

The Sea Divided Gael

*The Golden Treasury of Irish Songs and Lyrics*

Vol. 2

Edited by

Charles Walsh

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DEATH OF THE HOMEWARD BOUND

Thomas D'Arcy M'Gee  
(1825-1868)

PALER and thinner the morning moon grew,  
Colder and sterner the rising wind blew —  
The pole-star had set in a forest of cloud,  
And the icicles cracked on spar and on shroud,  
When a voice from below we heard feebly cry,  
“ Let me see—let me see—my own Land ere I die.

“ Ah, dear sailor, say, have we sighted Cape Clear ?  
Can you see any sign ? Is the morning light near ?  
You are young, my brave boy ; thanks, thanks, for  
your hand,  
Help me up, till I get a last glimpse of the land —  
Thank God, 'tis the sun that now reddens the sky,  
I shall see—I shall see—my own Land ere I die.

“ Let me lean on your strength, I am feeble and old,  
And one-half of my heart is already stone cold —  
Forty years work a change ! when I first crossed the  
sea  
There were few on the deck that could grapple with  
me ;  
But my prime and my youth in Ohio went by  
And I'm come back to see the old spot ere I die.”

'Twas a feeble old man, and he stood on the deck,  
His arm round a kindly young mariner's neck,  
His ghastly gaze fixed on the tints of the east,  
As a starveling might stare at the sound of a feast ;  
The morn quickly rose, and revealed to his eye  
The Land he had prayed to behold, and then die !

Green, green was the shore, though the year was near  
done —  
High and haughty the capes the white surf dashed  
upon —

A gray ruined convent was down by the strand,  
And the sheep fed afar, on the hills of the land !  
“ God be with you, dear Ireland,” he gasped with a  
    sigh,  
“ I have lived to behold you—I’m ready to die.”

#### MEMORIES

I LEFT two loves on a distant strand,  
One young, and fond, and fair, and bland  
One fair, and old, and sadly grand,—  
My wedded wife and my native land.

One tarrieth sad and seriously  
Beneath the roof that mine should be ;  
One sitteth sibyl-like, by the sea,  
Chanting a grave song mournfully.

A little life I have not seen  
Lies by the heart that mine hath been ;  
A cypress wreath darkles now, I ween,  
Upon the brow of my love in green.

The mother and wife shall pass away,  
Her hands be dust, her lips be clay ;  
But my other love on earth shall stay,  
And live in the life of a better day.

Ere we were born my first love was,  
My sires were heirs to her holy cause ;  
And she yet shall sit in the world’s applause,  
A mother of men and blessed laws.

I hope and strive the while I sigh,  
For I know my first love cannot die :  
From the chain of woes that loom so high  
Her reign shall reach to eternity.

#### SALUTATION TO THE CELTS

HAIL to our Celtic brethren, wherever they may be,  
In the far woods of Oregon or o’er the Atlantic sea ;  
Whether they guard the banner of St. George in Indian vales,  
Or spread beneath the nightless North experimental sails —  
    One in name and in fame  
    Are the sea-divided Gaels.

Though fallen the state of Erin, and changed the Scottish land,  
Though small the power of Mona, though unawaked

Llewellyn's band,  
Though Ambrose Merlin's prophecies are held as idle tales,  
Though Iona's ruined cloisters are swept by northern gales :  
One in name and in fame  
Are the sea-divided Gaels.

In Northern Spain and Italy our brethren also dwell  
And brave are the traditions of their fathers that they tell :  
The Eagle or the Crescent in the dawn of history pales  
Before the advancing banners of the great Rome-con-  
quering Gaels.

One in name and in fame  
Are the sea-divided Gaels.

A greeting and a promise unto them all we send :  
Their character our charter is, their glory is our end —  
Their friend shall be our friend, our foe whoe'er assails  
The glory or the story of the sea-divided Gaels.

One in name and in fame  
Are the sea-divided Gaels.

#### THE EXILE'S RETURN, OR MORNING ON THE IRISH COAST

John Locke  
(1847-1889)

*Th' anam an Dhia.* [1] But there it is —  
The dawn on the hills of Ireland !  
God's angels lifting the night's black veil  
From the fair, sweet face of my sireland !  
O Ireland isn't it grand you look —  
Like a bride in her rich adornin' ?  
And with all the pent-up love of my heart  
I bid you the top o' the mornin'

This one short hour pays lavishly back  
For many a year of mourning ;  
I'd almost venture another flight,  
There's so much joy in returning —  
Watching out for the hallowed shore,  
All other attractions scornin' :  
O Ireland ! don't you hear me shout ?  
I bid you the top o' the mornin'.

