

Aughrim & Sarsfield

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The spirit of song has ever shed a benign influence over the soul of man, brightening up the fire of its energies, and warming into bloom the flowers of its sympathies and affections. Oft has the magic numbers of the lyre awakened into life the nobler feelings of our nature, which else might have slept inert, and hidden within the deep recesses of the heart, like a faint lamp suspended in a sepulchre, doomed to give out but a languid flickering flame, unseen, unfelt, and desolate. History, sacred and profane, fully illustrates this assertion.

The Psalms of David—and they are approached with reverence—these glorious effusions of the royal and devout poet imparted fire to the mind. Piety, and all its holy attributes ; brotherhood, and all its special emotions, cour-age, and all its sparkling energies ; all the virtues which adorn humanity, were called into full existence by the animating tones, the glowing imagery, and the inspired eloquence of the Harp of Israel.

Coming down to the European nations, we find the Chansons of the French Troubadours, and the ballads of the minstrels of the British Islands acting with great directing power on the public mind and national character. The song of the troubadour in dulcet strains of glowing passion, breathing its hymns to love and beauty, imparted a romantic gallantry to the people, for which their descendants are eminently conspicuous; The verses of our national bards, the hereditary minstrels of baronial chiefs, those bold relators of the trophies of war and chase, aroused by such animating ballads as Chevy Chase, the hearts of the men of old, keeping alive the spirit of feudal fealty, and inciting to deeds of note and enterprise.

The lyrics which succeeded the ancient minstrels are adorned with imperishable names ; luminaries shone in the poetic hemisphere. Shakspeare, who, from the rich mine of his poetic wealth, would sometimes scatter bright gems of sparkling song ; from him, down to Moore, the last and best of the lyric poets, whose fame is identified with the unrivalled music of his native land ; all, have led, and entranced the hearts and sympathies of the ages in which they won the trophies of immortal verse.

Amongst the moderns we find famous instances of song. Dibden's sea songs have tended more to infuse a spirit of order, and loyalty, and friendship for their messmates, amongst British sailors, than all the coercions of all the admirals that ever paced the quarter-deck ever could have accomplished. Allan Ramsey's pastoral muse charmed the simple peasantry of Scotland, winning them away from the jealousy of Clanship and feudal prejudices, to thoughts of love, friendship, the cottage and the plough ; then, oh! then the full and enthusiastic strain of Robert Burns, flowing like a lark Hymn; — all melody and nature—scattering in its soarings on the wings of inspiration, pride of nationality, and love of fatherland.

These are the achievements of lyrical composition—these are the trophies of “ the child of song.”

The Orange Institution, from its peculiar organization, moral, political, and social ; and from the truth, devotion and heroism, which adorn its history, demands, and is well entitled to have its song of loyalty, its song of fraternity, and its glorious song of triumphs ; of triumphs, not ephemeral or local, but historical and national.

What is the grand purpose of history ? To survey events in cause and effect ; to derive lessons of wisdom from the application of facts ; and to look at the past, and provide for the future. It, therefore, behoves the Orangeman to know what were the efforts of his ancestors, why these efforts, and what the results. It behoves him to profit by what he learns, to imitate the bright examples of piety and firmness set before him, and to stand as a conservator of those rights and truths for which the protestant martyr, and protestant soldier laid down their lives at scaffold, furnace, and battle-field.

Impressed with these sentiments, and anxious to promote them in others, I appeal to my brethren through the medium of song, and in its language speak to those feelings of loyalty, morality, fraternity, and temperate festivity which characterize our order. I trust that the verse which attempts to celebrate an historical event, which sings of bravery and triumph, may attain the desired consummation, to promote love for truth, and courage to defend it.

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King James II

AIR—" Nae luck about the house."

King James the *Second* was the *first*
To *second* Popish sway,
And as his thoughts inclined to *Rome*,
He had to *roam* away.
He thought to fell our British oak —
Cut off its branches thick ;
So as he meant our *stick* to *cut*,
We made him *cut* his *stick*.
Tol de rol, de rol, de rol, &c.

