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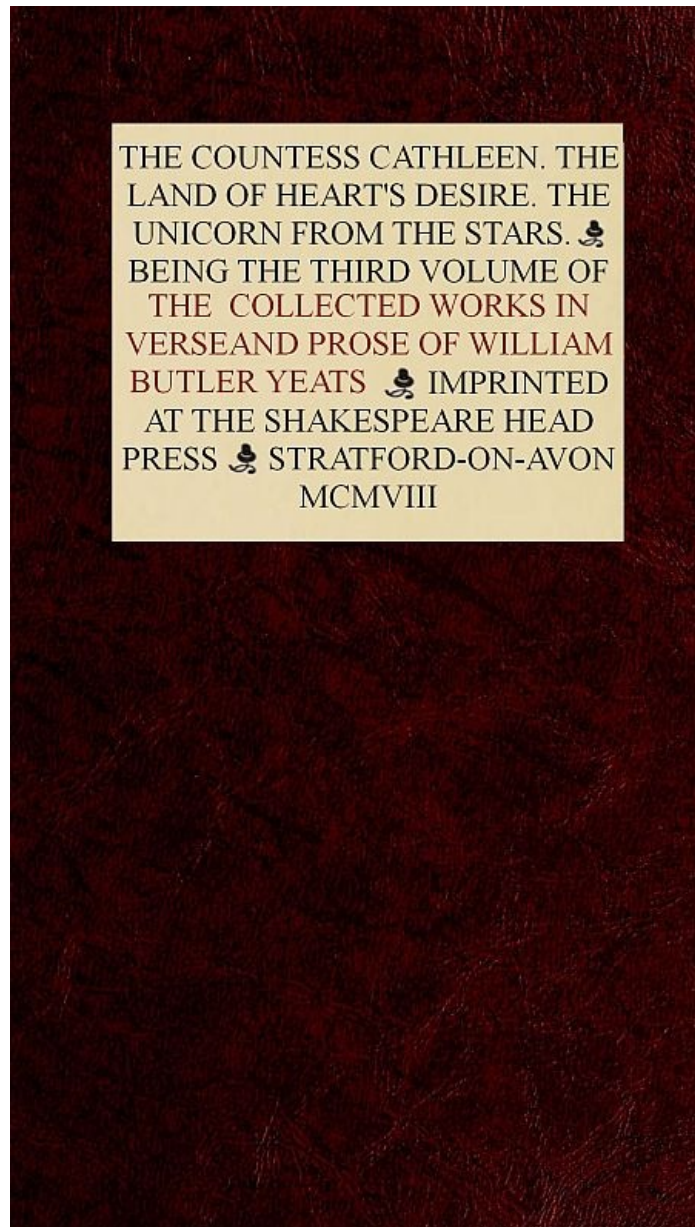
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**THE COLLECTED WORKS OF  
WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS**

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Emerg Walker, Pa. sc.

*From a picture by Charles Shannon*

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**THE COUNTESS CATHLEEN. THE  
LAND OF HEART'S DESIRE. THE  
UNICORN FROM THE STARS ♪ BEING  
THE THIRD VOLUME OF THE  
COLLECTED WORKS IN VERSE  
AND PROSE OF WILLIAM BUTLER  
YEATS ♪ IMPRINTED AT THE  
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STRATFORD-ON-AVON  
MCMVIII**

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*'The sorrowful are dumb for thee.'*  
Lament of MORION SHEHONE for MISS MARY  
BOURKE.

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***PERSONS IN THE PLAY***

[4]

[5]

SHEMUS RUA, *a peasant*

TEIG, *his son*

ALEEL, *a young bard*

MAURTEEN, *a gardener*

THE COUNTESS CATHLEEN

OONA, *her foster-mother*

MAIRE, *wife of Shemus Rua*

TWO DEMONS *disguised as merchants*

MUSICIANS

PEASANTS, SERVANTS, &c.

ANGELICAL BEINGS, SPIRITS, AND FAERIES

*The scene is laid in Ireland, and in old times.*

---



## ACT I.

*The cottage of SHEMUS REA. The door into the open air is at right side of room. There is a window at one side of the door, and a little shrine of the Virgin Mother at the other. At the back is a door opening into a bedroom, and at the left side of the room a pantry door. A wood of oak, beech, hazel, and quicken is seen through the window half hidden in vapour and twilight.*  
MAIRE *watches* TEIG, *who fills a pot with water. He stops as if to listen, and spills some of the water.*

MAIRE.

You are all thumbs.

TEIG.

Hear how the dog bays, mother,  
And how the gray hen flutters in the coop.  
Strange things are going up and down the land,  
These famine times: by Tubber-vanach crossroads  
A woman met a man with ears spread out,  
And they moved up and down like wings of bats.

[8]

MAIRE.

Shemus stays late.

TEIG.

By Carrick-orus churchyard,  
A herdsman met a man who had no mouth,  
Nor ears, nor eyes: his face a wall of flesh;  
He saw him plainly by the moon.

MAIRE.

*[Going over to the little shrine.]*

White Mary,  
Bring Shemus home out of the wicked woods;  
Save Shemus from the wolves; Shemus is daring;  
And save him from the demons of the woods,  
Who have crept out and wander on the roads,  
Deluding dim-eyed souls now newly dead,  
And those alive who have gone crazed with famine.  
Save him, White Mary Virgin.

TEIG.

And but now  
I thought I heard far-off tympan and harps.  
*[Knocking at the door.]*

[9]

MAIRE.

Shemus has come.

TEIG.

May he bring better food  
Than the lean crow he brought us yesterday.  
*[MAIRE opens the door, and SHEMUS comes in with a dead wolf on his shoulder.]*

MAIRE.

Shemus, you are late home: you have been lounging  
And chattering with some one: you know well  
How the dreams trouble me, and how I pray,  
Yet you lie sweating on the hill from morn,  
Or linger at the crossways with all comers,  
Telling or gathering up calamity.

SHEMUS.

You would rail my head off. Here is a good dinner.  
*[He throws the wolf on the table.]*  
A wolf is better than a carrion crow.  
I searched all day: the mice and rats and hedgehogs  
Seemed to be dead, and I could hardly hear  
A wing moving in all the famished woods,  
Though the dead leaves and clauber of four forests  
Cling to my footsole. I turned home but now,  
And saw, sniffing the floor in a bare cow-house,  
This young wolf here: the crossbow brought him down.

[10]

MAIRE.

Praise be the saints! [After a pause.  
Why did the house dog bay?

SHEMUS.  
He heard me coming and smelt food—what else?

TEIG.  
We will not starve awhile.

SHEMUS.  
What food is within?

TEIG.  
There is a bag half full of meal, a pan  
Half full of milk.

SHEMUS.  
And we have one old hen.

TEIG.  
The bogwood were less hard.

MAIRE.  
Before you came  
She made a great noise in the hencoop, Shemus.  
What fluttered in the window?

TEIG.  
Two horned owls  
Have blinked and fluttered on the window sill  
From when the dog began to bay.

SHEMUS.  
Hush, hush.  
[He fits an arrow to the crossbow, and goes towards the door. A  
sudden burst of music without.  
They are off again: ladies or gentlemen  
Travel in the woods with tympan and with harp.  
Teig, put the wolf upon the biggest hook  
And shut the door.

[TEIG goes into the cupboard with the wolf: returns and fastens the  
door behind him.

Sit on the creepy stool  
And call up a whey face and a crying voice,  
And let your head be bowed upon your knees.  
[He opens the door of the cabin.  
Come in, your honours: a full score of evenings  
This threshold worn away by many a foot  
Has been passed only by the snails and birds  
And by our own poor hunger-shaken feet.

[The COUNTESS CATHLEEN, ALEEL, who carries a small square harp,  
OONA, and a little group of fantastically dressed musicians  
come in.

CATHLEEN.  
Are you so hungry?

TEIG.  
[From beside the fire.]  
Lady, I fell but now,  
And lay upon the threshold like a log.  
I have not tasted a crust for these four days.  
[The COUNTESS CATHLEEN empties her purse on to the table.

CATHLEEN.  
Had I more money I would give it you,  
But we have passed by many cabins to-day;  
And if you come to-morrow to my house  
You shall have twice the sum. I am the owner  
Of a long empty castle in these woods.

MAIRE.  
Then you are Countess Cathleen: you and yours  
Are ever welcome under my poor thatch.  
Will you sit down and warm you by the sods?

CATHLEEN.

[11]

[12]

[13]

We must find out this castle in the wood  
Before the chill o' the night.  
[*The musicians begin to tune their instruments.*

Do not blame me,  
Good woman, for the tympan and the harp:  
I was bid fly the terror of the times  
And wrap me round with music and sweet song  
Or else pine to my grave. I have lost my way;  
Aleel, the poet, who should know these woods,  
Because we met him on their border but now  
Wandering and singing like the foam of the sea,  
Is so wrapped up in dreams of terrors to come  
That he can give no help.

MAIRE.  
[*Going to the door with her.*]

You're almost there.  
There is a trodden way among the hazels  
That brings your servants to their marketing.

[14]

ALEEL.  
When we are gone draw to the door and the bolt,  
For, till we lost them half an hour ago,  
Two gray horned owls hooted above our heads  
Of terrors to come. Tympan and harp awake!  
For though the world drift from us like a sigh,  
Music is master of all under the moon;  
And play 'The Wind that blows by Cummen Strand.'  
[*Music.*

[*Sings.*]  
*Impetuous heart, be still, be still:  
Your sorrowful love may never be told;  
Cover it up with a lonely tune.  
He who could bend all things to His will  
Has covered the door of the infinite fold  
With the pale stars and the wandering moon.*  
[*While he is singing the* COUNTESS CATHLEEN, OONA, *and the  
musicians go out.*

ALEEL.  
Shut to the door and shut the woods away,  
For, till they had vanished in the thick of the leaves,  
Two gray horned owls hooted above our heads.  
[*He goes out.*

[15]

MAIRE.  
[*Bolting the door.*]  
When wealthy and wise folk wander from their peace  
And fear wood things, poor folk may draw the bolt  
And pray before the fire.  
[*SHEMUS counts out the money, and rings a piece upon the table.*

SHEMUS.  
The Mother of God,  
Hushed by the waving of the immortal wings,  
Has dropped in a doze and cannot hear the poor:  
I passed by Margaret Nolan's; for nine days  
Her mouth was green with dock and dandelion;  
And now they wake her.

MAIRE.  
I will go the next;  
Our parents' cabins bordered the same field.

SHEMUS.  
God, and the Mother of God, have dropped asleep,  
For they are weary of the prayers and candles;  
But Satan pours the famine from his bag,  
And I am mindful to go pray to him  
To cover all this table with red gold.  
Teig, will you dare me to it?

[16]

TEIG.  
Not I, father.

MAIRE.  
O Shemus, hush, maybe your mind might pray  
In spite o' the mouth.

SHEMUS.  
Two crowns and twenty pennies.

MAIRE.  
Is yonder quicken wood?

SHEMUS.  
[*Picking the bough from the table.*]

He swayed about,  
And so I tied him to a quicken bough  
And slung him from my shoulder.

MAIRE. [17]  
[*Taking the bough from him.*]  
Shemus! Shemus!  
What, would you burn the blessed quicken wood?  
A spell to ward off demons and ill faeries.  
You know not what the owls were that peeped in,  
For evil wonders live in this old wood,  
And they can show in what shape please them best.  
And we have had no milk to leave of nights  
To keep our own good people kind to us.  
And Aleel, who has talked with the great Sidhe,  
Is full of terrors to come.

[*She lays the bough on a chair.*]

SHEMUS.  
I would eat my supper  
With no less mirth if squatting by the hearth  
Were dulacaun or demon of the pit  
Clawing its knees, its hoof among the ashes.  
[*He rings another piece of money. A sound of footsteps outside the door.*]

MAIRE. [18]  
Who knows what evil you have brought to us?  
I fear the wood things, Shemus.  
[*A knock at the door.*]  
Do not open.

SHEMUS.  
A crown and twenty pennies are not enough  
To stop the hole that lets the famine in.  
[*The little shrine falls.*]

MAIRE.  
Look! look!

SHEMUS.  
[*Crushing it underfoot.*]  
The Mother of God has dropped asleep,  
And all her household things have gone to wrack.

MAIRE.  
O Mary, Mother of God, be pitiful!  
[SHEMUS *opens the door.* TWO MERCHANTS *stand without. They have bands of gold round their foreheads, and each carries a bag upon his shoulder.*]

FIRST MERCHANT.  
Have you food here?

SHEMUS.  
For those who can pay well.

SECOND MERCHANT. [19]  
We are rich merchants seeking merchandise.

SHEMUS.  
Come in, your honours.

MAIRE.

No, do not come in:  
We have no food, not even for ourselves.