Ho, ho ! upon Cleena's shelving strand  
The surges are grandly beating,  
And Kerry is pushing her headlands out  
To give us the kindly greeting ;  
In to the shore the seabirds fly  
On pinions that know no drooping,  
And out of the cliffs, with welcomes charged,

A million of waves come trooping.

O kindly, generous, Irish land  
So leal and fair and loving !  
No wonder the wandering Celt should think  
And dream of you in his roving.  
The alien home may have gems and gold  
Shadows may never have gloomed it ;  
But the heart will sigh for the absent land  
Where the love-light first illumed it.

And doesn't old Cove look charming there,  
Watching the wild waves' motion,  
Leaning her back up against the hills,  
And the tip of her toes in the ocean ?  
I wonder I don't hear Shandon's bells —  
Ah ! maybe their chiming's over,  
For it's many a year since I began  
The life of a Western rover.

For thirty summers, *asthore machree*,  
Those hills I now feast my eyes on  
Ne'er met my vision save when they rose  
Over memory's dim horizon.  
E'en so, 'twas grand and fair they seemed  
In the landscape spread before me ;  
But dreams are dreams, and my eyes would ope  
To see Texas' sky still o'er me.

Oh ! often upon the Texan plains,  
When the day and the chase were over,  
My thoughts would fly o'er the weary wave,  
And around this coast-line hover ;  
And the prayer would rise that some future day —  
All danger and doubting scornin' —  
I'd help to win for my native land  
The light of Young Liberty's mornin' !

Now fuller and truer the shore line shows —  
Was ever a scene so splendid !  
I feel the breath of the Munster breeze ;  
Thank God that my exile's ended !  
Old scenes, old songs, old friends again,  
The vale and cot I was born in —  
O Ireland ! up from my heart of hearts  
I bid you the top o' the mornin' !

[1] *Th' anám an Dhia*, my soul to God.

IRELAND  
(1847)

Denis Florence MacCarthy

(1817-1882)

THEY are dying ! they are dying I where the  
golden corn is growing ;  
They are dying ! they are dying ! where the  
crowded herds are lowing :  
They are gasping for existence where the streams of  
life are flowing,  
And they perish of the plague where the breeze of  
health is blowing !

God of justice ! God of power !  
Do we dream ? can it be,  
In this land, at this hour,  
With the blossom of the tree,  
In the gladsome month of May,  
When the young lambs play,  
When Nature looks around  
On her waking children now,  
The seed within the ground,  
The bud upon the bough ?  
Is it right, is it fair,  
That we perish of despair  
In this land, on this soil  
Where our destiny is set,  
Which we cultured with our toil,  
And watered with our sweat ?  
We have ploughed, we have sown  
But the crop was not our own ;  
We have reaped, but harpy hands  
Swept the harvest from our lands ;  
We were perishing for food,  
When lo ! in pitying mood  
Our kindly rulers gave  
The fat fluid of the slave,  
While our corn filled the manger  
Of the war-house of the stranger !  
God of mercy ! must this last ?  
Is this land preordained,  
For the present and the past  
And the future, to be chained,—  
To be ravaged, to be drained,  
To be robbed, to be spoiled,  
To be hushed, to be whipt,  
Its soaring pinions dipt,  
And its every effort foiled ?

Do our numbers multiply  
But to perish and to die ?  
Is this all our destiny below,—  
That our bodies, as they rot,  
May fertilize the spot  
Where the harvest of the stranger grow ?  
If this be, indeed, our fate,  
Far, far better now, though late,  
That we seek some other land and try some  
other zone ;  
The coldest, bleakest shore  
Will surely yield us more  
Than the storehouse of the stranger that we  
dare not call our own.

Kindly brothers of the West  
Who from Liberty's full breast  
Have fed us, who are orphans beneath a stepdame's  
frown,  
Behold our happy state  
And weep your wretched fate  
That you share not in the splendors of an empire and  
our crown !

Kindly brothers of the East,—  
Thou great tiaraed priest,  
Thou sanctified Rienzi of Rome and of the earth,  
O thou who bear'st control  
Over golden Istambol  
Who felt for our misfortunes and helped us in our  
dearth,—

Turn here your wondering eyes,  
Call your wisest of the wise,  
Your muftis and your ministers, your men of deepest  
lore ;  
Let the sagest of your sages  
Ope our island's mystic pages,  
And explain unto your highness the wonders of our  
shore.