He was a genuine Jesuit—
A *foul* bird at the best ;
So being *foul*, it was not *fair*
He should *befoul* the nest.
He seem'd to stand from isle to isle—
An impudent colossus ;
And as he bowed unto the *cross*
Of course we gave him *crosses*.
Tol, de rol, &c.

He seized our Bishops—but his threats
Their virtue never shook ;
He for their croziers *fishing* was —
He got them—*with a hook*.
So after many a scurvy trick—
The Irish *seas* he cross'd—
He could not get the Bishops' *Sees*,
So on the *seas* was toss'd.
Tol de rol, &c.

Tyrconnell, as *Lord Lieutenant*,
Left tenantless the land ;

He swore he'd *cow* King William's *horse*.
And take his *foot* in *hand*.
The tyrant made poor *Ireland*
The very *land* of *ire* ;
The Jesuit kept it in a *fry*,
Because he was a *friar*.
Tol de rol, &c.

And thus were loyal Protestants
Bereft of house and home,
Because they would not bow pnto
The Juggernaut of Rome.
The star of truth seem'd o'ericast,
But soon in brightness shewn ;
Its lightnings flashed round bigot James,
And hurl'd him from the throne.
Tol de rol, &c.

How glorious at Derry's seige
They made his balls recoil,
He *found* that he was *lost* and *foiled*
Upon the river *Foyle*.
Great *Walker* walk'd into his schemes—
This *tester* put to *test* ;
And James the *Second* was the *first*
To come off *second* best.
Tol de rol, &c.

'Twas on the *Royal Bank* of Boyne
He thought some *change* to draw ;
His note *dishonor'd*—he was found
A *bankrupt* man of straw.
His heroes to the shades were sent
To sup— not quite at ease ;
Says he, “ I do not like such *fare*—
Indeed 'tis not the *cheese*.”
Tol de rol, &c.

At Aughrim's plains the Protestants
Did Popery repress ;
Twas there the foe lost brave Saint *Ruth*,
Which made them quite *ruthless*,
James saw at length it was no go—
Such queer chaps to be *troubling* ;
So off to *Dublin* Castle went.
And there his cares were *doubling*,
Tol de rol, &c.

I'll have a bowl with James's face
Depicted in the cup ;
We'll fill and empty—who would leave
That tyrant king a drop ?

For Rome he would *a-mass* his power—
But mark what came to pass :
The bigot lost three golden crowns,
For that vain thing—*a mass !*
Tol de rol, &c.

And as for him, the punning wight,
Who now would make the fun stir,
Should danger come to *stir upon*,
He'll not be a *mere punster*.
Come trumpet, drum—he'll ne'er be found
A sneaking, halting marcher ;
Midst merry soldiers, laughing, arch—
He'll be a *little Archer*.
Tol de rol, &c.

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The Battle of Aughrim
Air—"The Admiral."

I sing, I sing exultingly, for Aughrim is my theme,
And fancy paints the battle-field, as in a vivid dream ;
The marshall'd hosts in flashing steel, with war and
vengeance rife,
like thunder-clouds with lightning, charged for ele-
mental strife.
Horsemen and foot, red, blue, and green, in bristling
steel came on,
like sparkling foam of summer waves, quick glancing
in the sun ;
And tramp and stamp, and rolling drum, and trumpet
sounding high,
Announced the fight at Aughrim, fought upon the
Twelfth July !

With five and twenty thousand men Saint Ruth came
boastingly—
His rebel standard blazon'd with the Harp and
Fleur de lis ;
From rank to rank he rode along, with animating
shout.
To fight for Popish James, and put King William's
men to rout ;
The Priests proclaim'd, ' the man who falls will die
a holy martyr—
Up ! fight for Mother Church, and give the heretic no
quarter."
Thus Priest and Chief, with artful speech, did every

effort try,
To kindle rage at Aughrim's field upon the Twelfth
July !