FIRST MERCHANT.  
There is a wolf on the big hook in the cupboard.  
[*They enter.*]

SHEMUS.  
Forgive her: she is not used to quality,  
And is half crazed with being much alone.  
How did you know I had taken a young wolf?  
Fine wholesome food, though maybe somewhat strong.  
[*The SECOND MERCHANT sits down by the fire and begins rubbing his hands. The FIRST MERCHANT stands looking at the quicken bough on the chair.*]

FIRST MERCHANT.  
I would rest here: the night is somewhat chilly, [20]  
And my feet footsore going up and down  
From land to land and nation unto nation:  
The fire burns dimly; feed it with this bough.  
[*SHEMUS throws the bough into the fire. The FIRST MERCHANT sits down on the chair. The MERCHANTS' chairs are on each side of the fire. The table is between them. Each lays his bag before him on the table. The night has closed in somewhat, and the main light comes from the fire.*]

MAIRE.  
What have you in the bags?

SHEMUS.  
Don't mind her, sir:  
Women grow curious and feather-thoughted  
Through being in each other's company  
More than is good for them.

FIRST MERCHANT.  
Our bags are full  
Of golden pieces to buy merchandise.  
[*They pour gold pieces on to the table out of their bags. It is covered with the gold pieces. They shine in the firelight.*  
MAIRE goes to the door of pantry, and watches the  
MERCHANTS, muttering to herself.

TEIG. [21]  
These are great gentlemen.

FIRST MERCHANT.  
[*Taking a stone bottle out of his bag.*]  
Come to the fire,  
Here is the headiest wine you ever tasted.

SECOND MERCHANT.  
Wine that can hush asleep the petty war  
Of good and evil, and awake instead  
A scented flame flickering above that peace  
The bird of prey knows well in his deep heart.

SHEMUS.  
[*Bringing drinking-cups.*]  
I do not understand you, but your wine  
Sets me athirst: its praise made your eyes lighten.  
I am thirsting for it.

FIRST MERCHANT.  
Ay, come drink and drink,  
I bless all mortals who drink long and deep.  
My curse upon the salt-strewn road of monks.  
[*TEIG and SHEMUS sit down at the table and drink.*] [22]

TEIG.  
You must have seen rare sights and done rare things.

FIRST MERCHANT.

What think you of the master whom we serve?

SHEMUS.

I have grown weary of my days in the world  
Because I do not serve him.

FIRST MERCHANT.

More of this

When we have eaten, for we love right well  
A merry meal, a warm and leaping fire  
And easy hearts.

SHEMUS.

Come, Maire, and cook the wolf.

MAIRE.

I will not cook for you.

SHEMUS.

Maire is mad.

[TEIG *and* SHEMUS *stand up and stagger about.*

SHEMUS.

That wine is the suddenest wine man ever tasted.

MAIRE.

I will not cook for you: you are not human:  
Before you came two horned owls looked at us;  
The dog bayed, and the tongue of Shemus maddened.  
When you came in the Virgin's blessed shrine  
Fell from its nail, and when you sat down here  
You poured out wine as the wood sidheogs do  
When they'd entice a soul out of the world.  
Why did you come to us? Was not death near?

[23]

FIRST MERCHANT.

We are two merchants.

MAIRE.

If you be not demons,  
Go and give alms among the starving poor,  
You seem more rich than any under the moon.

FIRST MERCHANT.

If we knew where to find deserving poor,  
We would give alms.

MAIRE.

Then ask of Father John.

FIRST MERCHANT.

We know the evils of mere charity,  
And have been planning out a wiser way.  
Let each man bring one piece of merchandise.

[24]

MAIRE.

And have the starving any merchandise?

FIRST MERCHANT.

We do but ask what each man has.

MAIRE.

Merchants,  
Their swine and cattle, fields and implements,  
Are sold and gone.

FIRST MERCHANT.

They have not sold all yet.

MAIRE.

What have they?

FIRST MERCHANT.

They have still their souls.

[MAIRE *shrieks. He beckons to* TEIG *and* SHEMUS.

Come hither.

See you these little golden heaps? Each one

[25]



Is payment for a soul. From charity  
We give so great a price for those poor flames.  
Say to all men we buy men's souls—away.

[*They do not stir.*  
This pile is for you and this one here for you.

MAIRE.  
Shemus and Teig, Teig—

TEIG.  
Out of the way.  
[SHEMUS *and* TEIG *take the money.*

FIRST MERCHANT.  
Cry out at cross-roads and at chapel doors  
And market-places that we buy men's souls,  
Giving so great a price that men may live  
In mirth and ease until the famine ends.  
[TEIG *and* SHEMUS *go out.*

MAIRE [*kneeling*].  
Destroyers of souls, may God destroy you quickly!

FIRST MERCHANT.  
No curse can overthrow the immortal demons.

MAIRE.  
You shall at last dry like dry leaves, and hang  
Nailed like dead vermin to the doors of God.

FIRST MERCHANT.  
You shall be ours. This famine shall not cease.  
You shall eat grass, and dock, and dandelion,  
And fail till this stone threshold seem a wall,  
And when your hands can scarcely drag your body  
We shall be near you.

[*To* SECOND MERCHANT.  
Bring the meal out.  
[*The* SECOND MERCHANT *brings the bag of meal from the*  
*pantry.*

Burn it. [MAIRE *faints.*  
Now she has swooned, our faces go unscratched;  
Bring me the gray hen, too.

*The* SECOND MERCHANT *goes out through the door and returns*  
*with the hen strangled. He flings it on the floor. While*  
*he is away the* FIRST MERCHANT *makes up the fire. The*  
*FIRST MERCHANT then fetches the pan of milk from the*  
*pantry, and spills it on the ground. He returns, and*  
*brings out the wolf, and throws it down by the hen.*

These need much burning.  
This stool and this chair here will make good fuel.

[*He begins breaking the chair.*  
My master will break up the sun and moon  
And quench the stars in the ancestral night  
And overturn the thrones of God and the angels.

[26]

[27]

*A great hall in the castle of the COUNTESS CATHLEEN. There is a large window at the farther end, through which the forest is visible. The wall to the right juts out slightly, cutting off an angle of the room. A flight of stone steps leads up to a small arched door in the jutting wall. Through the door can be seen a little oratory. The hall is hung with ancient tapestry, representing the loves and wars and huntings of the Fenian and Red Branch heroes. There are doors to the right and left. On the left side OONA sits, as if asleep, beside a spinning-wheel. The COUNTESS CATHLEEN stands farther back and more to the right, close to a group of the musicians, still in their fantastic dresses, who are playing a merry tune.*

CATHLEEN.

Be silent, I am tired of tympan and harp,  
And tired of music that but cries 'Sleep, sleep,'  
Till joy and sorrow and hope and terror are gone.  
[*The COUNTESS CATHLEEN goes over to OONA.*  
You were asleep?

[29]

OONA.

No, child, I was but thinking  
Why you have grown so sad.

CATHLEEN.

The famine frets me.

OONA.

I have lived now near ninety winters, child,  
And I have known three things no doctor cures—  
Love, loneliness, and famine; nor found refuge  
Other than growing old and full of sleep.  
See you where Oisín and young Niamh ride  
Wrapped in each other's arms, and where the Fenians  
Follow their hounds along the fields of tapestry;  
How merry they lived once, yet men died then.  
Sit down by me, and I will chaunt the song  
About the Danaan nations in their raths  
That Aleel sang for you by the great door  
Before we lost him in the shadow of leaves.

CATHLEEN.

No, sing the song he sang in the dim light,  
When we first found him in the shadow of leaves,  
About King Fergus in his brazen car  
Driving with troops of dancers through the woods.  
[*She crouches down on the floor, and lays her head on OONA'S  
knees.*

[30]

OONA.

Dear heart, make a soft cradle of old tales,  
And songs, and music: wherefore should you sadden  
For wrongs you cannot hinder? The great God  
Smiling condemns the lost: be mirthful: He  
Bids youth be merry and old age be wise.

CATHLEEN.

Tympan and harp awaken wandering dreams.

A VOICE [*without*].

You may not see the Countess.

ANOTHER VOICE.

I must see her.

[*Sound of a short struggle. A SERVANT enters from door to R.*

SERVANT.

The gardener is resolved to speak with you.  
I cannot stay him.

[31]

CATHLEEN.

You may come, Maurteen.

[*The GARDENER, an old man, comes in from the R., and the SERVANT  
goes out.*

GARDENER.

Forgive my working clothes and the dirt on me.  
I bring ill words, your ladyship,—too bad

To send with any other.

CATHLEEN.

These bad times,  
Can any news be bad or any good?

GARDENER.

A crowd of ugly lean-faced rogues last night—  
And may God curse them!—climbed the garden wall.  
There is scarce an apple now on twenty trees,  
And my asparagus and strawberry beds  
Are trampled into clauber, and the boughs  
Of peach and plum-trees broken and torn down  
For some last fruit that hung there. My dog, too,  
My old blind Simon, him who had no tail,  
They murdered—God's red anger seize them!

[32]

CATHLEEN.

I know how pears and all the tribe of apples  
Are daily in your love—how this ill chance  
Is sudden doomsday fallen on your year;  
So do not say no matter. I but say  
I blame the famished season, and not you.  
Then be not troubled.

GARDENER.

I thank your ladyship.

CATHLEEN.

What rumours and what portents of the famine?

GARDENER.

The yellow vapour, in whose folds it came,  
That creeps along the hedges at nightfall,  
Rots all the heart out of my cabbages.  
I pray against it.

*[He goes towards the door, then pauses.*

*If her ladyship*

Would give me an old crossbow, I would watch  
Behind a bush and guard the pears of nights  
And make a hole in somebody I know of.

[33]

CATHLEEN.

They will give you a long draught of ale below.  
*[The GARDENER goes out.*

OONA.

What did he say?—he stood on my deaf side.

CATHLEEN.

His apples are all stolen. Pruning time,  
And the slow ripening of his pears and apples,  
For him is a long, heart-moving history.

OONA.

Now lay your head once more upon my knees.  
I will sing how Fergus drove his brazen cars.

*[She chaunts with the thin voice of age.*

*Who will go drive with Fergus now,  
And pierce the deep woods' woven shade,  
And dance upon the level shore?*

*Young man, lift up your russet brow,  
And lift your tender eyelids, maid,*

*And brood on hopes and fears no more.*

You have dropped down again into your trouble.  
You do not hear me.

[34]

CATHLEEN.

Ah, sing on, old Oona,  
I hear the horn of Fergus in my heart.

OONA.

I do not know the meaning of the song.  
I am too old.

CATHLEEN.

The horn is calling, calling.

OONA.  
*And no more turn aside and brood  
Upon Love's bitter mystery;  
For Fergus rules the brazen cars,  
And rules the shadows of the wood,  
And the white breast of the dim sea  
And all dishevelled wandering stars.*

THE SERVANT'S VOICE [*without*].  
The Countess Cathleen must not be disturbed.

ANOTHER VOICE.  
Man, I must see her.

CATHLEEN.  
Who now wants me, Paudeen?

SERVANT [*from the door*].  
A herdsman and his history.

CATHLEEN.  
He may come.  
[*The HERDSMAN enters from the door to R.*

HERDSMAN.  
Forgive this dusty gear: I have come far.  
My sheep were taken from the fold last night.  
You will be angry: I am not to blame.  
But blame these robbing times.

CATHLEEN.  
No blame's with you.  
I blame the famine.

HERDSMAN.  
Kneeling, I give thanks.  
When gazing on your face, the poorest, Lady,  
Forget their poverty, the rich their care.

CATHLEEN.  
What rumours and what portents of the famine?

HERDSMAN.  
As I came down the lane by Tubber-vanach  
A boy and man sat cross-legged on two stones,  
With moving hands and faces famine-thin,  
Gabbling to crowds of men and wives and boys  
Of how two merchants at a house in the woods  
Buy souls for hell, giving so great a price  
That men may live through all the dearth in plenty.  
The vales are famine-crazy—I am right glad  
My home is on the mountain near to God.  
[*He turns to go.*

CATHLEEN.  
They will give you ale and meat before you go.  
You must have risen at dawn to come so far.  
Keep your bare mountain—let the world drift by,  
The burden of its wrongs rests not on you.

HERDSMAN.  
I am content to serve your ladyship.  
[*He goes.*

OONA.  
What did he say?—he stood on my deaf side.  
He seemed to give you word of woful things.

CATHLEEN.  
A story born out of the dreaming eyes  
And crazy brain and credulous ears of famine.  
O, I am sadder than an old air, Oona,  
My heart is longing for a deeper peace  
Than Fergus found amid his brazen cars:  
Would that like Edain my first forebear's daughter,  
Who followed once a twilight's piercing tune,  
I could go down and dwell among the Sidhe

[35]

[36]

[37]

In their old ever-busy honeyed land.