A fruitful, teeming soil,  
Where the patient peasants toil  
Beneath the summer's sun and the watery winter sky ;  
Where they tend the golden grain  
Till it bends up on the plain,  
Then reap it for the stranger, and turn aside to die ;  
Where they watch their flocks increase,  
And store the snowy fleece  
Till they send it to their masters to be woven o'er the  
waves ;  
Where, having sent their meat,

For the foreigner to eat,  
Their mission is fulfilled, and they creep into their  
graves.

'Tis for this they are dying where the golden corn is  
growing,  
'Tis for this they are dying where the crowded herds  
are lowing,  
'Tis for this they are dying where the streams of life are  
flowing,  
And they perish of the plague where the breeze of health  
is blowing !

#### THE WAR-SHIP OF PEACE

Samuel Lover  
(1797-1868)

The Americans exhibited much sympathy towards Ireland when the famine raged there in 1847. A touching instance was then given how the better feelings of our nature may employ even the enginery of destruction to serve the cause of humanity: an American frigate (the *Jamestown* I believe) was dismantled of all her warlike appliances, and placed at the disposal of the charitable to carry provisions.—*Author*.

SWEET Land of Song ! thy harp doth hang  
Upon the willows now,  
While famine's blight and fever's pang  
Stamp misery on thy brow ;  
Yet take thy harp, and raise thy voice,  
Though faint and low it be,  
And let thy sinking heart rejoice  
In friends still left to thee !

Look out look out across the sea  
That girds thy emerald shore,  
A ship of war is bound for thee,  
But with no warlike store ;  
Her thunder sleeps 'tis Mercy's breath  
That wafts her o'er the sea ;  
She goes not forth to deal out death,  
But bears new life to thee !

Thy wasted hand can scarcely strike  
The chords of grateful praise ;  
Thy plaintive tone is now unlike  
Thy voice of former days ;  
Yet, even in sorrow, tuneful still,  
Let Erin's voice proclaim  
In bardic praise, on every hill,  
Columbia's glorious name !

## THE MYSTERY

George Francis Savage-Armstrong  
(1845- )

YEAR after year  
The leaf and the shoot ;  
The babe and the nestling,  
The worm at the root ;  
The bride at the altar,  
The corpse on the bier—  
The Earth and its story  
Year after year :

Whither are tending,  
And whence do they rise,  
The cycles of changes,  
The worlds in their skies,  
The seasons that rolled  
Ere I flashed from the gloom,  
And will roll on as now  
When I'm dust in the tomb?

## THE FAIR HILLS OF EIRE OGH

Edward Walsh  
(1805-1850)

BEAUTIFUL and wide are the green fields of  
Erin,  
Uileacán dubh O !  
With life-giving grain in the golden corn therein,  
Uileacán dubh O !

And honey in the woods of the mist-wreaths deep,  
And in the summer by the paths the bright streams  
leap,  
At burning noon, rich, sparkling dew the fair flowers  
steep,  
On the fair hills of Eire Ogh !

How clustering his ringlets, how lofty his bearing,  
Uileacán dubh O !  
Each warrior leaving the broad bays of Erin  
Uileacán dubh O !  
Would heaven grant the hope in my bosom swelling,  
I'd seek that land of joy in life's gifts excelling  
Beyond your rich rewards, I'd choose a lowly dwelling,  
On the fair hills of Eire Ogh !  
Gainful and large are the corn-stacks of Erin,  
Uileacán dubh O !



Yellow cream and butter abound ever therein  
Uileacán dubh O !  
And sorrel soft and cresses where bright streams stray  
And speaking cuckoos fill the grove the live-long day,  
And the little thrush so noble of sweetest-sounding lay,  
On the fair hills of Eire Ogh !

IN EXILE : AUSTRALIA

Andrew Orr  
(1822 —)

THE sunny South is glowing in the glow of  
Southern glory,  
And the Southern Cross is waving o'er the  
freest of the free ;  
Yet in vain, in vain my weary heart would try to hide  
the story  
That evermore 'tis wandering back, dear native  
land, to thee :  
The heathy hills of Malazan, the Bann's translucent  
waters,  
Glenleary's shades of hazel, and Agivy's winding  
streams,  
And Kathleen of the raven locks, the flower of Erinn's  
daughters —  
Lost heaven of wildering beauty ! thou art mine at  
least in dreams.  
Oh ! the green land, the old land,  
Far dearer than the gold land,  
With all its landscape glory and unchanging Summer  
skies ;  
Let others seek their pleasures  
In the chase of golden treasures,  
Be mine a dream of Erinn and the light of Kathleen's  
eyes.  
Sweet scenes may group around me, hill and dale,  
lagoon and wildwood,  
And eyes as bright and cloudless as the azure skies  
above ;  
But strange the face of nature—not the happy haunts  
of childhood,  
And cold the glance of beauty—not the smile of  
early love ;  
Even in the pulse of joy itself the native charm is  
wanting,  
For distant far the bosoms that would share it as their  
own :  
Too late to learn that loving hearts will never bear  
transplanting ;  
Uprooted once, like seedless flowers, they wither lost  
and lone.