Our troops were eighteen thousand men, by General
Ginckle led ;
Old England's flag—Saint George's cross—was flut-
tering overhead ;
Their hearts with holy freedom fired, their brows
with victory glowing,
And Derry, Boyne, and stout Athlone, were laurel
leaves bestowing.
One mind, one soul, one deep intent, pervaded all
the host,
To sweep the foe, as stormy surges sweep along the
coast ;
Or as the eagle on its prey comes rushing from the
sky.
They rush'd to Aughrim's combat field upon the
Twelfth July !

The fight comes on : Saint Ruth prevails—his troops
he animates.
And swears he'll drive the heretics, aye, up to Dublin
gates ;
But, oh ! a ball, by justice wing'd, to vindicate the
Truth—
As he rode down Kilcomodan, laid low the brave
Saint Ruth.
Then came the rout ! Our troops rush'd on ; the
foe fled pale, aghast,
like autumn's leaves in myriads driven before No-
vember's blast.
Seven thousand men they left behind, in death to close
the eye,
While victory bless'd King William's men upon the
Twelfth July !

It may be said, such sanguine scenes the muse should
not relate ;
But I say, yes ! you must be told the deeds you'd
emulate ;
A holy zeal our sires fill'd to crush oppression strong,
And oh ! I'd try that zeal to raise upon the wings of
song.
For should the Papists coil again their adamantine
chain.
As did our sires, so we their sons, should rend the
yoke in twain ;
And in the spirit of my song, which, with my heart
must die,
I fill to Aughrim's victor fight upon the Twelfth July !

The Orange melodist. Original Orange songs, with occasional verses, and an appendix containing copious explanatory notes (1852)

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Sarsfield

(FROM THE IRISH.)

“ A Phadruig Sairseal ! slan go dti tu ! ”

PART I.

The bard apostrophises Sarsfield.

FAREWELL, O Patrick Sarsfield ! May luck be on your
path !

Your camp is broken up—your work is marred for
years

But you go to kindle into flame the King of France’s
wrath,

Though you leave sick Erin in tears.

Ohone ! Ullagone ! [1]

And invoices blessings on him.

May the white sun and moon. . .rain glory on your head,
All hero as you are, and holy Man of God !

To you the Saxons owe. . .a many an hour of dread
In the land you have often trod.

Ohone ! Ullagone !

And yet more blessings.

The Son of Mary guard you, and bless you to the end !
'Tis altered is the time since your legions were astir,
When at Cullen you were hailed as the Conqueror and
Friend,

And you crossed the river near Birr.

Ohone ! Ullagone !

He announces his design of revisiting the North.

I’ll journey to the North, over mount, moor, and wave.

'Twas there I first beheld, drawn up in file and line,
The brilliant Irish hosts they were bravest of the Brave,

But, alas! they scorned to combine!

Ohone! Ullagone!

He recounts his reminiscences of the war.

I saw the royal Boyne, when its billows flashed with
blood.

I fought at Grana Oge, where a thousand *marcach's* [2] fell.
On the dark empurpled field of Aughrim, too, I stood,
On the plain by Shanbally's Well.
Ohone! Ullagone!

He gives his benison to Limerick.

To the heroes of Limerick, the City of the Fights,
Be my best blessing borne on the wings of the air!
We had card-playing there o'er our camp-fires at night,
And the Word of Life, too, and prayer [3]

And bestows his malison on Londonderry.

But, for you, Londonderry, may Plague smite and slay
Your people! May Ruin. . .desolate you stone by
stone !
Through you a many a gallant youth lies coffinless to-day,
With the winds for mourners alone !
Ohone ! Ullagone !

He indulges in a burst of sorrow for a lost opportunity.

I climb the high hill on a fair summer noon,
And saw the Saxon Muster, clad in armour blinding
bright,
Oh, Rage withheld my hand, or gunsman and dragoon
Should have supped with Satan that night !
Ohone ! Ullagone !