OONA.

You should not say such things—they bring ill-luck.

CATHLEEN.

The image of young Edain on the arras,  
Walking along, one finger lifted up;  
And that wild song of the unending dance  
Of the dim Danaan nations in their raths,  
Young Aleel sang for me by the great door,  
Before we lost him in the shadow of leaves,  
Have filled me full of all these wicked words.

[*The SERVANT enters hastily, followed by three men. Two are peasants.*

SERVANT.

The steward of the castle brings two men  
To talk with you.

STEWARD.

And tell the strangest story  
The mouth of man has uttered.

[38]

CATHLEEN.

More food taken;  
Yet learned theologians have laid down  
That he who has no food, offending no way,  
May take his meat and bread from too-full larders.

FIRST PEASANT.

We come to make amends for robbery.  
I stole five hundred apples from your trees,  
And laid them in a hole; and my friend here  
Last night stole two large mountain sheep of yours  
And hung them on a beam under his thatch.

SECOND PEASANT.

His words are true.

FIRST PEASANT.

Since then our luck has changed.  
As I came down the lane by Tubber-vanach  
I fell on Shemus Rua and his son,  
And they led me where two great gentlemen  
Buy souls for money, and they bought my soul.  
I told my friend here—my friend also trafficked.

[39]

SECOND PEASANT.

His words are true.

FIRST PEASANT.

Now people throng to sell,  
Noisy as seagulls tearing a dead fish.  
There soon will be no man or woman's soul  
Unbargained for in fivescore baronies.

SECOND PEASANT.

His words are true.

FIRST PEASANT.

When we had sold we talked,  
And having no more comfortable life  
Than this that makes us warm—our souls being bartered  
For all this money—

SECOND PEASANT.

And this money here.

[*They bring handfuls of money from their pockets. CATHLEEN starts up.*

FIRST PEASANT.

And fearing much to hang for robbery,  
We come to pay you for the sheep and fruit.  
How do you price them?

[40]

CATHLEEN.

Gather up your money.  
Think you that I would touch the demons' gold?  
Begone, give twice, thrice, twenty times their money,  
And buy your souls again. I will pay all.

FIRST PEASANT.

We will not buy our souls again: a soul  
But keeps the flesh out of its merriment.  
We shall be merry and drunk from moon to moon.  
Keep from our way. Let no one stop our way.  
[*They go.*]

CATHLEEN [*to servant*].

Follow and bring them here again—beseech them.  
[*The SERVANT goes.*]

[*To STEWARD.*]

Steward, you know the secrets of this house.  
How much have I in gold?

STEWARD.  
A hundred thousand.

CATHLEEN.  
How much have I in castles?

STEWARD.  
As much more.

CATHLEEN.  
How much have I in pastures?

STEWARD.  
As much more.

CATHLEEN.  
How much have I in forests?

STEWARD.  
As much more.

CATHLEEN.  
Keeping this house alone, sell all I have;  
Go to some distant country and come again  
With many herds of cows and ships of grain.

STEWARD.  
God's blessing light upon your ladyship;  
You will have saved the land.

CATHLEEN.  
Make no delay.  
[*He goes.*]

[*Enter SERVANT.*]

How did you thrive? Say quickly. You are pale.

SERVANT.  
Their eyes burn like the eyes of birds of prey:  
I did not dare go near.

CATHLEEN.  
God pity them!  
Bring all the old and ailing to this house,  
For I will have no sorrow of my own  
From this day onward.

[*The SERVANT goes out. Some of the musicians follow him, some  
linger in the doorway. The COUNTESS CATHLEEN kneels beside*

OONA.  
Can you tell me, mother,  
How I may mend the times, how staunch this wound  
That bleeds in the earth, how overturn the famine,  
How drive these demons to their darkness again?

OONA.  
The demons hold our hearts between their hands,

[41]

[42]

[43]

For the apple is in our blood, and though heart break  
There is no medicine but Michael's trump.  
Till it has ended parting and old age  
And hail and rain and famine and foolish laughter;  
The dead are happy, the dust is in their ears.

---

*Hall of the* COUNTESS CATHLEEN *as before.* SERVANT *enters and goes towards the oratory door.*

SERVANT.

Here is yet another would see your ladyship.

CATHLEEN [*within*].

Who calls me?

SERVANT.

There is a man would speak with you,  
And by his face he has some pressing news,  
Some moving tale.

CATHLEEN [*coming to chapel door*].

I cannot rest or pray,  
For all day long the messengers run hither  
On one another's heels, and every message  
More evil than the one that had gone before.  
Who is the messenger?

SERVANT.

Aleel, the poet.

[45]

CATHLEEN.

There is no hour he is not welcome to me,  
Because I know of nothing but a harp-string  
That can remember happiness.

[SERVANT *goes out and* ALEEL *comes in.*

And now

I grow forgetful of evil for awhile.

ALEEL.

I have come to bid you leave this castle, and fly  
Out of these woods.

CATHLEEN.

What evil is there here,  
That is not everywhere from this to the sea?

ALEEL.

They who have sent me walk invisible.

CATHLEEN.

Men say that the wise people of the raths  
Have given you wisdom.

ALEEL.

I lay in the dusk  
Upon the grassy margin of a lake  
Among the hills, where none of mortal creatures  
But the swan comes—my sleep became a fire.  
One walked in the fire with birds about his head.

[46]

CATHLEEN.

Ay, Aengus of the birds.

ALEEL.

He may be Aengus,  
But it may be he bears an angelical name.  
Lady, he bid me call you from these woods;  
He bids you bring Oona, your foster-mother,  
And some few serving-men and live in the hills  
Among the sounds of music and the light  
Of waters till the evil days are gone.

[*He kneels.*]

For here some terrible death is waiting you;  
Some unimaginable evil, some great darkness  
That fable has not dreamt of, nor sun nor moon  
Scattered.

CATHLEEN.

And he had birds about his head?

ALEEL.



Yes, yes, white birds. He bids you leave this house  
With some old trusty serving-man, who will feed  
All that are starving and shelter all that wander  
While there is food and house-room.

[47]

CATHLEEN.

He bids me go  
Where none of mortal creatures but the swan  
Dabbles, and there you would pluck the harp when the trees  
Had made a heavy shadow about our door,  
And talk among the rustling of the reeds  
When night hunted the foolish sun away,  
With stillness and pale tapers. No—no—no.  
I cannot. Although I weep, I do not weep  
Because that life would be most happy, and here  
I find no way, no end. Nor do I weep  
Because I had longed to look upon your face,  
But that a night of prayer has made me weary.

ALEEL.

[*Throwing his arms about her feet.*]  
Let Him that made mankind, the angels and devils  
And death and plenty mend what He has made,  
For when we labour in vain and eye still sees  
Heart breaks in vain.

CATHLEEN.

How would that quiet end?

ALEEL.

How but in healing?

[48]

CATHLEEN.

You have seen my tears.  
And I can see your hand shake on the floor.

ALEEL [*faltering*].

I thought but of healing. He was angelical.

CATHLEEN.

[*Turning away from him.*]  
No, not angelical, but of the old gods,  
Who wander about the world to waken the heart—  
The passionate, proud heart that all the angels  
Leaving nine heavens empty would rock to sleep.  
[*She goes to the chapel door; ALEEL holds his clasped hands  
towards her for a moment hesitatingly, and then lets them  
fall beside him.*]  
Do not hold out to me beseeching hands.  
This heart shall never waken on earth. I have sworn  
By her whose heart the seven sorrows have pierced  
To pray before this altar until my heart  
Has grown to Heaven like a tree, and there  
Rustled its leaves till Heaven has saved my people.

[49]

ALEEL [*who has risen*].

When one so great has spoken of love to one  
So little as I, although to deny him love,  
What can he but hold out beseeching hands,  
Then let them fall beside him, knowing how greatly  
They have overdared?

[*He goes towards the door of the hall. The COUNTESS CATHLEEN  
takes a few steps towards him.*]

CATHLEEN.

If the old tales are true,  
Queens have wed shepherds and kings beggar-maids;  
God's procreant waters flowing about your mind  
Have made you more than kings or queens; and not you  
But I am the empty pitcher.

ALEEL.

Being silent,  
I have said all—farewell, farewell; and yet no,  
Give me your hand to kiss.

[50]

CATHLEEN.

I kiss your brow,  
But will not say farewell. I am often weary,  
And I would hear the harp-string.

ALEEL.

I cannot stay,  
For I would hide my sorrow among the hills—  
Listen, listen, the hills are calling me.  
[*They listen for a moment.*]

CATHLEEN.

I hear the cry of curlew.

ALEEL.

Then I will out  
Where I can hear wind cry and water cry  
And curlew cry: how does the saying go  
That calls them the three oldest cries in the world?  
Farewell, farewell, I will go wander among them,  
Because there is no comfort under a roof-tree.  
[*He goes out.*]

CATHLEEN.

[*Looking through the door after him.*]  
I cannot see him. He has come to the great door.  
I must go pray. Would that my heart and mind  
Were as little shaken as this candle-light.  
[*She goes into the chapel. The TWO MERCHANTS*  
*enter.*]

SECOND MERCHANT.

Who was the man that came from the great door  
While we were still in the shadow?

FIRST MERCHANT.

Aleel, her lover.

SECOND MERCHANT.

It may be that he has turned her thought from us  
And we can gather our merchandise in peace.

FIRST MERCHANT.

No, no, for she is kneeling.

SECOND MERCHANT.

Shut the door.  
Are all our drudges here?

FIRST MERCHANT.

[*Closing the chapel door.*]  
I bid them follow.  
Can you not hear them breathing upon the stairs?  
I have sat this hour under the elder-tree.

SECOND MERCHANT.

I had bid you rob her treasury, and yet  
I found you sitting drowsed and motionless,  
Your chin bowed to your knees, while on all sides,  
Bat-like from bough and roof and window-ledge,  
Clung evil souls of men, and in the woods,  
Like streaming flames, floated upon the winds  
The elemental creatures.

FIRST MERCHANT.

I have fared ill;  
She prayed so hard I could not cross the threshold  
Till this young man had turned her prayer to dreams.  
You have had a man to kill: how have you fared?

SECOND MERCHANT.

I lay in the image of a nine-monthed bonyeen,  
By Tubber-vanach cross-roads: Father John  
Came, sad and moody, murmuring many prayers;  
I seemed as though I came from his own sty;  
He saw the one brown ear; the breviary dropped;  
He ran; I ran, I ran into the quarry;

[51]

[52]

He fell a score of yards.

FIRST MERCHANT.

Now that he is dead  
We shall be too much thronged with souls to-morrow.  
Did his soul escape you?

SECOND MERCHANT.

I thrust it in the bag.  
But the hand that blessed the poor and raised the Host  
Tore through the leather with sharp piety.

FIRST MERCHANT.

Well, well, to labour—here is the treasury door.  
[*They go out by the left-hand door, and enter again in a little while, carrying full bags upon their shoulders.*]

[53]

FIRST MERCHANT.

Brave thought, brave thought—a shining thought of mine!  
She now no more may bribe the poor—no more  
Cheat our great master of his merchandise,  
While our heels dangle at the house in the woods,  
And grass grows on the threshold, and snails crawl  
Along the window-pane and the mud floor.  
Brother, where wander all these dwarfish folk,  
Hostile to men, the people of the tides?

SECOND MERCHANT.

[*Going to the door.*]  
They are gone. They have already wandered away,  
Unwilling labourers.

FIRST MERCHANT.

I will call them hither.  
[*He opens the window.*]  
Come hither, hither, hither, water-folk:  
Come, all you elemental populace;  
Leave lonely the long-boarding surges: leave  
The cymbals of the waves to clash alone,  
And, shaking the sea-tangles from your hair,  
Gather about us. [After a pause.]

[54]

I can hear a sound  
As from waves beating upon distant strands;  
And the sea-creatures, like a surf of light,  
Pour eddying through the pathways of the oaks;  
And as they come, the sentient grass and leaves  
Bow towards them, and the tall, drouth-jaded oaks  
Fondle the murmur of their flying feet.

SECOND MERCHANT.

The green things love unknotted hearts and minds;  
And neither one with angels or with us,  
Nor risen in arms with evil nor with good,  
In laughter roves the litter of the waves.  
[*A crowd of faces fill up the darkness outside the window. A figure separates from the others and speaks.*]

THE SPIRIT.

We come unwillingly, for she whose gold  
We must now carry to the house in the woods  
Is dear to all our race. On the green plain,  
Beside the sea, a hundred shepherds live  
To mind her sheep; and when the nightfall comes  
They leave a hundred pans of white ewes' milk  
Outside their doors, to feed us when the dawn  
Has driven us out of Finbar's ancient house,  
And broken the long dance under the hill.

FIRST MERCHANT.