Oh ! the old land, the green land,  
The land of lands, the queen land ;  
Keep, keep the gorgeous splendor of your sunny  
Southern shore ;  
Unfading and undying,  
O'er the world between us lying,  
The hallowed loves of former days are mine for ever-  
more.

I-BREASIL

Mrs. Seumas MacManus “ Ethna Carbery”

*Anna Johnston*  
(1866-1902)

THERE is a way I am fain to go—  
To the mystical land where all are young,  
Where the silver branches have buds of snow,  
And every leaf is a singing tongue.

It lies beyond the night and day,  
Over shadowy hill, and moorland wide,  
And whoso enters casts care away,  
And wistful longings unsatisfied.

There are sweet white women, a radiant throng,  
Swaying like flowers in a scented wind :  
But between us the veil of earth is strong,  
And my eyes to their luring eyes are blind.

A blossom of fire is each beauteous bird,  
Scarlet and gold on melodious wings,  
And never so haunting a strain was heard  
From royal harp in the Hall of Kings.

The sacred trees stand in rainbow dew,  
Apple and ash and the twisted thorn,  
Quicken and holly and dusky yew,  
Ancient ere ever gray Time was born.

The oak spreads mighty beneath the sun  
In a wonderful dazzle of moonlight green—  
O would I might hasten from tasks undone,  
And journey whither no grief hath been !

Were I past the mountains of opal flame,  
I would seek a couch of the king-fern brown,  
And when from its seed glad slumber came,  
A flock of rare dreams would flutter down.

But I move without in an endless fret,

While somewhere beyond earth's brink, afar,  
Forgotten of men, in a rose-rim set,  
I-Breasil shines like a beckoning star.

#### OUR ROAD

HERE is the road that you must climb with me,  
This road that winds between the hill and sea,  
And leads to where our quiet home shall be.

Love waits us there not proud, nor kingly clad,  
Oh ! just a little joyous country lad,  
With tender wiles to make our tired hearts glad.

No barbed arrow doth he hold for us  
But outstretched hands, divine and generous.  
Would all sad wayfarers were welcomed thus !

The world hath tortured yet immense our gain  
To find enduring peace around us twain,  
I, weary of my wanderings, you of your disdain.

#### THE BROWN WIND OF CONNACHT

THE brown wind of Connacht  
Across the bogland blown  
(The brown wind of Connacht)  
Turns my heart to a stone ;  
For it cries my name at twilight,  
And cries it at the noon  
“ O Mairgreá Ban ! O Mairgreá Ban ! ”  
Just like a fairy tune.

The brown wind of Connacht,  
When Dermot came to woo  
(The brown wind of Connacht)  
It heard his whispers too ;  
And while my wheel goes whirring,  
It taps on my window-pane,  
Till I open wide to the Dead outside,  
And the sea-salt misty rain.

The brown wind of Connacht  
With women wailed one day  
(The brown wind of Connacht)  
For a wreck in Galway Bay ;  
And many the dark-faced fishers  
That gathered their nets in fear,  
But one sank straight to the Ghostly Gate —  
And he was my Dermot Dear.

The brown wind of Connacht,

Still keening in the dawn  
(The brown wind of Connacht)  
For my true love that's gone.  
Oh, cold green wave of danger,  
Drift him a restful sleep—  
O'er his young black head on its lowly bed,  
While his weary wake I keep.

THE CALLING

George Sigerson  
(1839 -)

O SIGH of the Sea, O soft lone-wandering  
sound,  
Why callest thou me, with voice of all waters  
profound,  
With sob and with smile, with lingering pain and de-  
light,  
With mornings of blue, with flash of thy billows at  
night ?

The shell from the shore, though borne far away from  
thy side,  
Recalls evermore the flowing and fall of thy tide,  
And so, through my heart thy murmurs gather and  
grow—  
Thy tides, as of old, awake in its darkness, and flow.

O Sigh of the Sea, from luminous isles far away,  
Why callest thou me to sail the impassable way ?  
Why callest thou me to share the unrest of thy soul—  
Desires that avail not, yearnings from pole unto pole ?  
Still call, till I hear no voice but the voice of thy love,  
Till stars shall appear the night of my darkness above,  
Till night to the dawn gives way, and death to new  
life—  
Heart-full of thy might, astir with thy tumult and  
strife.

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