That might restore the crown,
That formerly prince Lubeck wore:
Then fiercely every Tolchian swore,
That heavier blows were still in store
For that rebellious clown.

The armies quickly come in sight,
And both make ready for the fight.
Loud and more loud the shouting rose,
As the combatants meet;
With deadly blows, those ancient foes,
Again each other greet:
But now the Fenian chiefs appear,
And bid their friends be of good cheer;
While like a whirlwind on they go,
And spread dismay among the foe,
Along their entire front.
No troops such valor could withstand,
They smote the foe on every hand,
Left but a broken, shattered band
To bear the battle brunt.

The victory was soon complete,
Their foes no longer stand,
And to the Bretons as was meet,
Restore their gold and land.
The latter now returning home,
A council quickly hold;
Decide those chiefs from Scotia's land
Should share none of the gold.
But dreading much the mighty blows
They saw those heroes deal,

A frightful plot they hatched for those,
Who helped them to defeat their foes,
And should have shared their weal.
These not suspecting any guile,
The palace seek to rest awhile.

Meanwhile they view the country round
A lovely land it seems;
Where deer and antelope abound,
And rills and sparkling streams.

Through cultivated fields they go,
Where flowering shrubs and fruit trees grow;
On to the summit of a hill,
That makes their very heartstrings thrill;
Such lovely views the place commands,
Where crowning all the castle stands.
But once within the castle hold,
A choir sweet music chants,
And many youths of graceful mould
Anticipate their wants.
And now chief Lund makes haste to say:
Come, "Men of Eire," be seated pray!
We strangers are no more;
But exercise here lordly sway,
While with us you will deign to stay,
Until your wealth you bear away
To Erin's lovely shore.

"Quick, waiters quick!" the Breton said,
Serve viands rich and wine;
But first their thirst must be allayed,
Those valiant friends of mine."
The Fenian chiefs soon felt elated,
And swore that they had never tasted
Old usquebaugh so fine;
And so, they never hesitated,
But, long they quaffed off unabated,
The generous draughts of wine.

Still wine for them they freely pour,
Till fell their weapons on the floor,
And helpless was each chief.
Then did the Breton princes praise
The strategy of Lund;
Who found for them the means and ways
Of saving such a fund.
Not gold alone their actions sway,
In this revenge its part must play.

Said Lund, "where Ventry harbor stands,
The king of the world gave his commands,
And the king of Ireland did agree,
That on that strand the fight should be.
'Twas there I saw my brothers fall,
My cousins, relatives, and all;
The bravest men of Lichtendahl,
Struck down by Oscar's flail!
And there my father too was slain,
Although he tried to dodge in vain,
Swift Caolte, who cut him in twain—
The fiercest of the Gael.
But now we'll send to long repose
Late friends, who were our fathers' foes,
So deal them out your heaviest blows,
There's none their fate to wail.

But Luchra's son, who with a band
Of chieftains loitering on the strand,
Were startled by a cry;
And mixed with it were awful sounds;
A man came rushing through the grounds,
And quickly drawing nigh,
Cried: "Comrades haste, avert their fate!
Fly quicker than the deer;
One minute lost, 'twill be too late."
Each grasps his doughty spear,

And for the mansion hastes away,
The Bretons' treachery to repay.

Soon heads were falling down like rain;
The Bretons fought, but fought in vain,
And now like frightened deer,
They seek the densest woods and brakes,
And thick copse bordering the lakes,
In hope to quell their fear

Well did the scared cup-bearers say:
Your vengeance, Chiefs! 'twere well to stay;
If any one of us you slay;
You'll all regret this night;
For naught will ever then restore
Their strength, to those who weapons bore
In many a battle heretofore
And well remembered fight.
But we the heralds of the king,
Can bring to you a magic ring,
And they'll be soon all right.
We've seen it tried three times before,
'Twill heal their wounds, their strength restore.
And make them fully ten times more
Resistless in their might."
"Then get the charm and bring it hence.
And from us claim fit recompense."

They seek at once the haunted cave,
Where dwelt the fairy queen;
Who gave to each a shadowy cloak,
So they could pass unseen
By the minotaur, who vigil kept
O'er this magic ring, and never slept.

At last they find the secret crypt,
Where lay the magic ring;
And passed unseen the awful beast,
While back the prize they bring,

And place it first in Oscar's hand,
Who felt immediate relief;
Then in clear tones he gave command,
To pass the ring from chief to chief.
And every chieftain in his turn,
Felt all his former strength return,
And vengeance fierce within him burn;
For the drugged wine he quaffed.
Ah! they'll have cause to weep and mourn
Who lately at us laughed.

But now the Bretons in their plight,
Their former foes to them invite,
To lend them needed aid;
Or Wessex sons would surely feel,
The weight of Eire's polished steel,
If that aid were delayed.
So now their forces they unite,
Against the Fenian chiefs to fight.

There upon Oscar fiercely swore
That he would shed the Breton's gore,
Until it reddened all the shore,
Where now their good ship lay.
But leave a few behind to store
Eight casks of gold, and perhaps more
For us to take away.
Our suffering we'll now avenge,
Their treachery calls for revenge,
And soon on them 'twill fall.
Nor will we leave here while one foe
Throughout this land is free to go,
Let battle axe and halberd's blow
Exterminate them all.

Then quickly taking up the word,
Each warrior drew his keen edged sword;

The palace grounds they quickly gain,
Where many nobles still remain
Around the council board.
Some boldly counseled and some planned
Measures not yet disclosed,
Giving advise on every hand
Where to unite and where to stand,
And overwhelm the tiny band
By which they were opposed.

Charge! Charge! said Oscar, on that host,
But first on those who loudest boast,
Let your keen halberds play.
Surprised the Tolchians quickly fled,
But after them the Fenians sped,
And those who boasted and who bled,
Were filled with dire dismay.

Nor did they stop the slaughter there,
But kept pursuing them everywhere,
Smiting them in their tracks;
And fearful was the din that rose,
As gathering bands tried to oppose
Those furious chiefs, who on their foes,
Swung the dread battle-axe.

As sweeps the storm along the height,
When thunders rattle and lightnings smite,
And mountain torrents pour.
They madly rush into the fight,
And scores of Bretons put to flight,
Or change their day to endless night,
Amid the battle roar.

What vails the battle to prolong,
'Gainst men so valiant and so strong?
Nought that prince Lund can see.
Against a troop each one would strive,
Receive deep wounds and still survive,
And win the victory.

Sore was the need of Omar then,
Pursued by Eire's fighting men,
Her bravest sons were slain.
The other troops in terror fled,
Through fields of wounded and of dead,
Nor longer fight maintain.

The Fenians came down to the ship,
To start upon the homeward trip,
And meet old friends once more.
While Oscar, Con, and Caolte fleet,
Diarmid, Ossian, and Luch all greet
Their comrades on the shore.
All Europe's conquest they might plan,
For they were wonders, every one;
Since Hercules, there was no man
That had acquired such fame;
No Sassenach came then to fan
Their discords into flame.

NINTH NIGHT

Pat Martin's Tale

Pat Martin now addressed the crowd,
Still clapping, and still talking loud:
"I'm glad to see Pat Maher's tale
Has met with such applause;
But there's a legend older still,
I know it well because
I was raised on Corkoguiny's coast,
Where Kerry's wild waves roar,
And I know well the story that
I heard in days of yore.

As soon as Eire's fighting men
Had crushed the Breton bands;

A vast amount of treasure fell
Into the victors' hands;
Which they conveyed in their trim ship,
Preparing to set sail,
For the land they had so lately left,
Their own loved Innisfail.

His kingship met them on the way,
And said: "With us you'll surely stay,
And we will reckon you alway
Our bulwark and our pride;
For here we grant you lordly sway,
With varying pleasures for each day;
By hill and dale, by lake and bay,
While with us you reside."
Then to the king's seductive words,
The Fenians made reply:
"Your generous offer make to those,
You never treated as your foes;
Who never smarted 'neath your blows
And on it might rely.

Reserve for them your gracious mien,
Your base ingratitude we've seen;
So now we will not fail
To take away those casks of gold,
And stow them safe in the ship's hold,
And with them homeward sail;
So part we here, we're going to join
Our comrades at the ship;
Who gallantly have done their share,
And anxiously await us there,
To make the homeward trip."

The humbled king his steps retraced,
Through his vast pleasure ground;
And strange to say, while on his way,
The magic ring he found.

So to the fairy cave he went,
The genie to conjure,
That boreas he should implore,
To wreck the strangers on the shore,
And thus their gold secure.
Next day the clouds obscure the sky,
And winds and blinding hail
Delay the chiefs, now homeward bound
For the land of Innisfail.

For days those chiefs were tossed about,
Shock fast succeeding shock;
Until at length they're driven on
The barren Skellig rock.
Here they feared much their fragile craft
Would be to pieces dashed,
For merciless appeared the waves
By which that craft was lashed.

When lo, the sky began to clear,
A calm came o'er the sea;
Then joyfully they anchor cast,
And landed hastily.
They talked and walked along the shore,
The day had now grown fine;
The sea around seemed full of fish,
Each got his hook and line;
When down upon the fishers swooped
Huge gulls and ospreys too,
And used both wings, and bills, and claws,
Upon the Fenian crew.
Before their fierce and sudden charge,
The men to rally fail;
Till Oscar made his signal trip,
And dashed back from the sea-lashed ship
With his big iron flail.
Then o'er the monsters' backs it rings,
And loud the noise arose;

When o'er their heads and tails and wings,
The awful flail brave Oscar swings,
And many a bird to earth it brings
Among his feathered foes.

Then was a chance presented to
Proud Diarmid, Conn and all;
To rush down at their fastest clip,
And get their weapons from the ship,
And on the monsters fall.
Both sides then waged a battle fierce;
Such ne'er was seen elsewhere;
One army fighting on the earth,
Another in the air.

The birds at last seemed giving way,
And in wider circles sail;
While on the ground vast numbers lay,
Who fell in the unequal fray,
Which they had waged for half a day,
Against both spear and flail.

The men hoist anchor and set sail
For a haven to the east;
And left this barren island where
Those shocking vultures feast.
They soon reach land, though steep Bray head
Does not invite their stay;
But driven northward by the wind,
They entered Dingle Bay.
Here was an inlet of the sea,
That they could safely fish;
Where the grim shadows ever change,
Beneath the lofty mountain range,
Of frowning, grey Slieve Mish.

On the north side of Dingle Bay,
Just where the town of Dingle lay,
Their ship at anchor rides;

The chiefs and men together land,
As they had previously planned;
Upon a narrow winding strand,
That the steep mountain hides,
Of Beenoskee where the heather blooms,
Where high above it Brandon looms,
A mighty mountain mass;
That they can easily survey,
'Tis only a few miles away,
Towering o'er Brandon Head and Bay,
And over steep Slieveglas.

'Twas here the chiefs advised their bands,
Upon the spreading lea;
That some should search the neighboring lands,
With skeins and spears and battle brands,
And others fish the sea.
Those who for fishing volunteered
Nets for lines substituted;
They lower the boats upon the spray,
And as they pushed the craft away,
Their friends on shore saluted.

Forthwith swift Caolte and Oscar came,
And Diarmid by their side,
And Goll McMorna, the doughty chief,
Of Connaught long the pride.
These were the bravest fighting men
Of all the Fenian crew,
They were the greatest champions
Of Ireland through and through.

But while they stood there doubting
Which course they should pursue,
A novel spectacle was soon
Presented to their view.
A flock of goats attracted by
The strange craft and its sails,

Kept drawing closer to the spot
Where stood those sportive Gaels.