PART II.

The bard mourns for the valiant Dead.

How many a noble soldier, how many a cavalier,
Careered along this road. . .seven fleeting weeks ago,
With silver-hilted sword, with matchlock and with spear,
Who now, *mavrone*, lieth low!
Ohone! Ullagone!

And pays a tribute to the valour of one of the Living.

All hail to thee Ben Hedir—But ah, on thy brow
I see a limping soldier, who battled and who bled
Last year in the cause of the Stuart, though now
The worthy is begging his bread !
Ohone ! Ullagone !

He deploras the loss of a friend.

And Jerome, oh, Jerome ! [4] he perished in the strife
His head it was spiked on a halbert so high ;
His colours they were trampled. He had no chance of
life

If the Lord God himself stood by. [5]

And of others, dear friends also.

But most, oh, my woe ! I lament and lament
For the ten valiant heroes who dwelt nigh the Nore,
And my three blessed brothers! They left me, and they
went
To the wars and returned no more !
Ohone ! Ullagone !

He reverts to the calamities of the Irish.

On the Bridge of the Boyne was our first overthrow
By Slaney the next, for we battled without rest :
The third was at Aughrim. Oh, Erin, thy woe
Is a sword in my bleeding breast !
Ohone ! Ullagone !

*He describes in vivid terms the conflagration of the house
at Ballytemple.*

O ! the roof above our heads it was barbarously fired,
While the black Orange guns. . .blazed and bellowed
around,
And as volley followed volley, Colonel Mitchell enquired
Whether Lucan [6] still stood his ground.
Ohone ! Ullagone !

*Finally, however, he takes a more hopeful view of the
prospects of his country.*

But O'Kelly still remains, to defy and to toil ;
He has memories that Hell won't permit him to forget,
And a sword that will make the blue blood flow like oil
Upon many an Aughrim yet !
Ohone! Ullagone!

And concludes most cheeringly.

And I never shall believe that my Fatherland can fall
With the Burkes, and the Decies, and the son of Royal
James,
And Talbot the Captain, and SARFIELD above all,
The beloved of damsels and dames. [7]

[1] This word is a corruption of the phrase *Ole-gheoin*, literally an *evil noise*, viz., a cry raised on the perpetration of some bad action.

[2] Cavaliers, or horsemen : the *marcach* of the middle ages, however, held the rank of a knight.

[3] I italicise those lines to invite attention to their peculiarly Irish character.

[4] One of King James's generals.

[5] "*Agus ni riabh faghail cleasda aige da bhfaicleach se Dia nan.*" This is one of those peculiarly powerful forms of expression, to which I find no parallel except in the Arabic language.

[6] Lord Lucan, i. e. General Sarsfield.

[7] “ *Agus Padraig Sairseal, gradh ban Eirionn !*”

The prose writings of James Clarence Mangan (1904)

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Jacobite Ballads.

I WAS looking the other day through a collection of poems, lately taken down from Irish-speaking country people for the *Oireactas*, the great yearly meeting of the Gaelic League ; and a line in one of them seemed strange to me : ‘ Prebaim mo chroidhe le mo Stuart gle-gleall’ ‘ my heart leaps up with my bright Stuart’ ; for I did not know there was still a memory of James and Charles among the people. The refrain of the poem was : ‘ Och, my grief, my friend stole away from me !’ and these are some of its verses : —

‘ There are young girls through the whole country would sit alongside of me through a half-hour, till we would be telling you the story together of what it was put myself under trouble ; I make my complaints, wanting my comrade. Och, my grief, my friend stole away from me !

‘ Where are my people that were wise and learned ? Where is the troop readying their spears, that they do not smooth out this knot for me ? Och, my grief, my friend stole away from me !

‘ I was for a while airy and beautiful, and all my treasure with my pleasant James. . . . On the top of all, my Stuart to leave me. Och, my grief, my friend stole away from me !