[*Making a sign upon the air.*]  
Obey! I make a sign upon your hearts.

[55]

THE SPIRIT.

The sign of evil burns upon our hearts,  
And we obey.  
[*They crowd through the window, and take out of the bags a small*

*bag each. They are dressed in green robes and have ruddy hair. They are a little less than the size of men and women.*

FIRST MERCHANT.

And now begone—begone! [*They go.*  
I bid them go, for, being garrulous  
And flighty creatures, they had soon begun  
To deafen us with their sea-gossip. Now  
We must go bring more money. Brother, brother,  
I long to see my master's face again,  
For I turn homesick.

SECOND MERCHANT.

I too tire of toil.  
[*They go out, and return as before, with their bags full.*

SECOND MERCHANT.

[*Pointing to the oratory.*]  
How may we gain this woman for our lord?  
This pearl, this turquoise fastened in his crown  
Would make it shine like His we dare not name. [56]  
Now that the winds are heavy with our kind,  
Might we not kill her, and bear off her spirit  
Before the mob of angels were astir?  
[*A diadem and a heap of jewels fall from the bag.*

FIRST MERCHANT.

Who tore the bag?

SECOND MERCHANT.

The finger of Priest John  
When he fled through the leather. I had thought  
Because his was an old and little spirit  
The tear would hardly matter.

FIRST MERCHANT.

This comes, brother,  
Of stealing souls that are not rightly ours.  
If we would win this turquoise for our lord,  
It must go dropping down of its freewill.  
She will have heard the noise. She will stifle us  
With holy names.  
[*He goes to the oratory door and opens it a little, and then closes it.*

No, she has fallen asleep.

SECOND MERCHANT.

The noise wakened the household. While you spoke  
I heard chairs moved, and heard folk's shuffling feet.  
And now they are coming hither.

A VOICE [*within*]. [57]

It was here.

ANOTHER VOICE.

No, further away.

ANOTHER VOICE.

It was in the western tower.

ANOTHER VOICE.

Come quickly; we will search the western tower.

FIRST MERCHANT.

We still have time—they search the distant rooms.  
Call hither the fading and the unfading fires.

SECOND MERCHANT.

[*Going to the window.*]

There are none here. They tired and strayed from hence—  
Unwilling labourers.

FIRST MERCHANT.

I will draw them in.  
[*He cries through the window.*

Come hither, you lost souls of men, who died  
In drunken sleep, and by each other's hands  
When they had bartered you—come hither all  
Who mourn among the scenery of your sins,  
Turning to animal and reptile forms,  
The visages of passions; hither, hither—  
Leave marshes and the reed-encumbered pools,  
You shapeless fires, that were the souls of men,  
And are a fading wretchedness.

[58]

SECOND MERCHANT.

They come not.

FIRST MERCHANT.

[*Making a sign upon the air.*]

Come hither, hither, hither.

SECOND MERCHANT.

I can hear

A crying as of storm-distempered reeds.  
The fading and the unfading fires rise up  
Like steam out of the earth; the grass and leaves  
Shiver and shrink away and sway about,  
Blown by unnatural gusts of ice-cold air.

FIRST MERCHANT.

They are one with all the beings of decay,  
Ill longings, madness, lightning, famine, drouth.

[*The whole stage is gradually filled with vague forms, some  
animal shapes, some human, some mere lights.*]

Come you—and you—and you, and lift these bags.

A SPIRIT.

We are too violent; mere shapes of storm.

FIRST MERCHANT.

Come you—and you—and you, and lift these bags.

A SPIRIT.

We are too feeble, fading out of life.

[59]

FIRST MERCHANT.

Come you, and you, who are the latest dead,  
And still wear human shape: the shape of power.

[*The two robbing peasants of the last scene come forward. Their  
faces have withered from much pain.*]

Now, brawlers, lift the bags of gold.

FIRST PEASANT.

Yes, yes!

Unwillingly, unwillingly; for she,  
Whose gold we bear upon our shoulders thus,  
Has endless pity even for lost souls  
In her good heart. At moments, now and then,  
When plunged in horror, brooding each alone,  
A memory of her face floats in on us.  
It brings a crowned misery, half repose,  
And we wail one to other; we obey,  
For heaven's many-angled star reversed,  
Now sign of evil, burns into our hearts.

FIRST MERCHANT.

When these pale sapphires and these diadems  
And these small bags of money are in our house,  
The burning shall give over—now begone.

SECOND MERCHANT.

[*Lifting the diadem to put it upon his head.*]

No—no—no. I will carry the diadem.

[60]

FIRST MERCHANT.

No, brother, not yet.

For none can carry her treasures wholly away  
But spirits that are too light for good and evil,  
Or, being evil, can remember good.

Begone! [*The spirits vanish.*] I bade them go, for they are lonely,

And when they see aught living love to sigh.  
[*Pointing to the oratory.*] Brother, I heard a sound in there—a sound  
That troubles me.

SECOND MERCHANT.

[*Going to the door of the oratory and peering through it.*]

Upon the altar steps  
The Countess tosses, murmuring in her sleep  
A broken *Paternoster*.

[*The FIRST MERCHANT goes to the door and stands beside him.*]

She is grown still.

FIRST MERCHANT.

A great plan floats into my mind—no wonder,  
For I come from the ninth and mightiest Hell,  
Where all are kings. I will wake her from her sleep,  
And mix with all her thoughts a thought to serve.

[*He calls through the door.*]

May we be well remembered in your prayers!

[*The COUNTESS CATHLEEN wakes, and comes to the door of the oratory. The MERCHANTS descend into the room again. She stands at the top of the stone steps.*]

CATHLEEN.

What would you, sirs?

FIRST MERCHANT.

We are two merchant men,  
New come from foreign lands. We bring you news.  
Forgive our sudden entry: the great door  
Was open, we came in to seek a face.

CATHLEEN.

The door stands always open to receive,  
With kindly welcome, starved and sickly folk,  
Or any who would fly the woful times.  
Merchants, you bring me news?

FIRST MERCHANT.

We saw a man  
Heavy with sickness in the Bog of Allan,  
Whom you had bid buy cattle. Near Fair Head  
We saw your grain ships lying all becalmed  
In the dark night, and not less still than they  
Burned all their mirrored lanthorns in the sea.

CATHLEEN.

My thanks to God, to Mary, and the angels,  
I still have bags of money, and can buy  
Meal from the merchants who have stored it up,  
To prosper on the hunger of the poor.  
You have been far, and know the signs of things:  
When will this yellow vapour no more hang  
And creep about the fields, and this great heat  
Vanish away—and grass show its green shoots?

FIRST MERCHANT.

There is no sign of change—day copies day,  
Green things are dead—the cattle too are dead,  
Or dying—and on all the vapour hangs  
And fattens with disease and glows with heat.  
In you is all the hope of all the land.

CATHLEEN.

And heard you of the demons who buy souls?

FIRST MERCHANT.

There are some men who hold they have wolves' heads,  
And say their limbs, dried by the infinite flame,  
Have all the speed of storms; others again  
Say they are gross and little; while a few  
Will have it they seem much as mortals are,  
But tall and brown and travelled, like us, lady.  
Yet all agree a power is in their looks  
That makes men bow, and flings a casting-net

[61]

[62]

[63]

About their souls, and that all men would go  
And barter those poor flames—their spirits—only  
You bribe them with the safety of your gold.

CATHLEEN.

Praise be to God, to Mary, and the angels,  
That I am wealthy. Wherefore do they sell?

FIRST MERCHANT.

The demons give a hundred crowns and more  
For a poor soul like his who lies asleep  
By your great door under the porter's niche;  
A little soul not worth a hundred pence.  
But, for a soul like yours, I heard them say,  
They would give five hundred thousand crowns and more.

CATHLEEN.

How can a heap of crowns pay for a soul?  
Is the green grave so terrible a thing?

FIRST MERCHANT.

Some sell because the money gleams, and some  
Because they are in terror of the grave,  
And some because their neighbours sold before,  
And some because there is a kind of joy  
In casting hope away, in losing joy,  
In ceasing all resistance, in at last  
Opening one's arms to the eternal flames,  
In casting all sails out upon the wind:  
To this—full of the gaiety of the lost—  
Would all folk hurry if your gold were gone.

[64]

CATHLEEN.

There is a something, merchant, in your voice  
That makes me fear. When you were telling how  
A man may lose his soul and lose his God,  
Your eyes lighted, and the strange weariness  
That hangs about you vanished. When you told  
How my poor money serves the people—both—  
Merchants, forgive me—seemed to smile.

FIRST MERCHANT.

Man's sins  
Move us to laughter only, we have seen  
So many lands and seen so many men.  
How strange that all these people should be swung  
As on a lady's shoe-string—under them  
The glowing leagues of never-ending flame!

CATHLEEN.

There is a something in you that I fear:  
A something not of us. Were you not born  
In some most distant corner of the world?

[*The SECOND MERCHANT, who has been listening at the door to the right, comes forward, and as he comes a sound of voices and feet is heard through the door to his left.*]

SECOND MERCHANT [*aside to FIRST MERCHANT*].

Away now—they are in the passage—hurry,  
For they will know us, and freeze up our hearts  
With Ave Marys, and burn all our skin  
With holy water.

[65]

FIRST MERCHANT.

Farewell: we must ride  
Many a mile before the morning come;  
Our horses beat the ground impatiently.

[*They go out to R. A number of peasants enter at the same moment by the opposite door.*]

CATHLEEN.

What would you?

A PEASANT.

As we nodded by the fire,  
Telling old histories, we heard a noise

Of falling money. We have searched in vain.

CATHLEEN.

You are too timid. I heard naught at all.

THE OLD PEASANT.

Ay, we are timid, for a rich man's word  
Can shake our houses, and a moon of drouth  
Shrivel our seedlings in the barren earth;  
We are the slaves of wind, and hail, and flood;  
Fear jogs our elbow in the market-place,  
And nods beside us on the chimney-seat.  
Ill-bodings are as native unto our hearts  
As are their spots unto the woodpeckers.

[66]

CATHLEEN.

You need not shake with bodings in this house.

[OONA enters from the door to L.

OONA.

The treasure-room is broken in—mavrone—mavrone;  
The door stands open and the gold is gone.

[The peasants raise a lamenting cry.

CATHLEEN.

Be silent. [The cry ceases.

Saw you any one?

OONA.

Mavrone,

That my good mistress should lose all this money.

CATHLEEN.

You three upon my right hand, ride and ride;  
I will give a farm to him who finds the thieves.

[A man with keys at his girdle has entered while she was speaking.

A PEASANT.

The porter trembles.

THE PORTER.

It is all no use;

Demons were here. I sat beside the door  
In my stone niche, and two owls passed me by,  
Whispering with human voices.

THE OLD PEASANT.

God forsakes us.

CATHLEEN.

Old man, old man, He never closed a door  
Unless one opened. I am desolate,  
For a most sad resolve wakes in my heart:  
But always I have faith. Old men and women,  
Be silent; He does not forsake the world,  
But stands before it modelling in the clay  
And moulding there His image. Age by age  
The clay wars with His fingers and pleads hard  
For its old, heavy, dull, and shapeless ease;  
At times it crumbles and a nation falls,  
Now moves awry and demon hordes are born.

[The peasants cross themselves.

But leave me now, for I am desolate,  
I hear a whisper from beyond the thunder.

[She steps down from the oratory door.

Yet stay an instant. When we meet again

I may have grown forgetful. Oona, take  
These two—the larder and the dairy keys.

[To THE OLD PEASANT.] But take you this. It opens the small room  
Of herbs for medicine, of hellebore,  
Of vervain, monkshood, plantain, and self-heal  
And all the others; and the book of cures  
Is on the upper shelf. You understand,  
Because you doctored goats and cattle once.

[68]

THE OLD PEASANT.



Why do you do this, lady—did you see  
Your coffin in a dream?

CATHLEEN.

Ah, no, not that,  
A sad resolve wakes in me. I have heard  
A sound of wailing in unnumbered hovels,  
And I must go down, down, I know not where.  
Pray for the poor folk who are crazed with famine;  
Pray, you good neighbours.

*[The peasants all kneel. The COUNTESS CATHLEEN ascends the steps  
to the door of the oratory, and, turning round, stands there  
motionless for a little, and then cries in a loud voice.]*

Mary, queen of angels,  
And all you clouds on clouds of saints, farewell!

---

*The cabin of SHEMUS RUA. The TWO MERCHANTS are sitting one at each end of the table, with rolls of parchment and many little heaps of gold before them. Through an open door, at the back, one sees into an inner room, in which there is a bed. On the bed is the body of MAIRE with candles about it.*

FIRST MERCHANT.

The woman may keep robbing us no more,  
For there are only mice now in her coffers.

SECOND MERCHANT.