"Now Caolte," said Oscar laughingly,
I'll wager you a pound,
That you don't overtake the herd,
Before it gets around
The spur of yonder mountain,
Fast as you skim the ground.
For if you fail to catch them
Before that point they gain,
In tangled brush and ferny brake
And copsewood bordering the lake
Such game you'll seek in vain.

The words though spoken in a jest,
Caused Caolte to arise,
And said: who laughs the last, laughs best
And though with me none vies,
The largest in the flock I'll take,
Before the foremost reach the lake,
And lay it here upon the stake,
Before your very eyes.
Said Oscar: "The wager stands the same,
Make good your boast, produce the game!"

There words proud Caolte's spirit lashed
But answer he made none
Though from his eyes the lightning flashed,
As after them at once he dashed,
Who never was outdone
In race or chase by any man,
From Bandon river to the Baan.

The mountain sides were steep and tall;
The narrow vales between,
Were rent by streams that leap and brawl,
From Dingle Bay to Anascaul,
Forming many a waterfall,
And most romantic scene.

The rapid brooks all find their way
From Slieve Mish range to Dingle Bay,
The goats dashed through their cooling spray,
With Caolte on their track.
And ere the chiefs their laughter ceased,
O'ertook the herd, one of them seized,
And flung it o'er his back;
And for the supper brought it in
Amid the laughing, boisterous din,
Of those who wagered he would win
Who hailed him with loud cheers.
"Who won the prize?" "What need you care
Since in it all of you will share,
That you'll have vension to spare
I entertain no fears."

They passed the evening merrily,
In feasting and in song;
But when they were prepared to dine,
Brought from the boat a cask of wine,
Their pleasures to prolong.

Next day they launch their boats upon
The mountain guarded bay,
And fish its waters all day long;
Enjoying at dawn the milkmaid's song,
At eve the shepherd's lay.
A shoal of porpoise passed them by,
Coasting the shore along;
Now think they heard the mermaid's cry
And not the mildmaid's song.
They seek at once to moor their boats,
For they fared very well;
Good takes of herring, cod and sole,
And hake and makerel.
A narrow haven soon they spy,
To the east of Dingle Bay,
Where in security they lie
Until the coming day.

Its coasts were wild, the sky was blue;
From Caragh Lake to Caherdhu
The broom and fern a darker hue,
To their steep sides had given:
In stinted fields along the shore,
The wandering bees their treasure store;
Culled from wild flowers o'er which they soar,
Which constitute their heaven.
The woods with music seem to ring,
The birds in merry chorus sing,
That from Dunkerron's mountains wing
Their way down to the coast.
The sun is gilding with each ray,
The broad expanse of Dingle Bay;
No other estuary they say
Such scenery can boast.

For here were harbor, glen and wold,
And castle new and fortress old,
And mountain streamlets manifold,
That from the heights poured down.
There the enraptured eye can see
Flowers in the vale, fruit on the tree,
And thrushes singing merrily,
Whose voices seem to drown
The echoes of the waterfalls,
Where o'er the crags the Caragh brawls;
The owlet hoots, the cuckoo calls;
All nature's full of life;
The eagles toward Mangerton soar;
We see the boat, we hear the oar,
The wavelets breaking on the shore,
The wolf for mischief rife.
Sheep browse through lovely Caragh vale,
The red deer through Glenbehy stray,
Through Ferta goats have many a trail,
And wolves will find somewhere their prey.

But on the following morning when
To chase the goats they try;
They find them harder to approach,
More timid and more shy;
When all at once appeared a sight,
That thrilled the hunters with delight—
A noble herd of deer;
The great red deer of Glennaflesk,
Viewed from the hills appear grotesque;
At close range, grand and picturesque,
And now they wander here.

But Caolte fearful as the storm,
And swift as a grey hound,
At once pursued them spear in hand,
With all the speed he could command,
Gaining at every bound.
O'ertook them when about to gain,
The Main's low lying grounds;
And though not one behind did lag,
Pierced to the heart a noble stag,
That weighed a thousand pounds.

Then to the camp he brought the prize,
Seen and admired by eager eyes;
Still viewing closely, Diarmid cries;
Tapping him with his spear:
"You well may gaze on him with pride,
With branching antlers ten feet wide;
Of nobler Stag none pierced the hide,
Than lies before me here."

But when they next pursued the chase,
Luchra, the dauntless, led
The hunters, till they reached a cave
Beneath Beenoskee's Head;
When suddenly a boar rushed out,
Hid by the mountain spurs;

But Luchra met him with his spear,
The son of Luch, who knew no fear;
And ere the hunters had drawn near,
He tossed him in the furze.
This was the great Dunkerron boar,
That ravaged hill and down;
And havoc played for miles and miles
Along the river Laune,
And swam its strongest current when
Its floods were running brown.

Though stunned the savage beast came back,
Determined now to worst
The chief, and made a fresh attack,
More vigorous than the first.
But Luchra struck him with such force,
The huntsmen heard the sound;
Thought him attacked by some wild horse,
And so came hastening up of course;
But only saw the monster's corse,
Reddening the field all round.
His comrades then cut off the head,
In size a startling sight;
More than enough for all of them
To feast upon that night.

The fishing crew returned to camp,
The supper to prepare;
Examined with intense surprise,
A head of such unusual size,
And long as it did stare.
What an exciting chase they had!
Will they have any more?
That we should miss it makes us mad,
To see the man we'd be so glad,
Who fought that awful boar.

"Come haste the meal! you'll be surprised;
Boar's head will taste so fine;
And ducks are not to be despised
Washed down with mead and wine."

The night was growing late, the crowd
Must bid their host adieu;
And many a one thought Martin's tale
The better of the two.

TENTH NIGHT

Larry Dolan and the Fairies

"In stories like the one last night,
I certainly take great delight,
And so I think 'tis only right
This tale of mine should follow;
So I could make you all admit,
That an old man with lots of grit,
By dint of cunning and of wit
Beats giants and fairies hollow."

The early springtime of the year
Found Larry pale and famished,
For he stayed digging every day
Until the light had vanished,
The fine grass field that stretched around
The big moat of kilgobbin,
A frightful spot, a lonesome place,
And Larry's heart was throbbin',
As he beheld before him there
A sight that made him shiver;
A hundred elves all crying at once
To throw him in the river.

Now Larry frightened at their pranks,
Kept earnestly protesting,
That he had never done them wrong,
They surely must be jesting:
A jest is it? the fairies cried—
One that will set you yelling,
For you have ruined the playground
All round our lovely dwelling.
Said Larry: troth I didn't know
That any one was living,
Within a mile of this big moat,
My word to you I'm giving;
But if you will forgive me now
For making such a blunder.
The crop I'll sow and weed and hoe
And give you half by thunder!

The kindly offer Larry made
Was by the elves accepted;
Besides no harm was meant to them,
As he had just protested.
Said Larry: "Now to show I'm fair
And just in all my dealings;
We'll alternate the crops each year,
To soothe your angered feelings.
This year, I'll take all underground,
And you will take all over;
The next year I'll take all above
And you all under cover.
This proposition won applause;
The elves no longer tarry,
But as they parted each one said:
"Good night! You're all right, Larry!

"Good night, good night!" the toiler said,
"You'll alter your opinion;
You'll find that I'm not going to feed
The elves in your dominion.

No doubt these little men will dream
Of melons and tomatoes;
But not a thing will I plant in
This field but early 'tatoes.

So when the harvest time came round,
The Dolans and the Careys,
Took the whole crop and left the stalks,
To satisfy the fairies.
He put one over on us now,
Next year we elves fare better;
Then we will take all under ground,
We'll hold him to the letter.

But the next year old Larry sowed
The field with oats and wheat;
And left the fairies but the roots,
This tricky, cunning cheat.

No wonder that they angry got,
For all the elves were boiling hot,
To find themselves outwitted;
And vowed that Larry they would get,
And make the rascal fume and fret,
Their vengeance they would nurse and whet,
As long as 'twas permitted.
Nor did they have so long to wait,
For one night home returning late,
One of the elves perceived him;
And yelled: "Here Larry Dolan comes!
The biggest fraud of all the bums,
Were ever raised in Limerick's slums
And then rushed up and seized him.
But Larry struck with dire dismay,
Was scarcely able a word to say;
While gazing at the angry fay,
That held him in his power.
It seemed to him, 'twas his last day,
Perhaps 'twas his last hour.

From sighing, and lying, pray forbear!
On one condition your life I'll spare,
If with it you comply.
There is in Wicklow a giant Who mocks
My faithful herds, and kills their flocks,
By hurling down the mountain rocks,
Which near its summit lie.
If you approach this awful man,
Without some specious well-laid plan,
He'll surely take your life.

While if his death you don't procure
Before the third full moon, be sure!
That hardships many you'll endure
And lose your friends and wife.
Now take your choice, let's hear you say,
If in the moat you wish to stay;
Or meet this man that you must slay,
If you'd prolong your life.
Says Larry, determined and grim,
"I know that my chances are slim,
But I'll go for this giant,
Who appears so defiant,
And perhaps I'll put one over him."
Very good, says the fairy: My man!
I hope you will hit on some plan;
If you fail by the powers!
In three moons you are ours;
Now go! and away Larry ran.

But little he slept through that night,
He would doze and wake up in a fright;
Till a bright, happy thought,
Brought relief that he sought,
'Twas a man of great muscle and might,

That in Kerry did chance to dwell,
'Mong the hills, in a bright sunny dell;
Where no landlord would dare
Ask Shawn Fodha to share
The harvests that grew there so well.
Thought Larry, "if I could but get
These giants their vengeance to whet
On each other who knows;"
And at once he arose,
Crying: I've got it, my life I will bet!
So to Kerry at once Larry goes,
Bent on making those giants bitter foes;
Sees Shawn Fodha, whose size
Did him greatly surprise;
Then his secrets began to disclose.
"I'm not asking for any reward,
Though I came to put you on your guard;
For in Munster I pride,
And I'm here at your side,
To say there's an overgrown man,
Who swears that your sides he will tan.
He's an out and out fraud,
And a lying blackguard,
And says, once when you saw him you ran.
But this time to your castle he'll come,
Take your nose twixt his finger and thumb,
And squeezing your nose,
Shake you out of your clothes;
And with your hide cover his drum.

So saying, he left Kerry behind,
And to Wicklow proceeds like the wind;
Sees the giant in a trice,
And tells him there twice,

That to Kerry he's now forced to go;
Shawn Fodha was "knocking" him so—
    Said, you were a big stiff
    He'd knock out with one biff,
If you dared to come up to Dunloe.
But he's slow as a wagon of hay,
And can't walk a mile in a day;
    You'll enjoy the fun,
    When to Kerry you come,
To see him try to run away."
So to Munster the Wicklow gi'nt came
This boastful Shawn Fodha to tame;
Who ne'er saw with his eyes
A man of such size,
Then greatly he feared for his fame.
"Fear not!" said his wife, "I've a plan,
That will help you to vanquish this man."
    From his waist to his throat,
    She placed under his coat,
Before any contest began,
    Two goatskins she sewed,
    And away then she rode,
And directly the trials were on.
The giant from Wicklow drew nigh,
Asked Shawn Fodha what feat they should try:
    'I'll tell you," said Shawn,
    "Sure you're walking since dawn;
We'll eat first and fight by and by."

Then seven fat goats were on tables served,
    And a cask of usquebaugh;
The giants left nothing but the bones,
    And drank with a loud hurrah!
Now for every mouthful swallowed by Shawn
    He dropped two in the goatskin pouch,
But Wicklow, who played an honest game
    Looked tired, though he was no slouch.