‘ It is the truth I cannot sleep in the night, fretting for my comrade ; I to be lying down, and he weak under cold. My heart leaps up with my bright Stuart. Och, my grief, my friend stole away from me !

‘ It is hard for me to lie down after that ; it is an empty thing to be crying the loss of my comrade, and I lying down with the mean people ; it is my death the Stuart not to come at all. Och, my grief, my friend stole away from me !’

I had not heard any songs of this sort in Galway, and I remembered that our Connaught Raftery, whose poems are still teaching history, dealt very shortly with the Royal Stuarts. ‘ James,’ he says, ‘ was the worst man for habits. . . . He laid chains on our bogs and mountains. . . . The father wasn’t worse than the son Charles, that left sharp scourges on Ireland. When God and the people thought it time the story to be done, he lost his head. . . . The next James—sharp blame to him—gave his daughter to William as woman and wife ; made the Irish English, and the English Irish, like wheat and oats in the month of harvest. And it was at Aughrim on a Monday many a son of Ireland found sorrow, without speaking of all that died.’

So I went to ask some of the wise old neighbours, who sit in wide chimney-nooks by turf fires, and to whom I go to look for knowledge of many things, if they knew of any songs in praise of the Stuarts. But they were scornful. ‘ The Stuarts ?’ one said ; ‘ no, indeed ; they have no songs about them here in the West, whatever they may have in the South. Why would they, running away and leaving the country ? And what good did they ever do it ?’ And another, who lives on the Clare border, said : ‘ I used to hear them singing “ The White Cockade” through the country. “ King James was beaten, and all his well-wishers ; my grief, my boy that went with them !” But I don’t think the people had ever much opinion of the Stuarts ; but in those days they were all prone to versify. But the famine did away with all that.’ And then he also was scornful, and said : ‘ Sure, King James ran all the way from the Boyne to Dublin, after the battle. There was a lady walking in the street at Dublin when he got there ; and he told her the battle was lost ; and she said : “ Faith you made good haste ; you made no delay on the road.” So he said no more after that.’

And then he told me of the Battle of Aughrim, that is still such a terrible memory ; and how the ‘ Danes’—the De Danaan—the mysterious divine race that were conquered by the Gael, and who still hold an invisible kingdom—‘ were dancing in the raths-around Aughrim the night after the battle. Their ancestors were driven out of Ireland before ; and they were glad when they saw those that had put them out put out themselves, and every one of them skivered.’

And another old man said : ‘ When I was a young chap knocking about in Connemara, I often heard songs about the Stuarts, and talk of them and of the blackbird coming over the water. But they found it hard to get over James making off after the Battle of the Boyne.’ And another says of James : ‘ They liked him well before he ran ; they didn’t like him after that.’

And when I looked through the lately gathered bundle of songs again, and through some old collections of Jacobite songs in Irish, I found they almost all belonged to Munster. And if they are still sung there, it is not, I think, for the sake of the kings, but for the sake of the poets who made them—Red-haired Owen O’Sullivan, potato-digger, harvestman, hedge-schoolmaster, whose poems are still the joy of the Munster people ; O’Rahilly, more learned, and as boundlessly redundant ; O’Donnell, whose heart was set on translating Homer into Irish ; O’Heffernan, the blind wanderer ; and many others. For the Munstermen have always been more ‘ prone to versify’ than their leaner neighbours on the bogs and stones of Conn-aught.

There is a common formula for most of these songs or ‘ Visions,’ *Aislinghe*, as they are called. Just as artists of to-day find no monotony in drawing Ireland over and over again with her harp, her wolf-dog, and her round tower, so the Munster poets found no monotony in representing her as a beautiful woman, white-skinned, with curling hair, with cheeks in which ‘ the lily and the rose were fighting for mastery.’ The poet asks her if she is Venus, or Helen, or Deirdre, and describes her beauty in torrents of alliterative adjectives. Then she makes her complaint against England, or her lament for her own sorrows or for the loss of her Stuart lover, spoken of sometimes as ‘ the bricklayer,’ or ‘ the merchant’s son.’ The framework is artificial; but the laments are often very pathetic, the love of Ireland, and the hatred of England born of that love, finding expression in them.