Last night, closed in the image of an owl,  
I hurried to the cliffs of Donegal,  
And saw, creeping on the uneasy surge,  
Those ships that bring the woman grain and meal;  
They are five days from us.

FIRST MERCHANT.

I hurried East,  
A gray owl flitting, flitting in the dew,  
And saw nine hundred oxen toil through Meath  
Driven on by goads of iron; they, too, brother,  
Are full five days from us.

[70]

SECOND MERCHANT.

Five days for traffic.

*[While they have been speaking the peasants have come in, led by TEIG and SHEMUS, who take their stations, one on each side of the door, and keep them marshalled into rude order and encourage them from time to time with gestures and whispered words.]*

Here throng they; since the drouth they go in throngs,  
Like autumn leaves blown by the dreary winds.  
Come, deal—come, deal.

FIRST MERCHANT.

Who will come deal with us?

SHEMUS.

They are out of spirit, sir, with lack of food,  
Save four or five. Here, sir, is one of these;  
The others will gain courage in good time.

A MIDDLE-AGED MAN.

I come to deal if you give honest price.

FIRST MERCHANT.

*[Reading in a parchment.]*

John Maher, a man of substance, with dull mind,  
And quiet senses and unventurous heart.  
The angels think him safe. Two hundred crowns,  
All for a soul, a little breath of wind.

[71]

THE MAN.

I ask three hundred crowns. You have read there,  
That no mere lapse of days can make me yours.

FIRST MERCHANT.

There is something more writ here—often at night  
He is wakeful from a dread of growing poor.  
There is this crack in you—two hundred crowns.

*[THE MAN takes them and goes.]*

SECOND MERCHANT.

Come, deal—one would half think you had no souls.  
If only for the credit of your parishes,  
Come, deal, deal, deal, or will you always starve?  
Maire, the wife of Shemus, would not deal,  
She starved—she lies in there with red wallflowers,  
And candles stuck in bottles round her bed.

A WOMAN.

What price, now, will you give for mine?

[72]

FIRST MERCHANT.

Ay, ay,  
Soft, handsome, and still young—not much, I think.  
[*Reading in the parchment.*]

She has love letters in a little jar  
On the high shelf between the pepper-pot  
And wood-cased hour-glass.

THE WOMAN.  
O, the scandalous parchment!

FIRST MERCHANT [*reading*].

She hides them from her husband, who buys horses,  
And is not much at home. You are almost safe.

I give you fifty crowns. [*She turns to go.*]

A hundred, then.

[*She takes them, and goes into the crowd.*]

Come—deal, deal, deal; it is for charity  
We buy such souls at all; a thousand sins  
Made them our master's long before we came.  
Come, deal—come, deal. You seem resolved to starve  
Until your bones show through your skin. Come, deal,  
Or live on nettles, grass, and dandelion.  
Or do you dream the famine will go by?  
The famine is hale and hearty; it is mine  
And my great master's; it shall no wise cease  
Until our purpose end: the yellow vapour  
That brought it bears it over your dried fields  
And fills with violent phantoms of the lost,  
And grows more deadly as day copies day.  
See how it dims the daylight. Is that peace  
Known to the birds of prey so dread a thing?  
They, and the souls obedient to our master,  
And those who live with that great other spirit  
Have gained an end, a peace, while you but toss  
And swing upon a moving balance beam.

[*ALEEL enters; the wires of his harp are broken.*]

ALEEL.  
Here, take my soul, for I am tired of it;  
I do not ask a price.

FIRST MERCHANT [*reading*].

A man of songs:

Alone in the hushed passion of romance,  
His mind ran all on sidheoges and on tales  
Of Fenian labours and the Red Branch kings,  
And he cared nothing for the life of man:  
But now all changes.

ALEEL.

Ay, because her face,  
The face of Countess Cathleen, dwells with me:  
The sadness of the world upon her brow:  
The crying of these strings grew burdensome,  
Therefore I tore them; see; now take my soul.

FIRST MERCHANT.  
We cannot take your soul, for it is hers.

ALEEL.  
Ah, take it; take it. It nowise can help her,  
And, therefore, do I tire of it.

FIRST MERCHANT.  
No; no.  
We may not touch it.

ALEEL.  
Is your power so small,  
Must I then bear it with me all my days?  
May scorn close deep about you!

FIRST MERCHANT.  
Lead him hence;

He troubles me.  
[*TEIG and SHEMUS lead ALEEL into the crowd.*]

[73]

[74]

SECOND MERCHANT.

His gaze has filled me, brother,  
With shaking and a dreadful fear.

FIRST MERCHANT.

Lean forward  
And kiss the circlet where my master's lips  
Were pressed upon it when he sent us hither:  
You will have peace once more.

[*The SECOND MERCHANT kisses the gold circlet that is about the head of the FIRST MERCHANT.*

SHEMUS.

He is called Aleel,  
And has been crazy now these many days;  
But has no harm in him: his fits soon pass,  
And one can go and lead him like a child.

FIRST MERCHANT.

Come, deal, deal, deal, deal, deal; you are all dumb?

SHEMUS.

They say you beat the woman down too low.

FIRST MERCHANT.

I offer this great price: a thousand crowns  
For an old woman who was always ugly.  
[*An old peasant woman comes forward, and he takes up a parchment and reads.*]  
There is but little set down here against her;  
She stole fowl sometimes when the harvest failed,  
But always went to chapel twice a week,  
And paid her dues when prosperous. Take your money.

THE OLD PEASANT WOMAN [*curtseying*].

God bless you, sir. [*She screams.*]  
O, sir, a pain went through me.

FIRST MERCHANT.

That name is like a fire to all damned souls.  
Begone. [*She goes.*] See how the red gold pieces glitter.  
Deal: do you fear because an old hag screamed?  
Are you all cowards?

A PEASANT.

Nay, I am no coward.  
I will sell half my soul.

FIRST MERCHANT.

How half your soul?

THE PEASANT.

Half my chance of heaven.

FIRST MERCHANT.

It is writ here  
This man in all things takes the moderate course,  
He sits on midmost of the balance beam,  
And no man has had good of him or evil.  
Begone, we will not buy you.

SECOND MERCHANT.

Deal, come, deal.

FIRST MERCHANT.

What, will you keep us from our ancient home,  
And from the eternal revelry? Come, deal,  
And we will hence to our great master again.  
Come, deal, deal, deal.

THE PEASANTS SHOUT.

The Countess Cathleen comes!

CATHLEEN [*entering*].

And so you trade once more?

FIRST MERCHANT.

[75]

[76]

[77]

In spite of you.  
What brings you here, saint with the sapphire eyes?

CATHLEEN.  
I come to barter a soul for a great price.

FIRST MERCHANT.  
What matter if the soul be worth the price?

CATHLEEN.  
The people starve, therefore the people go  
Thronging to you. I hear a cry come from them,  
And it is in my ears by night and day;  
And I would have five hundred thousand crowns,  
That I may feed them till the dearth go by;  
And have the wretched spirits you have bought  
For your gold crowns released and sent to God.  
The soul that I would barter is my soul.

A PEASANT.  
Do not, do not; the souls of us poor folk  
Are not precious to God as your soul is.  
O! what would heaven do without you, lady?

[78]

ANOTHER PEASANT.  
Look how their claws clutch in their leathern gloves.

FIRST MERCHANT.  
Five hundred thousand crowns; we give the price,  
The gold is here; the spirits, while you speak,  
Begin to labour upward, for your face  
Sheds a great light on them and fills their hearts  
With those unveilings of the fickle light,  
Whereby our heavy labours have been marred  
Since first His spirit moved upon the deeps  
And stole them from us; even before this day  
The souls were but half ours, for your bright eyes  
Had pierced them through and robbed them of content.  
But you must sign, for we omit no form  
In buying a soul like yours; sign with this quill;  
It was a feather growing on the cock  
That crowed when Peter dared deny his Master,  
And all who use it have great honour in Hell.

[CATHLEEN *leans forward to sign.*

ALEEL.  
[*Rushing forward and snatching the parchment from her.*]  
Leave all things to the builder of the heavens.

CATHLEEN.  
I have no thoughts: I hear a cry—a cry.

[79]

ALEEL.  
[*Casting the parchment on the ground.*]  
I had a vision under a green hedge,  
A hedge of hips and haws—men yet shall hear  
The archangels rolling Satan's empty skull  
Over the mountain-tops.

FIRST MERCHANT.  
Take him away.  
[TEIG *and* SHEMUS *drag him roughly away so that he falls upon the floor among the peasants. CATHLEEN picks up the parchment and signs, and then turns towards the peasants.*

CATHLEEN.  
Take up the money; and now come with me.  
When we are far from this polluted place  
I will give everybody money enough.  
[*She goes out, the peasants crowding round her and kissing her dress. ALEEL and the TWO MERCHANTS are left alone.*

SECOND MERCHANT.  
Now are our days of heavy labour done.

FIRST MERCHANT.  
We have a precious jewel for Satan's crown.

[80]

SECOND MERCHANT.

We must away, and wait until she dies,  
Sitting above her tower as two gray owls,  
Watching as many years as may be, guarding  
Our precious jewel; waiting to seize her soul.

FIRST MERCHANT.

We need but hover over her head in the air,  
For she has only minutes: when she came  
I saw the dimness of the tomb in her,  
And marked her walking as with leaden shoes  
And looking on the ground as though the worms  
Were calling her, and when she wrote her name  
Her heart began to break. Hush! hush! I hear  
The brazen door of Hell move on its hinges,  
And the eternal revelry float hither  
To hearten us.

SECOND MERCHANT.

Leap, feathered, on the air  
And meet them with her soul caught in your claws.

*[They rush out. ALEEL crawls into the middle of the room. The twilight has fallen and gradually darkens as the scene goes on. There is a distant muttering of thunder and a sound of rising storm.]*

[81]

ALEEL.

The brazen door stands wide, and Balor comes  
Borne in his heavy car, and demons have lifted  
The age-weary eyelids from the eyes that of old  
Turned gods to stone; Barach the traitor comes;  
And the lascivious race, Cailitin,  
That cast a druid weakness and decay  
Over Sualtam's and old Dectora's child;  
And that great king Hell first took hold upon  
When he killed Naisi and broke Deirdre's heart;  
And all their heads are twisted to one side,  
For when they lived they warred on beauty and peace  
With obstinate, crafty, sidelong bitterness.

*[OONA enters, but remains standing by the door. ALEEL half rises, leaning upon one arm and one knee.]*

Crouch down, old heron, out of the blind storm.

OONA.

Where is the Countess Cathleen? All this day  
She has been pale and weakly: when her hand  
Touched mine over the spindle her hand trembled,  
And now I do not know where she has gone.

ALEEL.

Cathleen has chosen other friends than us,  
And they are rising through the hollow world.

*[He points downwards.]*

First, Orchil, her pale beautiful head alive,  
Her body shadowy as vapour drifting  
Under the dawn, for she who awoke desire  
Has but a heart of blood when others die;  
About her is a vapoury multitude  
Of women, alluring devils with soft laughter;  
Behind her a host heat of the blood made sin,  
But all the little pink-white nails have grown  
To be great talons.

*[He seizes OONA and drags her into the middle of the room and points downwards with vehement gestures. The wind roars.]*

They begin a song

And there is still some music on their tongues.

[82]

OONA.

*[Casting herself face downwards on the floor.]*

O maker of all, protect her from the demons,  
And if a soul must needs be lost, take mine.

*[ALEEL kneels beside her, but does not seem to hear her words; he is gazing down as if through the earth. The peasants return. They carry the COUNTESS CATHLEEN and lay her upon the ground before OONA and ALEEL. She lies there as if dead.]*

O that so many pitchers of rough clay

Should prosper and the porcelain break in two!  
[*She kisses the hands of the* COUNTESS CATHLEEN.

[83]

A PEASANT.

We were under the tree where the path turns  
When she grew pale as death and fainted away,  
And while we bore her hither, cloudy gusts  
Blackened the world and shook us on our feet:  
Draw the great bolt, for no man has beheld  
So black, bitter, blinding, and sudden a storm.

[*One who is near the door draws the bolt.*

OONA.

Hush, hush, she has awakened from her swoon.

CATHLEEN.

O hold me, and hold me tightly, for the storm  
Is dragging me away!

[*OONA takes her in her arms. A woman begins to wail.*

A PEASANT.

Hush.

ANOTHER PEASANT.

Hush.

A PEASANT WOMAN.

Hush.

ANOTHER PEASANT WOMAN.

Hush.

CATHLEEN [*half rising*].

Lay all the bags of money at my feet.

[*They lay the bags at her feet.*

And send and bring old Neal when I am dead,  
And bid him hear each man and judge and give:  
He doctors you with herbs, and can best say  
Who has the less and who the greater need.

[84]

A PEASANT WOMAN.