Said Shawn: "I have eaten more than you,"
Which the other at once denied.
As you don't believe it, measure up!
"Tis the only way to decide."
Then a vat was placed in front of each—
Cried Shawn: "Are you ready or not?"
Then he stuck the knife in the goatskin pouch,
And its contents fell in the pot.
Now then bit for bit, and sup for sup,
As he handed Wicklow the knife,
Who seizing it ripped his stomach up,
And instantly lost his life.

Thus Larry who quickly detected
That giants are dull-witted, and prone
To mischief, won as he expected,
And longs to be free and at home.
Then at once to the moat he proceeds,
Where the elves of Kilgobbin hold court;
By the gleam of a light, on its lonely site,
He saw them dance, sing and sport.
Then at once to the fairies he goes,
Quite ready his tale to disclose
And reminded them then
What they promised him when
He last saw them, just two weeks before.
"To that promise we're true."
"Then I'm square with you
For the Wicklow giant is no more.
I got the big elf to kill himself,
And they all burst into a roar:
Saying Larry my dear! you have nothing to fear,
We'll nevermore darken your door.

ELEVENTH NIGHT

Fairies and Ghosts

But now appeared Ned Sullivan,
And to him all the children ran.
"You said you would a story tell
Would fill us with delight;
Of lonesome spots where goblins dwell,
And wander round at night."
"Oh yes, I'll tell those stories,
I'm sure you like the most,
But first I'll talk of fairies,
And then about a ghost."

One night poor Mistress Hoban
Returning from a wake,
Had felt so tired and sleepy,
That she forgot to rake
The fire, upon the hearthstone,
Where the fairies bake and brew;
Or dump the dirty water,
Just as she used to do.
So when the fairies came that night,
And saw the place was just a sight.
They started making a rough house,
O'erturned the pans and pots,
And pinched the drowsy sleepers
And tied their clothes in knots.
Told the water to make trouble,
The fire to blaze up high,
The sideboard and the cabinet
Across the room to fly.
The windows did some rattling,
The china made some noise;
The house seemed toppling over
The frightened girls and boys.

Although outside the night was still,
As you surveyed the gloom;
Inside it seemed a hurricane
Was blowing through the room.
But nothing could they plainly see
Of what was taking place;
For in their terror they had pulled
The bedclothes o'er their face.
At last arose old Andy Bray,
The dolt a word he couldn't say;
He was so overcome with fright,
At what he saw and heard that night.

But even when the rumpus
Had reached its very height;
Though angry elves had spoken,
Not a single dish was broken,
But the keyhole bore a token
Of their sudden, hasty flight.

But now for the ghost story
That I have promised you;
It happened many a year ago,
And people say 'tis true.

The Three Ghosts

Some time ago near Cullen Hill,
The little hut was standing still,
That sheltered Jack Mulloy;
Between the village and Longstone,
A spot that looked so weird and lone
To man's estate in time had grown
This lonely orphan boy.

One day he to his mother went,
And said: My youth round here I spent,
I now must earn my bread;
And should kind fortune favor me,
Your loving son again you'll see
Then cold, and want, and poverty,
You never more need dread.

She blessed him though her heart did ache,
For well she knew 'twas for her sake,
That he was going away;
And said: "Think when beset with care,
Of Him who can our burdens bear;
Approach Him with a heartfelt prayer,
And you won't go astray.

Obedience pledged, he then set out,
But all day long he looked about
In an exciting chase;
Till twilight spread her pall around,
O'er hill and dale and grassy mound;
At last a spacious house he found,
In a dark, gloomy place.

Its owner seated by the fire,
Asked Shawn what 'twas he might desire;
"Kind Sir! I wish a bed;
For I have travelled a long way
In quest of work, and I must say,
I didn't eat a thing all day,
Nor make a single "red."

"Be seated, pray!" the other said;
You can have supper and a bed,
If in yon tower you'll stay:
You can besides have fire and light,
And if you are not dead of fright,
Ere morning's beam dispels the night,
Ten guineas I will pay.

Behind the creaking doors and posts,
You're apt to find unruly ghosts,
Who in the castle hide;
The last three men who there did stay,
Expired before the break of day;
Of what or how I cannot say,
Enough to know they died."

"I have a conscience calm and clear;
Of ghosts I entertain no fear,
Though see them here I should."
The farmer rose up, led the way;
Unlocked the door, and thus did say:
"If but one night in here you stay,
My promise I'll make good."

Alone he passed from floor to floor,
Each alcove searched, and locked each door,
Then lighted up the hall:
But soon he heard an awful shout,
Mixed with loud taps, along the route,
And a weird cry—"Look out! Look out!
Or on you I will fall."

Oh why should ghosts such mischief plan!
A pair of legs soon past him ran,
And danced, and danced away;
While frightful sounds above maintain;
To calm himself, Shawn tries in vain;
Each thump and bump he hears quite plain,
And wishes for the day.

Just then he saw a body fall,
And roll along down toward the wall,
Where stood the pair of legs;
And jump upon them with a bound,
That made a dull uncanny sound;
A head that rolled along the ground,
Upon them quickly pegs.

Now that the ghost appeared complete,
Shawn feels his pulse the quicker beat,
And hard and fast he prays;
That he would not expire of fright,
That he would live till morning's light;
So he could take ten guineas bright,
To cheer his mother's days.

A ghastly sight before him spreads
Two pair of bodies, legs and heads,
Move past him down the floor;
From them two frightful ghosts are made,
And seeing them Shawn is sore afraid;
All heaven invokes to bring him aid;
Or this night he'll deplore.

Meanwhile the ghosts together leant,
On shaping something they are bent,
Crouched down beside the door.
On them he now directs his gaze,
And soon a sphere he sees them raise;
Then tell off sides, arrange the plays,
And toss it on the floor.

Now happ'd the strangest sight of all,
The shades began to kick football;
But stranger still 'twas made;
For Shawn kicked hard the bounding leather,
And rushed the ghosts not caring whether,
'Till all of them got mixed together,
And a fast game they played.

The football treat at length must cease,
The ghosts no longer seem at ease;
Shawn thinks he ought to speak.
"Of tonight's games I long shall vaunt;
But why do you the castle haunt,
If 'tis allowed you speak, why can't
You now the secret break?

Thus spoke the ghost addressed, 'tis well
We suffered here the pains of hell,
For mortal never dared
To ask of what we stood in need;
Tho' we committed many a deed
Of usury, and heartless greed,
And hard with us it fared.

Though singular it might appear,
It was my son who sent you here,
Who lives in the big manse.
Pa and grandpa, the ghosts you see,
Engaged like me in usury
This coffer holds the curst money,
Go see my son at once!

For needy farmers everywhere,
Would take what money we had to spare,
Besides secure the loan,
And if they weren't able to pay,
When they called on the reckoning day;
We'd take a part of their land away
And add it to our own.

Those bonds and notes clearly explain
Who should just dues from you obtain,
Till all our debts are paid.
So then they searched the country round,
And many creditors they found,
Whose claims they paid with money sound,
And thus the ghost obeyed.

Though many a man sent in his bill,
From Damer's wall to Cromwell's Hill,
From Oola to Glenbane;
Not one of them did they gainsay,
But paid off debts the livelong day,
Till every one was heard to say:
My blessing on you, Shawn!

And then three doves were seen to fly,
From Bruis, to Lattin Church hard by;
    Thence through the clouds they soar.
Shawn gets much money and a wife,
Provides for mother all her life,
Nor ghost, nor mortal, care nor strife
    Disturbs him evermore.

TWELFTH NIGHT

A Legend of Shronell

Now Shawn na Bourke was called upon
    To take the vacant chair,
Who smiling on the happy crowd
    Said: If you do not care,
I'll tell a tale 'bout Shronell and
    The fairies dwelling there.

You know there's a long story
    'Bout Damer's crumbling wall,
And you must bring the porter in
    If I'm to tell it all.
Oh here it comes! a keg of stout,
Who sends it, can you guess?
My blessing on you Lanty,
    May your shadow ne'er grow less!
The liquor put the crowd into
    A very jolly mood,
And Shawn na Bourke pursued his tale
    As they all hoped he would.

We all know there are fairies
    Round here, as thick as grass;
But worst of all's the magpie,
    And you see him as you pass,
Upon the wall at midnight
    When the sky is pitchy dark,

Then brighter grows the magpie
As he sits there stiff and stark.
Whoever sees him there alone,
When the moon has hid her face,
Will meet with disappointment,
And get left in fortune's chase.

"But surely, said Pop Clohessy,
"You do not mean to say
That such a bird can prophecy
What happens me today.

I never saw it in a book,
So I don't be'lieve that tale,
That the lone magpie brings bad luck,
That sits there on the rail.
I think 'tis superstition,
Are we crazy by the by?
To think that our condition
Depends on a magpie."

"The magpie," said the seanachie,
Is not at all to blame;
It is the number not the bird
That figures in the game.
One always was unlucky,
Though you may think it strange;
But if you see a pair of them,
Your luck at once will change.
Two is the lucky number,
Three means a wedding cake;
But if you should see four of them,
Get ready for a wake.

Pat Darcy was a man well known
For industry and pluck;
But since he saw the magpie
He hadn't any luck.

His cattle died, his neighbor's son
He shot him for a grouse;
They sued him for a thousand pounds,
    He died in the poor house.

Tom Collins saw the magpie, when
    His mare he tried to sell,
And that was just the night before
    The horse-fair of Clonmel.
He urged her on with whip and spur
    As fast as she could peg,
Till suddenly she fell down dead,
    And falling broke Tom's leg.

Jim Cooney saw the magpie
    On his way to pay the rent,
Then stopped to watch a game of chance,
    And gambled his last cent.
His cows died of distemper,
    His neighbors shunned the lout;
The landlord had no cash to get
    So Jim was turned out.

But as exceptions you will find
    To every general rule,
So here was Mister Damer,
    Who lived up by the school.
He was a chandler, so they say,
    And to his business wed;
Full fourteen hours he worked each day
    But couldn't get ahead.
Though he worked just like the dickens
    In the fields and in the bogs,
The fox would steal his chickens,
    Distemper take his hogs.

Returning here from Cashel town,
    That Cromwell's troopers robbed;

Admiring fertile hill and down,
His heart with pleasure throbbed;
As with himself he contemplated,
These lands would soon be confiscated;
And here were granite and sandstone
Would suit the building trade;
And if he could acquire these lands
His fortune would be made.
To Ballykisteen quarry, he
Proceeds without delay;
When a premature explosion
Nearly blew his head away.

Of cuts and bruises he had lots
His nose was almost gone;
Until he saw the lone magpie,
It mattered not how hard he'd try
All things were going wrong.
But from that day his luck they say,
Increased a hundred fold;
Till he bought ten casks of tallow and lard,
That he hauled from Cashel to Ballinard,
And in them found a rich reward;
For they were casks of gold;
Which the monks had covered in this way,
While in them they had stowed away
Most of what wealth in Cashel lay
Thinking thus to deceive
The plundering Cromwellian brood,
Who sacked the city, took what they could;
But casks of tallow the chandler would
At his new home receive.

But when some candles he would make,
And tallow from the casks must take,
He saw a sight his bosom thrilled—
With precious jewells the casks were filled.

With face distorted, stern and grim,
Three barrels with gold heaped to the brim,
Then seemed possessed of some mad whim,
To build a mansion grand;
'Mid flowering plants and forest trees,
'Mid tulips, lilacs and heartsease,
Loading with fragrance every breeze,
That swept this fairy land.