John O’Donnell sees her ‘ like a young queen that is going astray for the king being banished from her, that had a right to come and set her loose.’ O’Rahilly, in one of his poems, shows the beautiful woman held to her Saxon lover by some strange enchantment :—

‘ I met brightness of brightness upon the path of loneliness ; plaiting of plaiting in every

lock of her yellow hair. News of news she gave me, and she as lonely as she was ; news of the coming back of him that owns the tribute of the king.

‘ Folly of follies I to go so near to her ; slave I was made by a slave that put me in hard bonds. She made away from me then, and I following after her, till we came to a house of houses made by Druid enchantments.

‘ They broke into mocking laughter, a troop of men of enchantments, and a troop of young girls with smooth-plaited hair. They put me up in chains ; they made no delay about it ; and my love holding to her breast an awkward ugly clown.

‘ I told her then with the truest words I could tell her, it was not right for her to be joined with a common clumsy churl ; and the man that was three times fairer than the whole race of the Scots, waiting till she would come to him to be his beautiful bride.

‘ At the sound of my words her pride set her crying ; the tears were running down over the kindling of her cheeks. She sent a lad to bring me safe from the place I was in. She is the brightness of brightness I met in the path of loneliness.’

Sometimes the Stuart is almost forgotten in the story of sorrows and the indictment of England. O’Heffernan complains in one of his songs that many of the heroes of Ireland have passed away, and their names have never been put in a song by the poets ; ‘ and they even leave their verses without any account of Charles the wanderer, though I promise you they are not satisfied without giving some lines on Seagan Buidhe’ (one of the names for England). Yet he himself, when very downhearted, ‘ on the edge of the great wood under a harsh cloak of sorrow,’ is cheered by the pleasant sound of a swarm of bees in search of their ruler ; and with the pleasant thought that ‘ the harvest will be a bad one and with no joy in it to Seagan. George will be sent back over the sea, and the tribe that was so high up will be left without gold or townlands ; and I not pitying their sorrow.’ And he winds up : ‘ In Shronehill, if I were stretched at rest under a hard flag, and to hear this story moving about so pleasantly, by force and strength of my shoulders I would throw the sod off me ; and I coming back leaping to hear the news.’

And another writer, Seagan Clarach, looks forward to seeing ‘ timid George tame upon the road, without wine, without meat, without thread for his shoes.’ And his last verse, his ‘ binding,’ is, ‘ I beseech of God, I ask and I pray very hard, to cast out the gluttons that tormented the generous race of the Gael, from the island of the west, under hard bonds, and to banish the foreign devils from us.’

For poets and people found it hard to forget Cromwell ; and how ‘ the sons of the Gael are scorched, tormented, pitchforked, put under the yoke, by boors that are used to doing treachery.’

When the Stuarts come to mind, they are given fair words enough. ‘ The prince and heart-secret Charles that is sorrowful now and under weariness . . . will be under esteem ; and the Gael pleasant in the lime-white house.’ ... ‘ It is friendly, fair, bright, companionable, loving, brave, Charles will be, with sway, without a mist about him.’

And in one of Red Owen’s ‘ Visions’ he is told not to forget James, who is ‘ persevering, well-tempered, affectionate, stout, sweet, kind, poetical.’

Yet the Stuart seems to be always a faint and unreal image ; a saint by whose name a heavy oath is sworn. There are no personal touches such as I find in a song taken down from some countryman, on Patrick Sarsfield, the brave, handsome fighter, the descendant of Conall Cearnach, the man who, after the Boyne, offered to ‘ change kings and fight the battle again,’ This ballad seems to have more of Connaught simplicity than of Munster luxuriance in it : —

‘ O Patrick Sarsfield, health be to you, since you went to France and your camps were loosened ; making your sighs along with the king, and you left poor Ireland and the Gael defeated—Och ochone !