[*At the back of the crowd.*]

And will he give enough out of the bags  
To keep my children till the dearth go by?

ANOTHER PEASANT WOMAN.

O Queen of Heaven and all you blessed Saints,  
Let us and ours be lost, so she be shriven.

CATHLEEN.

Bend down your faces, Oona and Aleel:  
I gaze upon them as the swallow gazes  
Upon the nest under the eave, before  
He wander the loud waters: do not weep  
Too great a while, for there is many a candle  
On the high altar though one fall. Aleel,  
Who sang about the people of the raths,  
That know not the hard burden of the world,  
Having but breath in their kind bodies, farewell!  
And farewell, Oona, who spun flax with me  
Soft as their sleep when every dance is done:  
The storm is in my hair and I must go.

[*She dies.*

[85]

OONA.

Bring me the looking-glass.

[*A woman brings it to her out of the inner room. OONA holds the  
glass over the lips of the COUNTESS CATHLEEN. All is silent for  
a moment; and then she speaks in a half scream.*]

O, she is dead!

A PEASANT WOMAN.

She was the great white lily of the world.

ANOTHER PEASANT WOMAN.

She was more beautiful than the pale stars.

AN OLD PEASANT WOMAN.

The little plant I loved is broken in two.

[ALEEL *takes the looking-glass from OONA and flings it upon the floor so that it is broken in many pieces.*

ALEEL.

I shatter you in fragments, for the face  
That brimmed you up with beauty is no more:  
And die, dull heart, for she whose mournful words  
Made you a living spirit has passed away  
And left you but a ball of passionate dust;  
And you, proud earth and plummy sea, fade out,  
For you may hear no more her faltering feet,  
But are left lonely amid the clamorous war  
Of angels upon devils.

[*He stands up; almost everyone is kneeling, but it has grown so dark that only confused forms can be seen.*]

And I who weep

Call curses on you, Time and Fate and Change,  
And have no excellent hope but the great hour  
When you shall plunge headlong through bottomless space.

[*A flash of lightning followed immediately by thunder.*

A PEASANT WOMAN.

Pull him upon his knees before his curses  
Have plucked thunder and lightning on our heads.

ALEEL.

Angels and devils clash in the middle air,  
And brazen swords clang upon brazen helmets:

[*A flash of lightning followed immediately by thunder.*]

Yonder a bright spear, cast out of a sling,  
Has torn through Balor's eye, and the dark clans  
Fly screaming as they fled Moytura of old.

[*Everything is lost in darkness.*

AN OLD MAN.

The Almighty, wrath at our great weakness and sin,  
Has blotted out the world and we must die.

[*The darkness is broken by a visionary light. The peasants seem to be kneeling upon the rocky slope of a mountain, and vapour full of storm and ever-changing light is sweeping above them and behind them. Half in the light, half in the shadow, stand armed Angels. Their armour is old and worn, and their drawn swords dim and dented. They stand as if upon the air in formation of battle and look downward with stern faces. The peasants cast themselves on the ground.*

ALEEL.

Look no more on the half-closed gates of Hell,  
But speak to me, whose mind is smitten of God,  
That it may be no more with mortal things;  
And tell of her who lies here.

[*He seizes one of the Angels.*] Till you speak  
You shall not drift into eternity.

THE ANGEL.

The light beats down: the gates of pearl are wide,  
And she is passing to the floor of peace,  
And Mary of the seven times wounded heart  
Has kissed her lips, and the long blessed hair  
Has fallen on her face; the Light of Lights  
Looks always on the motive, not the deed,  
The Shadow of Shadows on the deed alone.

[ALEEL *releases the Angel and kneels.*

OONA.

Tell them who walk upon the floor of peace  
That I would die and go to her I love;  
The years like great black oxen tread the world,  
And God the herdsman goads them on behind,  
And I am broken by their passing feet.

[*A sound of far-off horns seems to come from the heart of the light. The vision melts away, and the forms of the kneeling peasants appear faintly in the darkness.*]

[86]

[87]

[88]



# THE LAND OF HEART'S DESIRE

[89]

'O Rose, thou art sick.' — *William Blake*.

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[90]



MAURTEEN BRUIN  
SHAWN BRUIN  
FATHER HART  
BRIDGET BRUIN  
MAIRE BRUIN  
A FAERY CHILD

*The scene is laid in the Barony of Kilmacowen, in the County of Sligo, and the characters are supposed to speak in Gaelic. They wear the costume of a century ago.*

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*The kitchen of MAURTEEN BRUIN'S house. An open grate with a turf fire is at the left side of the room, with a table in front of it. There is a door leading to the open air at the back, and another door a little to its left, leading into an inner room. There is a window, a settle, and a large dresser on the right side of the room, and a great bowl of primroses on the sill of the window. MAURTEEN BRUIN, FATHER HART, and BRIDGET BRUIN are sitting at the table. SHAWN BRUIN is setting the table for supper. MAIRE BRUIN sits on the settle reading a yellow manuscript.*

BRIDGET BRUIN.

Because I bade her go and feed the calves,  
She took that old book down out of the thatch  
And has been doubled over it all day.  
We would be deafened by her groans and moans  
Had she to work as some do, Father Hart,  
Get up at dawn like me, and mend and scour;  
Or ride abroad in the boisterous night like you,  
The pyx and blessed bread under your arm.

[94]

SHAWN BRUIN.

You are too cross.

BRIDGET BRUIN.

The young side with the young.

MAURTEEN BRUIN.

She quarrels with my wife a bit at times,  
And is too deep just now in the old book,  
But do not blame her greatly; she will grow  
As quiet as a puff-ball in a tree  
When but the moons of marriage dawn and die  
For half a score of times.

FATHER HART.

                  Their hearts are wild  
As be the hearts of birds, till children come.

BRIDGET BRUIN.

She would not mind the griddle, milk the cow,  
Or even lay the knives and spread the cloth.

FATHER HART.

I never saw her read a book before;  
What may it be?

MAURTEEN BRUIN.

                  I do not rightly know;  
It has been in the thatch for fifty years.  
My father told me my grandfather wrote it,  
Killed a red heifer and bound it with the hide.  
But draw your chair this way—supper is spread.  
And little good he got out of the book,  
Because it filled his house with roaming bards,  
And roaming ballad-makers and the like,  
And wasted all his goods.—Here is the wine:  
The griddle bread's beside you, Father Hart.  
Colleen, what have you got there in the book  
That you must leave the bread to cool? Had I,  
Or had my father, read or written books  
There were no stocking full of silver and gold  
To come, when I am dead, to Shawn and you.

[95]

FATHER HART.

You should not fill your head with foolish dreams.  
What are you reading?

MAIRE BRUIN.

                  How a Princess Edain,  
A daughter of a King of Ireland, heard  
A voice singing on a May Eve like this,  
And followed, half awake and half asleep,  
Until she came into the land of faery,  
Where nobody gets old and godly and grave,  
Where nobody gets old and crafty and wise,  
Where nobody gets old and bitter of tongue;

And she is still there, busied with a dance,  
Deep in the dewy shadow of a wood,  
Or where stars walk upon a mountain-top.

[96]

MAURTEEN BRUIN.

Persuade the colleen to put by the book:  
My grandfather would mutter just such things,  
And he was no judge of a dog or horse,  
And any idle boy could blarney him:  
Just speak your mind.

FATHER HART.

Put it away, my colleen.

God spreads the heavens above us like great wings,  
And gives a little round of deeds and days,  
And then come the wrecked angels and set snares,  
And bait them with light hopes and heavy dreams,  
Until the heart is puffed with pride and goes,  
Half shuddering and half joyous, from God's peace:  
And it was some wrecked angel, blind from tears,  
Who flattered Edain's heart with merry words.  
My colleen, I have seen some other girls  
Restless and ill at ease, but years went by  
And they grew like their neighbours and were glad  
In minding children, working at the churn,  
And gossiping of weddings and of wakes;  
For life moves out of a red flare of dreams  
Into a common light of common hours,  
Until old age bring the red flare again.

[97]

SHAWN BRUIN.

Yet do not blame her greatly, Father Hart,  
For she is dull while I am in the fields,  
And mother's tongue were harder still to bear,  
But for her fancies: this is May Eve too,  
When the good people post about the world,  
And surely one may think of them to-night.  
Maire, have you the primroses to fling  
Before the door to make a golden path  
For them to bring good luck into the house?  
Remember, they may steal new-married brides  
After the fall of twilight on May Eve.

[MAIRE BRUIN *goes over to the window and takes flowers from the  
bowl and strews them outside the door.*

FATHER HART.

You do well, daughter, because God permits  
Great power to the good people on May Eve.

SHAWN BRUIN.

They can work all their will with primroses;  
Change them to golden money, or little flames  
To burn up those who do them any wrong.

MAIRE BRUIN [*in a dreamy voice*].

[98]

I had no sooner flung them by the door  
Than the wind cried and hurried them away;  
And then a child came running in the wind  
And caught them in her hands and fondled them:  
Her dress was green: her hair was of red gold;  
Her face was pale as water before dawn.

FATHER HART.

Whose child can this be?

MAURTEEN BRUIN.

No one's child at all.

She often dreams that someone has gone by  
When there was nothing but a puff of wind.

MAIRE BRUIN.

They will not bring good luck into the house,  
For they have blown the primroses away;  
Yet I am glad that I was courteous to them,  
For are not they, likewise, children of God?

FATHER HART.  
Colleen, they are the children of the Fiend,  
And they have power until the end of Time,  
When God shall fight with them a great pitched battle  
And hack them into pieces.

MAIRE BRUIN. [99]  
He will smile,  
Father, perhaps, and open His great door,  
And call the pretty and kind into His house.

FATHER HART.  
Did but the lawless angels see that door,  
They would fall, slain by everlasting peace;  
And when such angels knock upon our doors  
Who goes with them must drive through the same storm.  
[A knock at the door. MAIRE BRUIN opens it and then goes to the  
dresser and fills a porringer with milk and hands it through  
the door and takes it back empty and closes the door.]

MAIRE BRUIN.  
A little queer old woman cloaked in green,  
Who came to beg a porringer of milk.

BRIDGET BRUIN.  
The good people go asking milk and fire  
Upon May Eve.—Woe on the house that gives,  
For they have power upon it for a year.  
I knew you would bring evil on the house.

MAURTEEN BRUIN.  
Who was she?

MAIRE BRUIN. [100]  
Both the tongue and face were strange.

MAURTEEN BRUIN.  
Some strangers came last week to Clover Hill;  
She must be one of them.

BRIDGET BRUIN.  
I am afraid.

MAURTEEN BRUIN.  
The priest will keep all harm out of the house.

FATHER HART.  
The cross will keep all harm out of the house  
While it hangs there.

MAURTEEN BRUIN.  
Come, sit beside me, colleen,  
And put away your dreams of discontent,  
For I would have you light up my last days  
Like a bright torch of pine, and when I die  
I will make you the wealthiest hereabout:  
For hid away where nobody can find  
I have a stocking full of silver and gold.

BRIDGET BRUIN.  
You are the fool of every pretty face,  
And I must pinch and pare that my son's wife  
May have all kinds of ribbons for her head.

MAURTEEN BRUIN. [101]  
Do not be cross; she is a right good girl!  
The butter is by your elbow, Father Hart.  
My colleen, have not Fate and Time and Change  
Done well for me and for old Bridget there?  
We have a hundred acres of good land,  
And sit beside each other at the fire,  
The wise priest of our parish to our right,  
And you and our dear son to left of us.  
To sit beside the board and drink good wine  
And watch the turf smoke coiling from the fire  
And feel content and wisdom in your heart,  
This is the best of life; when we are young

We long to tread a way none trod before,  
But find the excellent old way through love  
And through the care of children to the hour  
For bidding Fate and Time and Change good-bye.

[A knock at the door. MAIRE BRUIN opens it and then takes a sod of turf out of the hearth in the tongs and passes it through the door and closes the door and remains standing by it.

MAIRE BRUIN.

A little queer old man in a green coat,  
Who asked a burning sod to light his pipe.

BRIDGET BRUIN.

You have now given milk and fire, and brought,  
For all you know, evil upon the house.  
Before you married you were idle and fine,  
And went about with ribbons on your head;  
And now you are a good-for-nothing wife.

[102]

SHAWN BRUIN.

Be quiet, mother!

MAURTEEN BRUIN.

You are much too cross!

MAIRE BRUIN.

What do I care if I have given this house,  
Where I must hear all day a bitter tongue,  
Into the power of faeries!

BRIDGET BRUIN.

You know well

How calling the good people by that name  
Or talking of them over-much at all  
May bring all kinds of evil on the house.

MAIRE BRUIN.