The place selected for its site,
Was old Clanwilliam as was right:
Forests and glades, and chestnut groves,
Mountains, valleys, and sheltered coves;
Rocky caverns, and barren fells,
Fertile valleys and shady dells;
Rivers and streams, and mountain tarn
Which furnish many a fairy yarn;
Abbeys and castles, and courtly hall,
This barony possessed them all.

He might have chosen Cullen Hill
For a commanding site;
Or built where Multeen's sparkling rill
Would add to his delight;
If wilder scenes he would explore,
Here on the slopes of Galtymore,
His mansion might be placed;
That overlooks the vale below,
Where glides the winding Aherlow,
With current strong, and rapid flow
That easily could be traced.

Or if he would the mountain climb,
He'd there obtain a view sublime;
For where its summit greets the breeze,
Such distant views one gains,
One half of Erin's hills he sees,
A third of all her plains.

The storms around it howl and rave,
The shadows grimly frown,
O'er cliff and cave, and warrior's grave,
From Dawson's Table down.
While from its abrupt sides there wends
Through every gorge and glen,
The torrents that the mountain sends
Past storied cave and den.

Through dale and vale, those streams that flow
Throughout its entire length,
Add beauty to the vale below,
And to the river strength.
But choosing neither hill nor dale,
Nor Suir's strong rapid stream;
But in the heart of Golden Vale,
Purchased the lands at an army sale,
And there worked out his scheme.

The mansion I will not describe,
The refuge of the feathered tribe;
Except that in the lofty court,
Through which the winds and jackdaws sport;
Tradition says that there was here,
A window for every day in the year.
Twixt Lattin and Shronell on Emily Road,
Was the site selected for his abode.
The tiny Ara glides below,
Like a silver thread in the sunlight's glow;
Where sloping fields and meadows green,
Fresh charms lend to the rustic scene.

Around these grounds, he raised a wall
Of fine hewn stone eleven feet tall,
At an enormous price;
Where roes and does and antlered deers,
Watch the approaching charioteers,
Pass through the gates, whose polished piers
Long bore this strange device.

"Stop loafer, stop! and read this through,
For I was once as poor as you;
As poor as you I still might be,
If I had passed my days idly."

Two wags once passing the domain,
Before the lodge some time remain;
Examining this queer disclaimer,
Then gave their views to Mister Damer.
"If work's the surest road to wealth,
A good deal too depends on health,
And something on good sense;
But quarry work we will eschew,
Or hap it might what happed to you
In our sweet innocence.

"We still are young and much alive,
Though drones we be in nature's hive
Nor would we change our humble place,
For all your gold and shocking face."

From this time Damer, it is said,
Grew sullen beyond measure;
But till he died he kept his pledge,
He left no man his treasure.
Some fools keep digging for it still,
Round trees and shady ditches;
From which they oft are frightened by
Unruly ghosts and witches.

Old people said 'twas a magpie,
Using its bill and claws,
That hid the gold in a field hardby;
Some say 'twas crows and daws.
But whoever sees on the crumbling wall
At midnight two magpies,
Will find a crock of Damer's gold,
Or else the legend lies.

Still from this many different tales
About his wealth are told;
And Biddy Early* says she knows
That it was neither daws nor crows;
But a red-haired man, with a hooked nose,
That stole away the gold.

THIRTEENTH NIGHT

We've head of ghosts and fairies,
And of banshees many a tale,
And of the ancient fighting men
Who dwelt in Innisfail:
But tell us of some battle that
Occured in later times,
'Twould interest this crowded house
More than those ancient rhymes;
For those Englishmen were haughty,
And our Celtic blood was hot;
Between them many a fight took place,
And they're not all forgot.

"Come over here Thade Callanan!
You know it to be sure—
The story of bold Feoch McHugh,
Who fought in Glenmalure.
Thade Call'nan shrugged his shoulders
And took the proffered chair,
And every one was glad to see
The story-teller there.

Glenmalure

Elizabeth was seated
On England's ancient throne;
Engaged in weighty projects,
She pondered o'er alone.

* A famous sorceress

At length a favorite courtier
She summoned to her side;
The plastic knight of Wilton,
To stir his heart with pride.

"Lord Grey! it is my pleasure
To Ireland you should go,
And teach her fickle chiftains
Obedience they must show
To all our royal mandates;
Accord them fitting dues,
Pledge to our throne allegiance,
Or death if they refuse.
Two thousand men take with you,
Those rebels well I know
Our church and state will higher rate,
If dealt a crushing blow.
The pope rebellion teaches,
His priests are all disloyal;
Let only those the pulpit fill,
Who hold a patent royal."

Lord Grey bowed low and took the brief
From out her royal hands—
"The power with which it me invests,
And all for which it stands,
Will scrupulously be observed,
And promise now I make,
That England's colors I'll uphold
Till life will me forsake."

The squadrons soon were ready,
And anchor now they weigh,
With shouting and repoicing,
They enter Dublin Bay;
Where they receive loud greeting
In Dublin of the Pale,
Lord Grey and his mailed warriors,
Ten thousand voices hail;

But in his royal mansion
He's scarcely settled down,
Before he issues his commands
To country and to town:
"The Romish faith and worship
Our good queen Bess prescribes;
Away with vain petitions!
We spurn all popish bribes.

"The Firebrand of the Mountains
I have come here to tame,
In Wicklow's rugged passes
I hope to bag my game.
Two regiments of picked Englishmen's
The staff on which I lean,
And death or capture him awaits,
Who fights against our queen.

Then Feach McHugh to Eustace,
Through proud John Lawlor spoke:
"They've sent us one more tyrant,
To weld anew the yoke;
Will such threats make us stronger
And rouse the Geraldine?
Bring hither Nolan and O'Moore
With us now to combine."

Then outspoke Viscount Baltinglass:
"Three hundred clansmen here,
Will help him meet those hirelings
He never yet did fear."
Then forth stepped other chieftains,
Who said: "We've clansmen bold,
To battle with the Sassenach
In Feach's strong mountain hold."
Said Eustace: "Then make ready,
To Ballymore repair,

For if he conquers Wicklow
We cannot save Kildare.
So whet your pikes and oil your guns,
Your powder keep secure,
For mark me! you'll have need of them,
With Feach in Glenmalure.

So to Idrone and Offaly
Where stately Barrow flows,
We now must bid a fond farewell,
We're off to meet our foes
Tonight at Old Kilcullen
The Liffey we will pass;
'Tis but a few hours march from there
To Ballymore Eustace.
And what a wealth of scenery
Awaits the clansmen there,
On one side Wicklow mountains,
On the other side Kildare;
With the river Liffey boiling
In eddies at their feet.
They hear the frightful rumbling,
The crushing and the jumbling,
Of boulders downward tumbling
Their presence there to greet.

The fall's named Poulaphuca,
Thrice fifty feet in height,
And down that dreadful precipice,
The pooka comes each night;
Wrapt in the mist and vapor
That from the falls arise;
He comes to seek his weird abode,
Over a track none ever rode,
His hideous form he only showed
When lightning lit the skies.

In this romantic valley,
Where Eustace Castle stands,
They rested and they feasted,
Those ready fighting bands;
But the next morning early,
With usquebaugh on tap,
They breakfasted and took the road
That led to Wicklow Gap.
On top of this romantic pass,
The clansmen make a halt;
Declare those hills, and lakes and rills
Are lovely to a fault;
Beneath their feet Nahangan lies,
And Glendalough so gay,
And round these lovely lakes and fine,
Many a legend doth entwine,
Of Holy men, of men divine,
Who here used fast and pray.
Some told us of Saint Kevin,
And of Kathleen's sad fate;
Some talked of bloody Sussex,
His treachery and hate;
When some one mentioned Cosby's name,
Their eyes with fury flashed;
Vented their feelings in a roar
While loud and fierce the clansmen swore
Their pikes they'd steep in his vile gore,
The fiend of Mullaghmast.

Just then addressed Lord Eustace
A well known mountain scout:
"I'll lead your men across the glen,
I know the quickest route;
Where the 'Firebrand of the Mountain'
Has gathered all his clan;
The English too are now in view,
Encamped around Lough Dan.

Lord Eustice somewhat startled,
Northeastward bent his gaze,
Between the lake and Roundwood,
Like a vast field of maize
He sees the English breaking camp,
By Laragh road they go,
For they must cross the Avonmore
By the bridge of Annamoe.
"Scout, lead our men across the glen!
We'll then arrange the fight;
For Wilton's troops will be encamped
In Glenmalure tonight."

In a few hours the vale is crossed,
The Glenealo too is passed,
Whose waters are so pure,
Before we gain the hill-top quite,
We face another glorious sight,
Where Lugnaquilla's lofty height
Stands guard o'er Glenmalure.
While now we're closing up our ranks,
O'Byrne's men draw near;
'Mid waving hats and shaking hands
The chieftains now appear.

Thus spoke the lord of Baltinglass
"Six hundred and three score
Of clansmen true we bring to you,
You have as many more,
To meet the ravager who fires
Our churches and our homes;
Who boasts he'll feed us to the crows,
The hills strew with our bones.

Said Feach: "Our boys are ready,
To dare proud England's might;
The O'Toole and the McMurrough
Are expected here tonight;

The Cosbys and their ilk are brave
Against unarmed men,
But be their numbers what they may,
I'll fight them in this glen.

The English horse have reached the glen
And pitched their tents close by;
So dark and dreary were its looks,
Its sides so steep and high,
That they threw up strong breastworks,
Lest clan O'Byrne should try
To 'scape Lord Wilton's cavalry,
And through the valley fly.
The royal troops were ready,
Well cowardly Cosby knew,
Before he asked Lord Grey to come
His hirelings to review.
Sir Peter Carew also came
To strengthen England's might:
Unscrupulous and daring,
Lord Wilton's fortune sharing,
He was ready for the fight.

The English view the rugged slopes
Above the tawny flood;
And stillness brooded o'er the scene,
Where those tried warriors stood;
Scarce broken by the rapid flow
Of Avonbeg, that down below,
In divers channels strives to go,
Through rocks and brakes and wood.

Why halts the brave O'Byrne clan,
What does their chieftain mean?
Abandoning that narrow pass,
At crossing of the Polanass,
Where drooping willows lean

Above its banks, or thinks this glen
Can hold the foe at bay?
In which the Sassenach or Dane,
Could never troops enough maintain,
A single victory to obtain,
Nor ever yet held sway.

Lord Wilton cordially invites
His favorites to him now;
Upon a lofty precipice,
That overlooks the brow
Of a deep glen, where ready stand
His horse and foot, under command
Of captains true and tried.
His guests with eagerness comply,
To watch where soon the clans must fly;
Clans slaughtered there to satisfy
A queen's offended pride.

The Battle

His ardent troops by companies
Enter the rough defile;
And often find themselves opposed
By some vexatious pile
Of fallen trees, or rocks, or stones,
Through which some tiny brooklet moans,
Through which their steps they wend;
If slow their progress, their desire
To meet the foe is set on fire,
By Lord De Wiltons message dire,
To which quick ear they lend.

"Come Englishmen to England true,
A prize for every one of you!
But be this understood;

No prisoners take! 'tis better kill,
Who laws defy and sovereign's will.
Nor quit this gloomy vale until
    Your swords have drunk their blood."
Onward proceeds the British line,
    Through the entangling wood,
Unable clearly to define
    Where clan O'Byrne stood;
But soon was heard an ominous shout
    Some distance up the glade;
Volleys of musket shots rung out,
    From ambuscades well laid.
The skirmishers from Feach's command
    Pour in a deadly fire,
And cowardly Cosby's murderers
    The first were to retire;
But forward pressed the Englishmen,
    To battle with their foes,
And in that narow strip of glen,
Beset with brush and briar and fen,
The sword and battle-axe met then
    And deadly were their blows.