‘ O Patrick Sarsfield, it is a man with God you are ; and blessed is the earth you ever walked on. The blessing of the bright sun and the moon upon you, since you took the day from the hands of King William—Och ochone !

‘ O Patrick Sarsfield, the prayer of every person with you ; my own prayer and the prayer of the Son of Mary with you, since you took the narrow ford going through Biorra, and since at Cuilenn O’Cuanac you won Limerick— Och ochone !

‘ I will go up on the mountain alone ; and I will come hither from it again. It is there I saw the camp of the Gael, the poor troop thinned, not keeping with one another—Och ochone !

‘ My five hundred healths to you, halls of Limerick, and to the beautiful troop was in our company ; it is bonfires we used to have and playing cards, and the word of God was often with us—Och ochone !

‘ There were many soldiers glad and happy that were going the way through seven weeks ; but now they are stretched down in Aughrim—Och ochone !

‘ They put the first breaking on us at the Bridge of the Boyne ; the second breaking on the Bridge of Slaney ; the third breaking in Aughrim of O’ Kelly ; and O sweet Ireland, my five hundred healths to you — Och ochone !

‘ O’Kelly has manuring for his land, that is not sand or dung, but ready soldiers doing bravery with pikes, that were left in Aughrim stretched in ridges—Och ochone !

‘ Who is that beyond on the hill, Beinn Edair ? I a poor soldier with King James. I was last year in arms and in dress, but this year I am asking alms—Och ochone ! ’

There are other symbolic songs besides the ‘ Visions.’ Mangan’s fine translation of Kathleen ni Houlihan is well known ; and it is likely the king is calling to Ireland in ‘ *Ceann dubh deelish*’ that is beautiful in all translations. This is *An Craoibhin’s* : —

‘ The women of the village are in madness and trouble,
Pulling their hair and letting it go with the wind ;
They will not take a boy of the men of the country
Till they go into the rout with the boys of the king.

‘ Black head, darling, darling, darling.
Black head, darling, move over to me ;
Black head brighter than swan and than seagull.
It’s a man without heart gives not love to thee.’

But most of the translations have been in the affected style of the early part of the last century, twisting the sense to give what was thought to be a romantic turn. A verse of Seagan Clarach's, for instance, the lament of a farmer 'who has been wrestling with the world': 'The two that belong to me are without shelter, and my yoke of cattle without grass, without growth ; there is misery on my people, and their elbows without sound clothes,' is turned into : —

‘ The loved ones my life would have nourished
Are foodless, and bare, and cold.
My flocks by their fountain that flourished
Decay on the mountain wold.’

But there is one mistranslation for whose sake we must forgive many others, for it has given the sad refrain that has often been on Irish lips : —

‘ Seagan O’Dwyer a Gleanna,
We’re worsted in the game !’

Here are one or two of the many verses sung to the Little Black Rose by her lovers, poor or royal : —

‘ There is love through and through me for you all the length of a year; sore love, vexing love, lasting love, love that left me without health, without a road, without running ; and for ever, ever, without any sway at all over my Fair Black Rose.

‘ I would travel through Munster with you, and the boundaries of the hills, if I thought I could find your secret, or a part of your love. O branch of the tree, it seems to me that you love me ; that the flower of kind women is my Fair Black Rose.’

‘ My heart leaps up with my bright Stuart !’ James and Charles are, I think, the only English kings whose names, as it were by accident, have found their way into Irish song. And it is likely they are the last to find a place there, for the imagination of Ireland still tilts the beam to the national side ; and the loyalty the poets of many hundred years have called for, is loyalty to Kathleen ni Houlihan. ‘ Have they not given her their wills, and their hearts, and their dreams ? What have they left for any less noble Royalty ?’

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