Come, faeries, take me out of this dull house!  
Let me have all the freedom I have lost;  
Work when I will and idle when I will!  
Faeries, come, take me out of this dull world,  
For I would ride with you upon the wind,  
Run on the top of the dishevelled tide,  
And dance upon the mountains like a flame!

FATHER HART.

You cannot know the meaning of your words.

[103]

MAIRE BRUIN.

Father, I am right weary of four tongues:  
A tongue that is too crafty and too wise,  
A tongue that is too godly and too grave,  
A tongue that is more bitter than the tide,  
And a kind tongue too full of drowsy love,  
Of drowsy love and my captivity.

[SHAWN BRUIN comes over to her and leads her to the settle.

SHAWN BRUIN.

Do not blame me; I often lie awake  
Thinking that all things trouble your bright head—  
How beautiful it is—such broad pale brows  
Under a cloudy blossoming of hair!  
Sit down beside me here—these are too old,  
And have forgotten they were ever young.

MAIRE BRUIN.

O, you are the great door-post of this house,  
And I, the red nasturtium, climbing up.

[She takes SHAWN'S hand, but looks shyly at the priest and lets it go.

FATHER HART.

Good daughter, take his hand—by love alone  
God binds us to Himself and to the hearth  
And shuts us from the waste beyond His peace,  
From maddening freedom and bewildering light.

[104]

SHAWN BRUIN.

Would that the world were mine to give it you  
With every quiet hearth and barren waste,  
The maddening freedom of its woods and tides,  
And the bewildering light upon its hills.

MAIRE BRUIN.

Then I would take and break it in my hands  
To see you smile watching it crumble away.

SHAWN BRUIN.

Then I would mould a world of fire and dew  
With no one bitter, grave, or over-wise,  
And nothing marred or old to do you wrong;  
And crowd the enraptured quiet of the sky  
With candles burning to your lonely face.

MAIRE BRUIN.

Your looks are all the candles that I need.

SHAWN BRUIN.

Once a fly dancing in a beam of the sun,  
Or the light wind blowing out of the dawn,  
Could fill your heart with dreams none other knew,  
But now the indissoluble sacrament  
Has mixed your heart that was most proud and cold  
With my warm heart for ever; and sun and moon  
Must fade and heaven be rolled up like a scroll;  
But your white spirit still walk by my spirit.

[A VOICE *sings in the distance.*

[105]

MAIRE BRUIN.

Did you hear something call? O, guard me close,  
Because I have said wicked things to-night;  
And seen a pale-faced child with red-gold hair,  
And longed to dance upon the winds with her.

A VOICE [*close to the door*].

*The wind blows out of the gates of the day,  
The wind blows over the lonely of heart,  
And the lonely of heart is withered away,  
While the faeries dance in a place apart,  
Shaking their milk-white feet in a ring,  
Tossing their milk-white arms in the air;  
For they hear the wind laugh, and murmur and sing  
Of a land where even the old are fair,  
And even the wise are merry of tongue;  
But I heard a reed of Coolaney say,  
'When the wind has laughed and murmured and sung,  
The lonely of heart is withered away!'*

MAURTEEN BRUIN.

I am right happy, and would make all else  
Be happy too. I hear a child outside,  
And will go bring her in out of the cold.

[*He opens the door. A CHILD dressed in pale green and with red-gold hair comes into the house.*

[106]

THE CHILD.

I tire of winds and waters and pale lights!

MAURTEEN BRUIN.

You are most welcome. It is cold out there;  
Who'd think to face such cold on a May Eve?

THE CHILD.

And when I tire of this warm little house  
There is one here who must away, away,  
To where the woods, the stars, and the white streams  
Are holding a continual festival.

MAURTEEN BRUIN.

O listen to her dreamy and strange talk.  
Come to the fire.

THE CHILD.



I will sit upon your knee,  
For I have run from where the winds are born,  
And long to rest my feet a little while.  
[*She sits upon his knee.*]

BRIDGET BRUIN.  
How pretty you are!

[107]

MAURTEEN BRUIN.  
Your hair is wet with dew!

BRIDGET BRUIN.  
I will warm your chilly feet.  
[*She takes THE CHILD'S feet in her hands.*]

MAURTEEN BRUIN.  
You must have come  
A long, long way, for I have never seen  
Your pretty face, and must be tired and hungry;  
Here is some bread and wine.

THE CHILD.  
The wine is bitter.  
Old mother, have you no sweet food for me?

BRIDGET BRUIN.  
I have some honey!  
[*She goes into the next room.*]

MAURTEEN BRUIN.  
You are a dear child;  
The mother was quite cross before you came.  
[BRIDGET *returns with the honey, and goes to the dresser and fills a  
porringer with milk.*]

[108]

BRIDGET BRUIN.  
She is the child of gentle people; look  
At her white hands and at her pretty dress.  
I have brought you some new milk, but wait awhile,  
And I will put it by the fire to warm,  
For things well fitted for poor folk like us  
Would never please a high-born child like you.

THE CHILD.  
Old mother, my old mother, the green dawn  
Brightens above while you blow up the fire;  
And evening finds you spreading the white cloth.  
The young may lie in bed and dream and hope,  
But you work on because your heart is old.

BRIDGET BRUIN.  
The young are idle.

THE CHILD.  
Old father, you are wise,  
And all the years have gathered in your heart  
To whisper of the wonders that are gone.  
The young must sigh through many a dream and hope,  
But you are wise because your heart is old.

MAURTEEN BRUIN.  
O, who would think to find so young a child  
Loving old age and wisdom?  
[BRIDGET *gives her more bread and honey.*]

[109]

THE CHILD.  
No more, mother.

MAURTEEN BRUIN.  
What a small bite! The milk is ready now;  
What a small sip!

THE CHILD.  
Put on my shoes, old mother,  
For I would like to dance now I have eaten.  
The reeds are dancing by Coolaney lake,  
And I would like to dance until the reeds

And the white waves have danced themselves to sleep.  
[BRIDGET *having put on her shoes, she gets off the old man's knees  
and is about to dance, but suddenly sees the crucifix and  
shrieks and covers her eyes.*]

What is that ugly thing on the black cross?

FATHER HART.

You cannot know how naughty your words are!  
That is our Blessed Lord!

THE CHILD.

Hide it away!

BRIDGET BRUIN.

I have begun to be afraid, again!

THE CHILD.

Hide it away!

MAURTEEN BRUIN.

That would be wickedness!

BRIDGET BRUIN.

That would be sacrilege!

THE CHILD.

The tortured thing!

Hide it away!

MAURTEEN BRUIN.

Her parents are to blame.

FATHER HART.

That is the image of the Son of God.

[THE CHILD *puts her arm round his neck and kisses him.*]

THE CHILD.

Hide it away! Hide it away!

MAURTEEN BRUIN.

No! no!

FATHER HART.

Because you are so young and little a child  
I will go take it down.

THE CHILD.

Hide it away,

And cover it out of sight and out of mind.

[FATHER HART *takes it down and carries it towards the inner room.*]

FATHER HART.

Since you have come into this barony,  
I will instruct you in our blessed faith:  
Being a clever child, you will soon learn.  
[*To the others.*] We must be tender with all budding things.  
Our Maker let no thought of Calvary  
Trouble the morning stars in their first song.

[*Puts the crucifix in the inner room.*]

THE CHILD.

Here is level ground for dancing. I will dance.  
The wind is blowing on the waving reeds,  
The wind is blowing on the heart of man.  
[*She dances, swaying about like the reeds.*]

MAIRE [*to SHAWN BRUIN*].

Just now when she came near I thought I heard  
Other small steps beating upon the floor,  
And a faint music blowing in the wind,  
Invisible pipes giving her feet the time.

SHAWN BRUIN.

I heard no step but hers.

MAIRE BRUIN.

Look to the bolt!

[110]

[111]

[112]

Because the unholy powers are abroad.

MAURTEEN BRUIN [*to* THE CHILD].

Come over here, and if you promise me  
Not to talk wickedly of holy things  
I will give you something.

THE CHILD.

Bring it me, old father!

[MAURTEEN BRUIN *goes into the next room.*

FATHER HART.

I will have queen cakes when you come to me!

[MAURTEEN BRUIN *returns and lays a piece of money on the table.*

THE CHILD *makes a gesture of refusal.*

MAURTEEN BRUIN.

It will buy lots of toys; see how it glitters!

THE CHILD.

Come, tell me, do you love me?

MAURTEEN BRUIN.

I love you!

THE CHILD.

Ah, but you love this fireside!

FATHER HART.

I love you.

[113]

THE CHILD.

But you love Him above.

BRIDGET BRUIN.

She is blaspheming.

THE CHILD [*to* MAIRE].

And do you love me?

MAIRE BRUIN.

I—I do not know.

THE CHILD.

You love that great tall fellow over there:  
Yet I could make you ride upon the winds,  
Run on the top of the dishevelled tide,  
And dance upon the mountains like a flame!

MAIRE BRUIN.

Queen of the Angels and kind Saints, defend us!  
Some dreadful fate has fallen: a while ago  
The wind cried out and took the primroses,  
And she ran by me laughing in the wind,  
And I gave milk and fire, and she came in  
And made you hide the blessed crucifix.

FATHER HART.

You fear because of her wild, pretty prattle;  
She knows no better.

[*To* THE CHILD] Child, how old are you?

THE CHILD.

When winter sleep is abroad my hair grows thin,  
My feet unsteady. When the leaves awaken  
My mother carries me in her golden arms.  
I'll soon put on my womanhood and marry  
The spirits of wood and water, but who can tell  
When I was born for the first time? I think  
I am much older than the eagle cock  
That blinks and blinks on Ballygawley Hill,  
And he is the oldest thing under the moon.

FATHER HART.

She is of the faery people.

THE CHILD.

[114]

I am Brig's daughter.  
I sent my messengers for milk and fire,  
And then I heard one call to me and came.

[*They all except MAIRE BRUIN gather about the priest for protection.*  
MAIRE BRUIN *stays on the settle in a stupor of terror.* THE CHILD  
*takes primroses from the great bowl and begins to strew*  
*them between herself and the priest and about MAIRE BRUIN.*  
*During the following dialogue SHAWN BRUIN goes more than*  
*once to the brink of the primroses, but shrinks back to the*  
*others timidly.*

FATHER HART.  
I will confront this mighty spirit alone.  
[*They cling to him and hold him back.*

[115]

THE CHILD [*while she strews the primroses*].  
No one whose heart is heavy with human tears  
Can cross these little cressets of the wood.

FATHER HART.  
Be not afraid, the Father is with us,  
And all the nine angelic hierarchies,  
The Holy Martyrs and the Innocents,  
The adoring Magi in their coats of mail,  
And He who died and rose on the third day,  
And Mary with her seven times wounded heart.  
[*THE CHILD ceases strewing the primroses, and kneels upon the*  
*settle beside MAIRE and puts her arms about her neck.*]  
Cry, daughter, to the Angels and the Saints.

THE CHILD.  
You shall go with me, newly-married bride,  
And gaze upon a merrier multitude;  
White-armed Nuala and Aengus of the birds,  
And Feacra of the hurtling foam, and him  
Who is the ruler of the western host,  
Finvarra, and their Land of Heart's Desire,  
Where beauty has no ebb, decay no flood,  
But joy is wisdom, Time an endless song.  
I kiss you and the world begins to fade.

FATHER HART.  
Daughter, I call you unto home and love!

THE CHILD.  
Stay, and come with me, newly-married bride,  
For, if you hear him, you grow like the rest:  
Bear children, cook, be mindful of the churn,  
And wrangle over butter, fowl, and eggs,  
And sit at last there, old and bitter of tongue,  
Watching the white stars war upon your hopes.

[116]

FATHER HART.  
Daughter, I point you out the way to heaven.

THE CHILD.  
But I can lead you, newly-married bride,  
Where nobody gets old and crafty and wise,  
Where nobody gets old and godly and grave,  
Where nobody gets old and bitter of tongue,  
And where kind tongues bring no captivity,  
For we are only true to the far lights  
We follow singing, over valley and hill.

FATHER HART.  
By the dear name of the One crucified,  
I bid you, Maire Bruin, come to me.

THE CHILD.  
I keep you in the name of your own heart!  
[*She leaves the settle, and stooping takes up a mass of primroses*  
*and kisses them.*]  
We have great power to-night, dear golden folk,  
For he took down and hid the crucifix.  
And my invisible brethren fill the house;  
I hear their footsteps going up and down.

[117]

O, they shall soon rule all the hearts of men  
And own all lands; last night they merrily danced  
About his chapel belfry! [*To MAIRE*] Come away,  
I hear my brethren bidding us away!

FATHER HART.

I will go fetch the crucifix again.

[*They hang about him in terror and prevent him from moving.*]

BRIDGET BRUIN.

The enchanted flowers will kill us if you go.

MAURTEEN BRUIN.

They turn the flowers to little twisted flames.