Lord Grey's courtiers their laughter ceased,
    The volleys heavier grew;
Attacks with sword and pike and gun
    The combatants renew.
His horse to charge the rebel flank,
    He now seeks to employ;
But on a rugged mountain side
    Can cavalry deploy?
He orders up all the reserves,
    His footmen to support;
'Tis plain Lord Wilton does not now
    Think fighting is all sport.
But on the left Sir Francis
    Cosby, of hellish fame,

Has left exposed the English flank,
They flee like startled game,
He and his troop of yeomen
Have struck their fastest pace;
But shouts like thunder strike their ears,
Round them the nimble foe appears;
Cosby! well grounded were your fears,
Here are the men of Leix!

Of all his bloody murderers,
Fully one hundred men;
Not one escaped O'Morra's wrath,
Their blood streamed through the glen.
The execrated Crosby
Lay there among the slain,
The bloody fiend of Mullaghmast
Had tried escape in vain.
And still they say when hail and storm,
And lightnings rend the sky;
That round the moat of Mullaghmast,
Fresh horrors lending to the blast,
His hated form they spy:
Into the labyrinth he pries,
Or at its entrance groaning lies,
Rousing the herdsman's fears

Gazing into the blood-stained lair,
Where sat the guests he slaughtered there,
Shrieking, vanishing into air,
The specter disappears.
O'Byrne's avenging mountaineers,
Have pressed the English sore
Down on their broken front and flank,
His gallow glasses bore:
When clan O'Moore returning found
The English left exposed;

With pike well poised and axe swung high,
The bloody weapons fast they ply,
Beneath their blows, what numbers die
The early morn disclosed.

The English cause seemed hopeless;
Lord Grey and his courtiers,
That their retreat would be cut off,
Now entertain grave fears.
So they are quickly mounted,
And safety seek in flight;
But they will get a "roasting"
Since after all the toasting,
The feasting, and the boasting,
They're in retreat tonight.

The pompous lord of Wilton,
Who came O'Byrne to smite,
Will tell exaggerated tales
Of that proud chieftain's might.
A thousand of his fighting men
Left on the mountain slope,
Who never more will battle
Nor e'er express a hope;
While Feach's brave clansmen proudly roam,
The hills and valleys round their home,
From hostile foe secure;
For half a century no troops
Dared enter Glenmalure.

Notes

Commeraghs—A mountain range in the northwest of Waterford county, for centuries a noted retreat for outlaws.

Suir, pronounced shure.

Omadhaun—A simpleton.

Leprechaun or cluricane was a little fairy shoemaker, having always in his possession a crock of

gold. As he was small and always alone, he was the only one of all the fairy tribes that no one dreaded.

Page 23. The Spectacle Bridge and Corkscrew Road are very attracting sights near Lisdoonvarna in Northwest Clare.

The Sea-Nymphs abode, Among the sea lashed Cliffs of Moher.

Page 27. Kilfeakle moat, three miles east of Tipperary, commanding a fine view and famed in fairy lore.

Knockgraffon, a famous spot two miles north of Cahir, on the eastside of the Suir.

Three Year Old and Four Year Old—Faction cries during the first half of the nineteenth century, heard at every race and fair, from Kilmallock to Tipperary and from the Shannon to the Glen of Aherlow.

The Battle of Ventry Harbor—A great battle was supposed to have been fought near Dingle county Kerry before the Christian Era. The King of the world having landed there with all his forces, to do battle against the King of Ireland.

Page 111. Mullaghmast, a great moat four miles east of Athy, noted as the place where the infamous Cosby, acting in the interest of the Pale, invited to a feast to be held there the O'Moores, princess of Offaly (Queens county) and slaughtered 400 of them while seated at table.

Page 105. The Firebrand of the Mountains, Feach McHugh O'Byrne so called from his uncompromising attitude toward the English settlers.

Art McMurrough

Art McMurrough, the son of Art McMurrough, King of Leinster, was born in the year 1357. His

father who was all his life engaged in warfare with the English, died in 1375, leaving young Art to assume the control of affairs at the age of eighteen years.

He followed in his father's footsteps, everywhere combatting the aggressiveness of the English settlers, who from time to time and under one pretext or other, endeavored to dispossess the Irish of their lands to which they laid claim.

In 1392, he suffered a defeat at Shankill, Queen's county, at the hands of the Earl of Ormond, who commanded a greatly superior force, but he retrieved himself soon afterwards, by the capture of New Ross, at that time, the second strongest city in Leinster. After possessing himself of all their arms and stores, he razed the walls of the town. The English King, Richard the third was so indignant on hearing this that he raised an army of thirty-five thousand men; and with it sailed to Ireland, landing at Waterford in 1394; but was completely outgeneraled by McMurrough and returned to England, without accomplishing anything.

Meantime the king's exchequer had been removed from Dublin to Carlow for greater safety. McMurrough captured the town and seized the funds. This was followed by the battle of Kells county Kilkenny. The British were defeated, and their commander, the Earl of March, heir apparent to the English throne was slain.

On learning of this King Richard became so enraged, that he swore he would exterminate the whole McMurrough sept, and for that purpose gave orders, that every vessel over fifty tons through the whole length of England, from the Solway to Lands End should be placed at his disposal to transport his troops and stores across to Waterford, but the second expedition met with no more success than the first,

notwithstanding the vast amount of money expended on it. His failure in consequence, aroused so much indignation in England that it cost King Richard both his crown and his life.

McMurrough's proudest achievement was the battle of Kilmainham (1410) where he defeated an army of sixteen thousand men, composed largely of English veterans, of whom four thousand were slain; only a thousand making good their retreat to their barracks in Dublin. The rest fled panic stricken from the battelfield; the darkness aiding them to escape further slaughter.

FOURTEENTH NIGHT

Art McMurrough

Of Dermot McMurrough all have heard,
Basest of Leinster's kings;
Who to support his rotten cause,
A foreign army brings.
From Britain's hostile shores it came
To save his crown and smirch his name
And still 'tis right that all should know
That 'twas not Dermot, nor Strongbow,
That caused our endless woes;
But the dissensions of the clans,
That kept them from adopting plans,
To oust our ruthless foes.
Thus their divisions paved the way,
For servile chains and tyrants sway.

But we have with us here tonight,
A harper who will you delight;
Of Art McMurrough he will tell,
Of Leinster's greatest prince;
I heard the story long ago
But have not heard it since.

The harper then arose and said:
"The story is sublime;
I'll cull from it a few excerpts
To pass away the time.
But this you must remember
If you would grasp my tale;
You're 'mid the hills of Wicklow now,
And not in Golden Vale."

The Invasion

Immediately was fitted out
An expedition grand,
Intended by King Richard,
To overawe this land.
Three hundred ships soon brought across
Three times twelve thousand men;
In Waterford he disembarked,
And summoned to him then,
All Ireland's Chiefs, so they could see
The splendor of his majesty;
The might of England's King;
Against whose power, what chief would dare
To lift a hand; how would he fare
To war against a monarch there,
Who could such myriads bring?

Some timid chiefs said 'twas but right,
And others dazzled at the sight
Of England's King and England's might,
Did full submission make.
Agreed their lands should henceforth be
At the pleasure of his majesty;
If they should fail in loyalty,
Reprisals he could take.
The Royal Proclamation
Did not to him allure;

The brave O'Byrne, the fierce O'Toole,
McMurrough or O'Moore.
He then a courier dispatched
Prince Art to him to bring;
But that proud chief scant honors showed
The envoy of the king.

"What news is this my worthy sir,
From Richard that you bring?
Will he grant me an English shire
If I call him my king?
For though you have come over here,
Still nothing have you said,
Of what your king's intentions are,
But mine would learn instead."
"The king sends greetings to prince Art,
And with them some demands;
Which I shall now explain to you,
Such are the royal commands.

"You must surrender your domains,
And fealty pledge beside;
Then out of his vast plenitude,
He'll other lands provide."
"Your sire's so kind, ambassador
This message to him bring!
I'm king of Leinster and that means
The equal of your king.
Naught mean I to surrender,
As long as I shall live;
But who so would my lands invade,
To him hard blows I'll give."

The king on learning this was wroth,
So loud and fierce he swore;
The whole McMurrough clan could scarce
Sate his fierce thirst for gore.

And so the army orders got
To march without delay,
And show no mercy to his sept;
But slay, and slay, and slay!
Then hapless was the fate of those
They chanced to overhaul;
Still were there men within each glen,
To battle after all.
Who fodder and provisions swept
Out of the army's track;
And with their leaders on each hill,
Prepared a fresh attack.

Soon this unwieldy army
Of English fighting men;
Were put on quarter rations,
Assailed in moor and fen;
By Art McMurrough's clansmen
Who led in each attack,
Who shot the vanguard in the face,
The rear-guard in the back.

From Carlow town to Tullow
He sees his losses swell;
But crossing Slaney river
Such members of them fell,
That now the boastful Richard
Sees nothing but defeat,
And the pursuit is changed to an
Inglorious retreat.
So tempting offers now he makes
Of castles and of lands;
If Art no longer would oppose
The march of his commands.
Henceforth this haughty Briton
Crestfallen makes his way
Through moors and fens and woods and glens
Till he reached Dublin Bay.

When they arrived in Dublin,
The king again took heart;
Forgot alike his failures
And his promises to Art:
Not so that prince, to whom it seemed
Those pledges now should be redeemed,
He gave him when distrest;
And so to Dublin straight he came,
His wife's Kildare estates to claim,
But Ormond played a subtle game
And managed his arrest.
Then hard with Leinster's Prince 'twould fare,
Should Richard's minions only dare
That doughty chief to kill;
But since to England he must go;
Lest war should follow such a blow,
Their base designs they must forego;
Though much against their will.

But for the chief returning home,
Another plot was laid;
The Saxon lord of Talbotstown,
Prince Art his guest has made.
Within his splendid mansion, which
The Irish call Glencree;
He bade him and his harper share
His hospitality.
But when his faithful harper
Suspicious movements spied;
The gathering of armed men
In the big court outside.
He lost no time to intimate,
His prince was then in peril great,
Playing in thrilling Gaelic vein,
Upon his harp this warning strain.

"I've seen the faithless Sassenach,
And even heard him say,

That in a dungeon or a grave
Hereafter you would stay.
Your fate they're now debating,
Get off at any cost!
If you value life and freedom,
Not a moment's to be lost.

With most provoking coolness,
Art to the Courtyard sped;
To where his noble charger
Was by the groomsmen led.
Aware of his great danger,
Beset by treacherous foes,
He vaulted on his gallant steed,
And forward now he goes.
Then half a dozen palesmen,
At once rushed to the gate,
To block McMurrough's passage,
Ere it might be too late:
And called another yeoman
Who did the Irish hate—
Bold Singleton the swordsman
To seal the prince's fate.
Then forward dashed McMurrough,
Alone but undismayed,
And with his broadsword in his hand,
A passage soon he made.
A passage red and gory,
Recorded now in story;
Until the years grow hoary
With age, 'twill never fade.

First he attacked the foeman
Was holding on the left,
And with a blow of his broad sword,
His head in two he cleft.

Down on his comrade then he bore,
Who soon was lying in his gore,
And still he left one palesman more,
Of strength and life bereft.
Then next engaged him Singleton,
Who was the Saxons' pride;
But his strong blow was parried so,
It merely grazed his side.
Then fearful grew McMurrough's face
With anger and disdain;
As forward leant that doughty chief,
Tightening his horse's rein.
Then with a lightning downward sweep,
The Saxon doubled in a heap,
And left grim death a harvest reap
For Singleton was slain.
But the gate-keepers on the right
Who saw those deeds were seized with fright,
And safety sought in hasty flight;
Nor once looked back again.

So now the foe retreating,
An open passage made;
No other foeman daring
To block his exit stayed.
"Hear, traitors hear! before I go
Deem not your walls so great;
Your bodies soon will feed the crow,
Your lands I'll confiscate.
Your vaunted swordsmen I defy;
Your traitor nest I'll soon destroy."
Then galloped to Kippure close by,
Where clansmen for him wait.

Against the English settlers,
Through Wicklow as he sped;
He roused the Irish chieftains,
O'Toole his clansmen led,

And frightfully they punished
The Saxons of the Pale;
For six score heads they brought him from
The glen of wild Imaile.

Now consternation seemed to reign
From Bray to Malahide,
As with the royal funds and stores,
To Carlow town they hied;
And levied too a special tax,
Through Leinster near and far,
Against McMurrough and O'Toole
To wage a deadly war.
Meanwhile O'Toole has left behind
The vale of Glenmalure,
And on the plains of Ossory,
McMurrough met O'Moore.
What means this gathering of the clans
Upon the loyalists' track;
Is Ireland's inland capital
The object of attack?

Then to Kilkenny Ormond came
And met the Earl of March,
Knight of the Bath and Garter too,
And of the Royal Arch,
And heir apparent to the throne
Of England's ancient realm;
The royalists are happy now
With such men at the helm.

Battle of Kells

Way down the river Glory
That flows into the Kings,
Is seen the Irish army
That Art McMurrough brings.

See McGees History of Ireland.

Outspoke the haughty earl then
While pride his bosom swells;
"We must prevent their crossing,
And hold the bridge at Kells.
Now Ormond take the cavalry,
And with it quickly go,
Where the Glory and Kings River
In eddying currents flow;
Engage them in that angle till
My troops appear in sight;
When should they but attempt to cross,
I'll slaughter them outright.

Ormond saluted with his sword,
And orders gave "to horse"!
The squadron at a gallop went,
To reach the river their intent,
And thus the Irish troops prevent
Its passage for to force.
But while on Kells his thoughts are bent,
Much precious time is lost.
And ere 'tis reached, at Stonyford
The Irish right have crossed.

Who for possession of the bridge
With Ormond's horsemen vie;
As the Kilkenny bowmen and
The swordsmen too draw nigh:
That they would hold this vantage ground
McMurrough seemed afraid,
Till Nolan's men rushed up the glen,
And brought him needed aid.
The battle now is raging
Along the British line;
While victory seems to waver,
And to each side incline;
As bowmen meet cross-bowmen,
And swordsmen onward go,

To check McMurrough's pikemen
Advancing on their foe.
The English left is falling back,
Their center is hard pressed;
But on the right still raged the fight,
With foemen breast to breast;
Until McMurrough's pikemen reach
Where Ormond's troops prevail
His boasted cavalry this time,
To check the pikemen fail.
For to withstand the Irish right
That threatened his defeat;
He summoned up all the reserves,
That covered his retreat.
Appealed to English loyalty,
Nor made appeal in vain;
But in the thickest of the fight,
The Earl of March was slain.

Now consternation seized the ranks
Of England's fighting men;
As in disorganized retreat,
They fled through wood and glen.
Their officers no safety feel
Till Dublin's towers they see;
Secure again behind its walls,
They soon grow gay at feasts and balls,
And in its princely courts and halls
Forgot the enemy.

Throughout the country far and wide
The joyful news was spread;
This army of eight thousand men,
Before McMurough fled:
Still in the court of England's king
The news was told again—
The heir presumptive to the throne
In Ossory was slain.

Then swore the king a mighty oath,
His vengeance soon would fall
Upon the whole McMurough clan,
Their chieftains fiefs and all;
To serve his purpose he would take
An army o'er the sea,
And every ship of thirty tons,
Should give him passage free.

The harper ceased his thrilling tale,
While marveled those around,
That voice so clear, and song so sweet,
Could 'mid those hills be found;
With one whose locks were hoary,
Whose head was bowed with years,
Who knew so well the story
Of the Wicklow mountaineers.
But now appeared the butler,
Bearing a massive tray;
Upon it bowls of usquebaugh
To wake the harper's lay,
And rouse the interest of those
Who quaff the flowing bowl;
With lemon sliced and nutmeg spiced,
Of love and mirth the soul.

I.

Come drink the air grows sharper,
Drink to the faithful harper!
Drink while the night grows darker,
To him whose castle stands,
A menace to those strangers,
Whose presence bodes fresh dangers;
Whose thieving lords and rangers
Would steal away our lands.

II.

Though all their lords around us,
Were anxious to confound us;
Or see their troops surround us,
And shed our blood like rain:
We met them on the Glory,
No need to tell the story,
Its waters soon were gory
With the bodies of their slain.

III.

But yesterday that nation
Was full of expectation,
Of our early subjugation,
And that Prince Art 'twould tame;
Instead his chiefs and kerns true,
From the Blackstairs and Ferns too,
Pursued the foe by turns through
The glens like startled game.

IV.

The Wexford and Idrone boys,
The cause of all our own joys,
Who fought it out alone boys,
Of them now let us sing!
McMurrough's gallowglasses,
From Leinster's hills and passes,
Who slaughtered in such masses
The forces of the king.

FIFTEENTH NIGHT

Mike Fitz

"I'm sure it is a welcome sight
To see you all so well and bright,
For you will hear more of the fight,
By Art McMurrough waged.
The harper has come here tonight;
I'm sure he will you all delight,
With tales of daring death or flight,
When war through Leinster raged."

The Second Invasion—The Harper

The shires and towns King Richard taxed
For to augment his force;
But to increase his mariners,
To the press-gang had recourse.
His chief of staff is hastening
The Royal Decree to send—
That every ship must join his fleet
From Solway to Lands End.
For to transport his troops across,
Required three hundred ships;
In Waterford again they land
On docks and piers and slips.
Then with much pomp the king declares,
The Irish chiefs must make
Submission to his majesty;
Or else their lands he'll take.

"Enduring peace must Ireland have,
And to that end I plan
To crush the Prince of Leinster, and
The whole McMurrough clan.

No other chief would dare dispute,
That all the lands I own
Through Leinster and through Munster wide,
Tyrconnell and Tyrone.

Then marched he to Kilkenny,
To Carlow next came down,
But from that place to Arklow
O'er castle, tower and town;
No flag waved but McMurrough's,
"The Terror of the Pale"
So Richard must supplant it,
Or his expedition fail.
But to his haughty summons,
Prince Art said: "Twas but right,
For cowards to yield submission,
Who had no heart to fight.
For all his threats and bluster,
He did not care a whit;
His march through Leinster he'd oppose,
And never would submit."

Then blazed the huts along the track
Where England's army went,
While shooting peasants furnished them
A novel tournament:
Until Prince Art's guerillas
Around their camp appear;
Then foragers and looters,
And stragglers and freebooters,
And even the sharpshooters
Of the king had cause to fear.

No fuel or provender could
The army longer take;
Embarrassed by the woods and bogs,
Entangled in each brake:

A mark for Irish kerns who
Knew every sod of ground;
Till tented streets seemed hospitals,
With wounded stretched all round.

The English at Kilkenny swore
They'd leave no foe alive;
They had four and thirty thousand,
McMurrough scarcely five.
How stubbornly that handful fought
In Wicklow's deep defiles;
Tells why it took eleven days
To cover thirty miles.*
From Carlow town to Arklow,
Each day increased their plight;
Each wood was but an ambuscade,
No ridge gained but by fight;
But crossing Aughrim River,
Which was in a flooded state;
Was enough to make one shiver,
The slaughter was so great.
So when good news the troops receive,
Of vessels ready to relieve
Their wants; just as the men perceive
The sloops bearing supplies;
Into the water they madly rush,
And recklessly each other push;
In their mad haste to get some food,
Numbers are trampled in the flood,
And many a victim dies.

Defeated and crestfallen,
King Richard now retires;
Within the walls of Dublin where,
Recovered from his recent scare
Again assumes his haughty air
Proclaiming his desires.

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* McGees History of Ireland.

And though he had accomplished nought,
Those sycophants who favors sought,
For him light beacon fires.

And while they show him such regard,
A hundred golden marks reward,
He offered for the head
Of Leinster's Prince should he be brought
To him, alive or dead.

Through England soon the tidings spread
Of Richard's fresh defeat,
And while some noblemen seemed shocked,
At heart the news they greet.
The king cause for alarm feels,
At claims Lancaster makes;
And musters now what troops he can,
And leave of Ireland takes.
And left the Prince of Leinster, that
He boasted he would tame;
The one who from this campaign won
A great enduring fame.
And left him and his faithful clans,
For years secure from strife;
While the proud English monarch lost
His kingdom and his life.

Come rest thee, Worthy Harper!
Thy tale is very long;
We'll now take some refreshment,
And season it with song.
Some of those songs of Wicklow,
I learned so long ago;
They fill my heart with pleasure,
No matter where I go.

Kathleen and Saint Kevin

(With apologies to Tom Moore)

I.

Here in the quiet mountain shade,
Beside the lake, Saint Kevin laid
His plans for seven churches;
Built them of stones and lime and sand,
Upon this corner of the land,
That every tourist searches.

II.

One Kathleen came the saint to tempt,
That of his vows he might repent;
Her words were her undoing.
He little heeded her "hot air"
But left here quietly sitting there,
Some further mischief brewing.

III.

But when she to his stony bed
Did penetrate, the saint, 'tis said,
While muttering a pater,
Exclaimed: Oh Lord, come to my aid;
Then clapsed his hands around the maid,
And dropped her in the water.

IV.

Although the winds with violence break,
Upon the surface of the lake;
They lend to it a charm.
Though tempests wildly howl and roar,
There's scarce a ripple on the shore;
For Kathleen rides the storm.

V.

Into a nymph she quickly turned,
Ah, then his heart within him burned,
And vowed for her to fast:
Then built beside the lake a tower,
And there prayed for that sweet wild flower;
Till heaven she gained at last.

The Mountaineer

I.

Here's to the mountaineer
No foeman does he fear,
His sheeling it is here
Upon the mountain;
While mends his wife the coats,
His daughters milk the goats,
And his "kids" float tiny boats
Upon the fountain.

II.

Then take their daily flight
To some impending height;
Or among the flowers delight
In beds of lichen;
Or from the mountain rill,
Pull cresses there until,
Their little bibs they fill,
To aid the kitchen.

III.

For riches they don't care,
They've plenty and to spare,
And no Sassenach would dare
Their home to trouble.

They're healthy and they're strong;
At work they lilt a song,
And tell stories all day long
O'er spade and shovel.

IV.

Here's to the mountaineer!
A stranger still to fear;
Though misfortunes should draw near,
He will not heed 'em;
But with heart and arms strong,
Is prompt to right a wrong
And show the wavering throng
The path to freedom.

One song more and this concert ends
A love song to delight our friends;
Now Con McMurrough come along
And sing for us the closing song.

Phil Dwyer to His Sweetheart

I.

What ails you, Dear Polly; it seemed to me now,
As I just squeezed your hand, a dark frown lit your brow
While my heart with affection is melting, you'd steal
To that red-headed Barrett, to dance the next reel.
While I haven't a thought but to gladden your life,
To doll you up Polly and make you my wife.

II.

For to me your arch smile is far dearer than gold,
With your soft wavy hair falling down fold on fold;
Then your lips are so rosy and tempting, you know,
And your teeth are so white, shining all in a row;

With your bewitching eyes and your proud curving
nose,
Faith a beauty you are from your head to your toes.

III.

Sure your neck is so fair, and so slender your waist,
If I didn't embrace you, I'd be a "rale baste."
But then you'd cry out: "Don't you dare, Phil
Dwyer!
And your face gets so red that 'twould set things on
fire;
Still you look so attractive, and charming, and gay,
That I think you an angel that just chanced this way.

IV.

Compared to your voice, sure the nightingales
scream;
While your smile brings more cheer, than the sun's
brightest beam,
And when you are dancing they all stop and stare;
Though your toes touch the floor, you're nine-tenths
in the air:
But the squeeze of your hand—true as heaven above,
I'm no longer myself, I'm just one lump of love.

V.

Faith our hearts they are both in a terrible stew,
If you love me as much as I think I love you;
Sure nothing but smiles on you ever will beam,
And the rest of our lives will be one happy dream;
For 'twould grieve earth and heaven the knot to undo,
Of that marriage bond, that made one of us two.

Throughout the fourteenth century,
Each king who conquest tried,
Had found the house of McMurrough
A thorn in his side,
Hence to Lancaster's anxious quest
Ormond at once replies:
"If Leinster's prince you would destroy,
Commence with his allies."

For half a dozen years or more,
Peace reigned o'er Wicklow's land;
Until this new viceroy appeared,
To take supreme command:
Declared on those unruly chiefs,
He soon revenge would take,
And strong support he got at once
From Dublin's mayor, John Drake;
Who took his place at the head of
The city royalists;
While the viceroy, some troops of horse,
In the same cause enlists,
And with an overwhelming force,
Comes with the dawning day;
And there 'mid Wicklow's hills and dells,
Five hundred clansmen slay.
All of the brave O'Byrne clan
Who occupied Glencree,
And both sides of the Dargle,
To Bray built by the sea.
Now maids and matrons through those glens,
Send up their tearful wails;
For those who never more shall break
The silence of those vales.

The Slaughter of the O'Byrne

I.

Though Rathdown's fair as eden's paradise,
The foe stole down through Cookstown's sandy rut,
As the first rays showed sol about to rise
O'er hamlet, sheltered cot, and lonely hut;
But on their murderous work, both horse and foot
Pursued the peaceful dwellers of those vales,
Until their bodies did the Dargle glut.
A host of carrion crows above them sails,
And the whole vale is full of corses, sobs and wails.

II.

These charming dells begirt with lofty hills—
Kippure, Tonduff and Douce above them frown;
Whence flow Glencree's and Dargle's charming rills,
While from Prince William Seat comes the Cooks-
town;
On them War Hill and Sugar Loaf look down.
Such lovely scenes prompt brave souls to aspire,
To heroic deeds that crown men with renown;
But baser natures here, they also fire,
This eden to destroy, ere from it they retire.

III.

Those devastated glens shall yet resound,
Where now is heard the dying clansman's groan,
To the war pipes that through its length shall sound;
The Saxon matrons then shall weep and moan
Their husbands' fate, attacked and overthrown.
Dundrum shall then in troubled dreams disclose,
Phantoms of murdered kinsman not their own,
For terrible revenge will *Feach take on his foes,
And pay the Saxons back with still more deadly
blows.

---

* Feach M'Hugh O'Byrne.

SIXTEENTH NIGHT

In Which Both Sides Suffer Reverses

News of the viceroy's victory,
From Saxons won applause;
Gained over these fierce clansmen
Who hate their English laws.
So through the broad plains of kildare,
His troops once more he leads,
Against the Dempseys and O'Moores,
And here again succeeds.
The clans lost just two hundred men
In that unequal fight;
In which they found themselves compelled
To cope with England's might.
Proud is the Lord Lieutenant now,
Of him the rabble sings;
Who slaughtered Art's confederates,
And clipped that chieftain's wings.

Lancaster now returning home,
Left Ormond in his stead;
To guard the fortunes of the Pale
To which he was so wed;
But death the zealous earl seized,
A soldier skilled and brave;
Whereon the council called Kildare,
Their interests to save.
This news caused the late deputy,
The son of England's king,
To pay a flying visit,
To Ireland in the spring.
Deposed Kildare and left him
To nurse his wounded pride,
And Stephen Scrope appointed
The ship of State to guide.

In Carlow Art was biding
When news to him was brought,
That his allies were vanquished
In every battle fought.
Short time he lost in summoning
The clans from near and far,
Against the strongholds of the Pale
To wage a ruthless war.
McMurrough's clan rose like one man,
On valley, moor and hill;
Attacked their treacherous foemen,
And smote them there until,
Through all that spacious country,
From Arklow to Athy;
The blaze of Norman castles
Lit up the autumn sky.

Prince Art has gone in person
To lead his choicest troops;
Down on the Wexford Normans,
Through Scullogue Gap he swoops.
And charming is the color,
The gap in autumn wears;
Two thousand feet above it hides
In cloud, or mist that here abides,
Where nought but the dread pooka rides,
On top of the Blackstairs.
But on the north side of the Gap,
There in profusion grew,
The furze and fern, that clothe in turn,
The slopes of dark Knockroe.
By mountain river wild flowers plucked,
When June its voice had hushed;
Into the Witch's cave threw stones,
Or from the pine trees plucked the cones,
And often nearly broke our bones
As down the hill we rushed.

Then passed we through Kiltealy,
Along the Dufferin road;
And halted at the Urrin,
That by the wayside flowed.
Sweet scented hay around us lay,
The sun had turned brown,
Whence we marched down to Slaney's banks
By Enniscorthy town.
The day was dawning in the east;
The town serenely slept;
When like a rushing spring-tide wave
Through its drear streets we swept.
Then having seized the sentries,
We forced them with us go;
And captured the strong castle
Built by Raymond le Gros.*
Disarmed, free passage gave them,
Their banner quickly lowered;
Once more the sunburst hoisted
Where England's pennant soared,
Their arms and stores, save just a few,
We left with the townsmen,
With whom we did the plunder share,
To keep our banner flying there,
Till we came back again.

That night we followed Slaney,
'Till hindered by the Bann,
That from the Wicklow border,
With a swift current ran.
Three miles from Enniscorthy,
These rapid streams unite;
We crossed the latter by a bridge,
That served us well that night.

---

* Gros pronounce Gro.

We kept the river on our right,
Proceeding on our way;
And entered Ferns' ancient town
Before the break of day.
All the belongings of the Pale
We confiscated then;
They took them from our fathers,
So we took them back again.
Later we entered Camolin,
Where we found many a mill;
Between the Slieveboy mountain,
And steep Ballymore Hill.
We drove away the cattle
Of the Saxons dwelling there,
And to the camp at Carnew,
With our booty did repair.

Now Lord Lancaster's proxy,
The shrewd diplomat Scrope,
Found 'twas a most resourceful man
With whom he had to cope.
His plans against Prince Art's allies,
Must for the moment cease;
In fact the deputy himself,
No longer felt at ease.
Because to him those earls seem,
Who Munster's plains divide;
Too jealous of each other,
To battle side by side.
To overcome Prince Art of course,
Would need a strong well equipped force;
This could no man deny.
If Fitz with Butler would unite,
And battle hard for England's right;
Their chance seemed good to win the fight,
And Leinster pacify.

So to the powerful earls, Scrope
A hasty message sent:
"To vanquish Leinster's prince seems now
My master's sole intent.
His loyalty I will commend
To England's lords and king,
And he'll stand high in their esteem,
Who will strong forces bring.

Meanwhile McMurrough's clansmen
Have left behind Carnew;
And passed through rough Shillelagh,
Where the stout blackthorn grew.
Swift rolling Derreen river
They crossed at Hackettstown,
And at Rathvilly, Slaney passed;
Slaney that flows with current fast;
One wonders how the flood can last,
The way it rushes down.

The town of Castedermot
Soon feil into our power;
Famed for its noble abbey,
And for its fine round tower.
But while we laughed and feasted,
The news was to us brought,
That the great earls were reconciled,
And had together fought
Against O'Carroll of Ely,
Who came with troops select,
To bring aid to McMurrough,
And tribute to collect.
From Ara and from Owneybeg
Came squads led by O'Brien;
These to Rathdowney came with speed,
Teigue Carroll's force to join.

But of that chieftain's coming,
The earls were soon apprised,
And laid for both an ambuscade,
Quite skillfully devised.
Outnumbered greatly and surprised,
They were soon put to flight,
And with three hundred of their men,
Fell in that bloody fight.

The news received, McMurrough
Before his chiefs arose—
"This is disheartening tidings,
What do you now propose?"
Said Lawlor: "Though I'd like at once
To strike our deadly foe;
I fear our numbers are too few
Against him yet to go."
Stout Hugh O'Toole took up the word:
"Talk not of falling back,
'Twould instigate those wavering now
To join in the attack,
Upon us and our followers,
That they might favor gain,
From Ormond who would stronger be
Should we come back again.
Still I admit, it looks to me,
Kilkenny's not the place
Where we could crush decisively
The haters of our race.
But if we straight to Dublin go
It is my firm belief;
The earls their vantage must forego,
And haste to its relief.

So couriers to Wicklow send
To muster all the clans:
Then call the roll in glennasmole;
Prince Art these are my plans!"

"Your council prudent seems to me,
We'll pass this day in jollity
And with the rising sun,
To Wicklow we will wend our way;
But in its vales short time we'll stay,
Tomorrow may bring serious play;
Today we give to fun.
So harper! cheer us with your strains,
And play your liveliest air;
For in the pleasures of the camp
Today I mean to share.
Come let the men be feasted,
And try our favorite rounds,
To throw the weight, or jump the gate,
First prize is twenty pounds."
The feasting over for the time,
The contestants appeared,
And in the running broad jump
Were twenty-four feet cleared.
And in the races that were run,
Were men surprising fleet;
To see them taking the high jump,
Was still a greater treat.

But while the contest with the weights
Is stubbornly maintained;
A courrier on McMurrough waits,
His message thus explained.

"With twenty score, my chief, O'Moore
Is coming from Athy;
To battle hard for liberty,
Or on the field to die.
The welcome news was well received,
O'Moore won much applause;
O'Nolan too had reached the camp,
To strengthen Ireland's cause,

And vow they if at Dublin
The doughty earls they meet;
With toughened bows and bloody blows,
They mean those earls to greet.

Outside the contest ending,
Arose the loud hurrah;
The victors cheered and toasted
In cups of usquebaugh;
While in the hall the harper
Was in his happiest vein;
Discoursing of those heroes,
Who overthrew the Dane.
The kerns and gallow glasses
On oaten cakes regale.
The flesh of geese and pigs and deer,
Had helped to spread around good cheer
And there were methers full of beer,
And fresh goats' milk and ale.
And there were songs and toasting,
And tales that might enthrall;
Of pookas and malicious sprites,
'Till sleep o'ercame them all.

SEVENTEENTH NIGHT

The Battle of Kilmainham

We're tired of hearing shoneens boast
Of battles won along our coast,
Whenever we arose;
Can no one here tell us tonight,
Where justice triumphed over might;
Where Irish valor won the fight
Against our English foes?
The greatest battle that took place
'Tween English and the Irish race,
Was at Kilmainham waged;

When sixteen thousand on each side,
Buoyed up alike with hate and pride,
Would die or turn the battle tide,
And furiously it raged.
There's William Lundon, he can tell
The story, for he knows it well;
Come Will! the chair is yours tonight,
And tell us of this glorious fight.

The Battle

Lord Thomas of Lancaster
Long deemed an able prince,
Summoned the Pale from far and near
To join their forces, since
They still had hovering round their gates,
A bold, determined foe;
To whom their boasts of "conquerors"
Seemed but a hollow show.
But as he looked across the plain,
He saw approach the Earl of Slane.
Who on his foes would vengeance wreak.
"What of the earls, Slane! speak, pray speak!

"Of Desmond I have naught to say;
I don't believe he comes this way,
But Ormond's men passed up the glen
As it was breaking day.

I took them to Kilmainham's prior,
A man I greatly do admire;
He still retains his youthful fire,
Would rather fight than pray.
On Desmond we could ne'er rely,
A friend, perhaps an enemy.
He will not join in this affray,
But that need cause us no dismay.

To raise a powerful army
To vanquish all our foes,
And drive them from this province,
Is what I now propose.
To teach its lawless people
That forces we could bring,
Enough to crush forever
This self-styled Leinster king."
So from the Boyne to Barrow's mouth
The word was passed around;
In Dublin to assemble,
The fittest rallying ground;
From its large population,
And from its English tone;
Ten thousand men they could raise in
That borough town alone.
The summons it was answered,
And troops kept pouring in;
Until to Lord Lancaster,
It seemed time to begin
War on McMurrough's clansmen,
In Wicklow's deep defiles;
On the O'Tooles, O'Byrnes and
The Kavanaghs and Doyles.

These warlike preparations
Did not escape Prince Art,
Full well he knew, the Saxon crew
Against him soon would start.

So trusty scouts at once he sent
All Wicklow to patrol,
To urge the clans to come with speed
As far as Glennasmole;
If they would save their hearths and homes
From England's blighting hand;
Aye, save their wives and children,
Their houses and their land.

No time was to be wasted,
They must come without delay,
Or with exterminating war,
The Palesmen will them pay.

The dawn was just appearing,
When gazing towards Kippure;
Way up the Dodder valley,
The sentry felt quite sure
He saw the foe descending,
Along its winding shore;
Then promptly the alarm gave
And walked his beat once more.

Then forthwith came the Earl of Slane,
A noble ready to sustain
Proud England's king and crown;
And as he turning southward gazed
Up Dodder's stream, he felt amazed,
At the vast army pouring down
From Seefingan to Tallaght town.
Gleaming in sunshine, pikes and spears,
How beautiful the vale appears
Where Killakee's heights show,
O'er Dodder's stream that flows straightway,
From steep Kippure to Knockanvea;
While furze and fern their sides array,
Where'er the troopers go.
And from this lofty range of hills,
Pour many streamlets many rills,
To swell the Dodder's flow.

But while the clans are dressing ranks,
In shadowy Glennasmole;
Within the walls of Dublin
The drums are beating roll.

To summon to the colors
The various commands,
Who lately had assembled
To crush those rebel bands.

From a hasty reconnaisance
Made by the Earl of Slane,
Of all McMurrough's forces
Encamped upon the plain:
He quickly sought Lancaster,
And thus expressed his views:
"My Lord! they bring a mighty force,
And marshalled well both foot and horse;
Within those walls, behind this fosse
Is just the ground I'd choose.
For they seem getting ready
The city to besiege."
" 'Tis well, replied Lancaster,
If 'tis as you allege!
An army such as I command,
Has never o'er this mountain land,
Nor through its passes poured.
I've seen no troops of finer mould:
Sir Perrier's men are true as gold,
And Dartois is a leader bold,
As ever grasped a sword.
Here with the center I will fight,
Sir Jenicho commands the right,
Sir Edward holds the left;
Kilmainham's prior leads the reserve,
Three thousand men our cause to serve,
And Butler does such rank deserve,
Or I'm of sense bereft.

But a short time they have to wait,
When passing through the city gate,
They see the glint of pikes and spears;
Close and more close the foe appears.

When with a light armed cavalcade,
Through Oxmantown with naked blade,
Count Dartois leads his troops;
While the main body hurries on,
Past the old priory of Saint John,
That three main roads converge upon;
Loud rose the fierce war whoops.

How lovely looked the varied scenes
Presented to their view;
The river smoothly flowing along,
Shaded by beech and yew;
Their foliage presenting
An ever varying hue.
But save the march of armed men,
There was no sound from copse or glen.
The cattle ceased their lowing;
The barnyard fowl their crowing,
And on the river rowing,
You couldn't find a man.
The browsing horses seemed aware
That something strange was happening there;
They tossed their manes; they sniffed the air,
And through the fields they ran.

Between the Liffey and the wood,
Where many a giant oak tree stood;
Where now Kilmainham stands:
The armies with each other close;
Loud was the clamor that arose,
And louder still the clanging blows
Of spears and battle-brands.

King Henry's son now joins the fight,
With courage high as was his right;
For he was no soft carpet knight,
But held warfare his game.

Mounted upon a noble steed,
That was of purest Derby breed;
He bade his staff to take good heed;
This day should bring them fame.
Thus urged, they furious battle greet,
And bear themselves as worthy knights,
To battle hard for England's rights,
Soon as the enemy they meet.
If merciless the blows they deal,
Think war is but a soldier's game;
To win him an enduring fame,
Ere some fell blow his life shall steal.

But stretched along the river front,
His left opposed to England's right,
That with the center bore the brunt
Of battle, there Art's clansmen fight.
These from Shillelah's rugged height,
But those from Wexford's fertile plains;
Fierce Hugh O'Toole commands the right,
Where young O'Nolan too maintains
Against Sir Perrier the fight,
O'Byrne's gallow glasses brave,
From hill and dell and mountain cave,
Lined up beside O'Toole;
For they were veterans skilled and tried,
Who oft before fought side by side;
The rugged mountain oft did ride
To o'erthrow British rule.

The battle front seemed now extending;
Advancing here, there backward bending;
Arrows in clouds on it descending;
Loud! loud! the war-cries rose
While blood flowed in a tide unending,
From the contestants blows.

On England's right now raged the fight
More fiercely than elsewhere.
Lord Thomas too, they see invite
His fortunes for to share;
Sir Hudson Tuite, with royal Meath,
The prior too came there,
And Birmingham, a valiant knight,
To lend their aid to win the fight.
Confronting them with pike and dart,
Were Leinster's clans, with brave Prince Art;
His friend, Red Kavanagh, in short
All the McMurrough clan,
Advance to meet their stubborn foes;
The swords and spears exchanging blows;
So furious the encounter grows,
Whole lines fell in the van.

As sea-walls sometimes will give way,
Before the furious spring-tide's play;
While people look on in dismay
At the destruction wrought:
'Twas thus these fierce contestants met,
With pike and lance defiantly set;
Their eager thirst for blood to whet,
And hard and long they fought.

Then fiercely charged O'Nolan
The Methian royalists;
His clansmen armed with sword and spear,
Cut through their lines from front to rear;
Shouts of defiance, hate and fear,
Go mingling with the mists,
That from the river seem to rise,
And hover o'er the plain;
Where now the warrior sinks and dies;
The shouting rises to the skies,
And echoes back again.

But louder still the tumult grows,
As if the fiends of hell,
Had lent their aid to pike and blade,
The carnage for to swell.
Through Wexford's long, wide-spreading host
Count Dartois now a passage forced,
With veterans skilled and brave;
Who fought in Flanders and in France,
Now pierced its ranks and still advance
The Methians to save.
His strategy was bearing fruit,
So sudden the attack
That Gorey's famous regiment
That through the Gaels a thrill had sent,
Now overborne, broken and bent,
Was quickly hurled back;
While down on them Count Dartois swoops,
And breaks them in disordered groups,
Prince Art sends up his choicest troops
His line for to preserve.

While fiercer now the fighting grew
And spearmen and pikemen closer drew,
To Dartois' aid the Butler flew
With most of the reserve:
Then shouts arose for an O'Toole
Who might the furious battle rule,
With desperate strength and courage cool
Their purpose best to serve.
And aid the battling Irish right
Still strong in valor and in might
And help them in their sudden plight
To rearrange their lines.
Still to maintain the stubborn fight
And check the Count's designs.

Prince Art beheld with eager eye
O'Toole with his picked bowmen fly,
For well he knew that chief would die
Or turn the battle tide;
Where Britain's hosts seemed to prevail,
Now arrows fell in showers like hail,
And streams of blood flowed through the vale
But did not yet decide
Which side would conquer in the fray;
The Prior's troops might save the day,
But Dartois' lines were giving way,
Who might the battle guide.

The English ardor seems to flag,
Behind their lines great numbers lag;
Lord Thomas cried: Is this the brag
You made last even-tide?
Send Butler up with the reserve,
Our purpose it will better serve;
The laggards he will surely nerve,
And rouse their dormant pride.

The Prior's troops can't save the day;
Count Dartois' lines are giving way,
Or falling on the plain.
Birmingham dying on the field,
His new command is forced to yield;
Sir Hudson Tuite is slain.
But worst disaster of them all,
That caused their direst plight;
Was when his troops witnessed the fall
Of* Henry's son, who marshalled all,
And stood there firmly as a wall,
Throughout the raging fight.

---

* The Earl of Lancaster, son of King Henry IV.

Who now will lead that crushed array,
That short time since was proud and gay,
When scorning fosse and wall.
O'erweening pride, of foes makes light;
So eager were they for the fight;
So confident in their own might,
That they could conquer all.
Vain now is England's boasted pride,
Her veteran troops on every side
Are fleeing from the fray;
Or seek to gain the opposite shore;
The river ford at Inchicore,
Whose waters soon ran red with gore,
As surely well they may.

No need to tell the reason why,
The ford itself is called Athcroy;*
Where thousands of the enemy
Have found a watery grave.
'Mid scenes they dare not look upon,
With all their hopes of victory gone,
But blessed night soon coming on,
A respite to them gave.

Lancaster was to the city brought,
Where for a time the surgeons thought,
His wounds would fatal prove:
But through their prompt and skillful care,
Affairs of State again he'll share,
But never more will that prince dare
Against McMurrough move.

Though safe within Dublin's strong walls,
Sad was Lancaster's plight;
Four thousand of the soldiers slain,
He led into that fight.

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* Athcroy, the ford of blood.

While nearly trice that number
His colors did desert;
In vain Sir Jenicho might try
His influence to exert,
Upon a thoughtless soldiery,
Demoralized by fright;
Who cast away their weapons
And safety sought in flight.
Of the splendid English army
That round Kilmainham drew,
One thousand warriors scarcely,
Held to their colors true.

The loss of this great battle,
Did England's prestige lower;
The whole province of Leinster fell
Into McMurrough's power.
From Hook Head round to Dublin;
From Callan to the sea,
There waved no flag but brave Prince Art's
His province now was free.

But on the first day of the year
Fourteen-seventeen, 'tis told,
Prince Art within his palace walls,
'Mid wailings manifold;
Was there found lying still in death,
The noblest of the Gael;
For whom his people east and west,
For many a day shall wail.

He who for forty years had dared
Proud England's power and might,
And beat the forces of the Pale,
In many a stubborn fight;
With his chief brehon, Doran,
Was drugged by wily foes,
He taught on many a battlefield,
To dread his deadly blows.

Loud was the wailing that arose
Through Leinster far and wide;
Not till they reached Saint Mullins,
Did the wailing once subside:
Then in that little churchyard
By noble Barrow's side,
Laid the remains of him who was
Their bulwark and their pride.

THE END.