SHAWN BRUIN.

The little twisted flames burn up the heart.

THE CHILD.

I hear them crying, 'Newly-married bride,  
Come to the woods and waters and pale lights.'

MAIRE BRUIN.

I will go with you.

FATHER HART.

She is lost, alas!

[118]

THE CHILD [*standing by the door*].

Then, follow: but the heavy body of clay  
And clinging mortal hope must fall from you,  
For we who ride the winds, run on the waves,  
And dance upon the mountains, are more light  
Than dewdrops on the banners of the dawn.

MAIRE BRUIN.

Then take my soul.

[*SHAWN BRUIN goes over to her.*]

SHAWN BRUIN.

Beloved, do not leave me!  
Remember when I met you by the well  
And took your hand in mine and spoke of love.

MAIRE BRUIN.

Dear face! Dear voice!

THE CHILD.

Come, newly-married bride!

MAIRE BRUIN.

I always loved her world—and yet—and yet—  
[*Sinks into his arms.*]

THE CHILD [*from the door*].

White bird, white bird, come with me, little bird.

MAIRE BRUIN.

She calls my soul!

THE CHILD.

Come with me, little bird!

[119]

MAIRE BRUIN.

I can hear songs and dancing!

SHAWN BRUIN.

Stay with me!

MAIRE BRUIN.

I think that I would stay—and yet—and yet—

THE CHILD.

Come, little bird with crest of gold!

MAIRE BRUIN [*very softly*].

And yet—

THE CHILD.

Come, little bird with silver feet!

[MAIRE *dies*, and THE CHILD *goes*.

SHAWN BRUIN.

She is dead!

BRIDGET BRUIN.

Come from that image there: she is far away:  
You have thrown your arms about a drift of leaves  
Or bole of an ash-tree changed into her image.

FATHER HART.

Thus do the spirits of evil snatch their prey  
Almost out of the very hand of God;  
And day by day their power is more and more,  
And men and women leave old paths, for pride  
Comes knocking with thin knuckles on the heart.

[120]

A VOICE [*singing outside*].

*The wind blows out of the gates of the day,  
The wind blows over the lonely of heart,  
And the lonely of heart is withered away  
While the faeries dance in a place apart,  
Shaking their milk-white feet in a ring,  
Tossing their milk-white arms in the air;  
For they hear the wind laugh, and murmur and sing  
Of a land where even the old are fair,  
And even the wise are merry of tongue;  
But I heard a reed of Coolaney say,  
'When the wind has laughed and murmured and sung,  
The lonely of heart is withered away.'*

[*The song is taken up by many voices, who sing loudly, as if in  
triumph. Some of the voices seem to come from within the  
house.*]

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***PERSONS IN THE PLAY***

[122]

FATHER JOHN

THOMAS HEARNE, *a coachbuilder*

ANDREW HEARNE, *his brother*

MARTIN HEARNE, *his nephew*

JOHNNY BACACH

PAUDEEN

BIDDY LALLY

NANNY

]- *beggars*







# ACT I.

*Interior of a coachbuilder's workshop. Parts of a gilded coach, among them an ornament representing a lion and unicorn. THOMAS working at a wheel. FATHER JOHN coming from door of inner room.*

FATHER JOHN.

I have prayed over Martin. I have prayed a long time, but there is no move in him yet.

THOMAS.

You are giving yourself too much trouble, Father. It's as good for you to leave him alone till the doctor's bottle will come. If there is any cure at all for what is on him, it is likely the doctor will have it.

FATHER JOHN.

I think it is not doctor's medicine will help him in this case.

[124]

THOMAS.

It will, it will. The doctor has his business learned well. If Andrew had gone to him the time I bade him and had not turned again to bring yourself to the house, it is likely Martin would be walking at this time. I am loth to trouble you, Father, when the business is not of your own sort. Any doctor at all should be able and well able to cure the falling sickness.

FATHER JOHN.

It is not any common sickness that is on him now.

THOMAS.

I thought at the first it was gone to sleep he was. But when shaking him and roaring at him failed to rouse him, I knew well it was the falling sickness. Believe me, the doctor will reach it with his drugs.

FATHER JOHN.

Nothing but prayer can reach a soul that is so far beyond the world as his soul is at this moment.

THOMAS.

You are not saying that the life is gone out of him!

[125]

FATHER JOHN.

No, no, his life is in no danger. But where he himself, the spirit, the soul, is gone, I cannot say. It has gone beyond our imaginings. He is fallen into a trance.

THOMAS.

He used to be queer as a child, going asleep in the fields, and coming back with talk of white horses he saw, and bright people like angels or whatever they were. But I mended that. I taught him to recognise stones beyond angels with a few strokes of a rod. I would never give in to visions or to trances.

FATHER JOHN.

We who hold the faith have no right to speak against trance or vision. Saint Elizabeth had them, Saint Benedict, Saint Anthony, Saint Columcille. Saint Catherine of Siena often lay a long time as if dead.

THOMAS.

That might be so in the olden time, but those things are gone out of the world now. Those that do their work fair and honest have no occasion to let the mind go rambling. What would send my nephew, Martin Hearne, into a trance, supposing trances to be in it, and he rubbing the gold on the lion and unicorn that he had taken in hand to make a good job of for the top of the coach?

[126]

FATHER JOHN [*taking up ornament*].

It is likely it was that sent him off. The flashing of light upon it would be enough to throw one that had a disposition to it into a trance. There was a very saintly man, though he was not of our church; he wrote a great book called *Mysterium Magnum* was seven days in a trance. Truth, or whatever truth he found, fell upon him like a bursting shower, and he a poor tradesman at his work. It was a ray of sunlight on a pewter vessel that was the beginning of all. [*Goes to the door and looks in.*] There is no stir in him yet. It is either the best thing or the worst thing can happen to anyone, that is happening to him now.

THOMAS.

And what in the living world can happen to a man that is asleep on his bed?

FATHER JOHN.

There are some would answer you that it is to those who are awake that nothing happens, and it is they that know nothing. He is gone where all have gone for supreme truth.

[127]

THOMAS.

*[Sitting down again and taking up tools.]*

Well, maybe so. But work must go on and coachbuilding must go on, and they will not go on the time there is too much attention given to dreams. A dream is a sort of a shadow, no profit in it to anyone at all. A coach, now, is a real thing and a thing that will last for generations and be made use of to the last, and maybe turn to be a hen-roost at its latter end.

FATHER JOHN.

I think Andrew told me it was a dream of Martin's that led to the making of that coach.

THOMAS.

Well, I believe he saw gold in some dream, and it led him to want to make some golden thing, and coaches being the handiest, nothing would do him till he put the most of his fortune into the making of this golden coach. It turned out better than I thought, for some of the lawyers came looking at it at Assize time, and through them it was heard of at Dublin Castle . . . and who now has it ordered but the Lord Lieutenant! *[FATHER JOHN nods.]* Ready it must be and sent off it must be by the end of the month. It is likely King George will be visiting Dublin, and it is he himself will be sitting in it yet.

[128]

FATHER JOHN.

Martin has been working hard at it, I know.

THOMAS.

You never saw a man work the way he did, day and night, near ever since the time six months ago he first came home from France.

FATHER JOHN.

I never thought he would be so good at a trade. I thought his mind was only set on books.

THOMAS.

He should be thankful to myself for that. Any person I will take in hand, I make a clean job of them the same as I would make of any other thing in my yard—coach, half-coach, hackney-coach, ass-car, common-car, post-chaise, calash, chariot on two wheels, on four wheels. Each one has the shape Thomas Hearne put on it, and it in his hands; and what I can do with wood and iron, why would I not be able to do it with flesh and blood, and it in a way my own?

FATHER JOHN.

Indeed, I know you did your best for Martin.

[129]

THOMAS.

Every best. Checked him, taught him the trade, sent him to the monastery in France for to learn the language and to see the wide world; but who should know that if you did not know it, Father John, and I doing it according to your own advice?

FATHER JOHN.

I thought his nature needed spiritual guidance and teaching, the best that could be found.

THOMAS.

I thought myself it was best for him to be away for a while. There are too many wild lads about this place. He to have stopped here, he might have taken some fancies, and got into some trouble, going against the Government maybe the same as Johnny Gibbons that is at this time an outlaw, having a price upon his head.

FATHER JOHN.

That is so. That imagination of his might have taken fire here at home. It was better putting him with the Brothers, to turn it to imaginings of heaven.

THOMAS.

Well, I will soon have a good hardy tradesman made of him now that will live quiet and rear a family, and be maybe appointed coachbuilder to the Royal Family at the last.

[130]

FATHER JOHN [*at window*].

I see your brother Andrew coming back from the doctor; he is stopping to talk with a troop of beggars that are sitting by the side of the road.

THOMAS.

There, now, is another that I have shaped. Andrew used to be a bit wild in his talk and in his ways, wanting to go rambling, not content to settle in the place where he was reared. But I kept a guard over him; I watched the time poverty gave him a nip, and then I settled him into the business. He never was so good a worker as Martin, he is too fond of wasting his time talking vanities. But he is middling handy, and he is always steady and civil to customers. I have no complaint worth while to be making this last twenty years against Andrew.

[ANDREW *comes in.*]

ANDREW.

Beggars there outside going the road to the Kinvara fair. They were saying there is news that Johnny Gibbons is coming back from France on the quiet; the king's soldiers are watching the ports for him.

[131]

THOMAS.

Let you keep now, Andrew, to the business you have in hand. Will the doctor be coming himself or did he send a bottle that will cure Martin?

ANDREW.

The doctor can't come, for he's down with the lumbago in the back. He questioned me as to what ailed Martin, and he got a book to go looking for a cure, and he began telling me things out of it, but I said I could not be carrying things of that sort in my head. He gave me the book then, and he has marks put in it for the places where the cures are . . . wait now. . . . [*Reads*] 'Compound medicines are usually taken inwardly, or outwardly applied; inwardly taken, they should be either liquid or solid; outwardly, they should be fomentations or sponges wet in some decoctions.'

THOMAS.

He had a right to have written it out himself upon a paper. Where is the use of all that?

ANDREW.

I think I moved the mark maybe . . . here, now, is the part he was reading to me himself. . . . 'The remedies for diseases belonging to the skins next the brain, headache, vertigo, cramp, convulsions, palsy, incubus, apoplexy, falling sickness.'

[132]

THOMAS.

It is what I bid you to tell him that it was the falling sickness.

ANDREW [*dropping book*].

O, my dear, look at all the marks gone out of it! Wait, now, I partly remember what he said . . . a blister he spoke of . . . or to be smelling hartshorn . . . or the sneezing powder . . . or if all fails, to try letting the blood.

FATHER JOHN.

All this has nothing to do with the real case. It is all waste of time.

ANDREW.

That is what I was thinking myself, Father. Sure it was I was the first to call out to you when I saw you coming down from the hill-side, and to bring you in to see what could you do. I would have more trust in your means than in any doctor's learning. And in case you might fail to cure him, I have a cure myself I heard from my grandmother—God rest her soul!—and she told me she never knew it to fail. A person to have the falling sickness, to cut the top of his nails and a small share of the hair of his head, and to put it down on the floor, and to take a harry-pin and drive it down with that into the floor and to leave it there. 'That is the cure will never fail,' she said, 'to rise up any person at all having the falling sickness.'

[133]

FATHER JOHN [*hand on ear*].

I will go back to the hill-side, I will go back to the hill-side; but no, no, I must do what I can. I will go again, I will wrestle, I will strive my best to call him back with prayer.

[*Goes in and shuts door.*]

ANDREW.

It is queer Father John is sometimes, and very queer. There are times when you would say that

he believes in nothing at all.

THOMAS.

If you wanted a priest, why did you not get our own parish priest that is a sensible man, and a man that you would know what his thoughts are? You know well the bishop should have something against Father John to have left him through the years in that poor mountainy place, minding the few unfortunate people that were left out of the last famine. A man of his learning to be going in rags the way he is, there must be some good cause for that.

[134]

ANDREW.

I had all that in mind and I bringing him. But I thought he would have done more for Martin than what he is doing. To read a Mass over him I thought he would, and to be convulsed in the reading it, and some strange thing to have gone out with a great noise through the doorway.

THOMAS.

It would give no good name to the place such a thing to be happening in it. It is well enough for labouring-men and for half-acre men. It would be no credit at all such a thing to be heard of in this house, that is for coachbuilding the capital of the county.

ANDREW.

If it is from the devil this sickness comes, it would be best to put it out whatever way it would be put out. But there might no bad thing be on the lad at all. It is likely he was with wild companions abroad, and that knocking about might have shaken his health. I was that way myself one time.

THOMAS.

Father John said that it was some sort of a vision or a trance, but I would give no heed to what he would say. It is his trade to see more than other people would see, the same as I myself might be seeing a split in a leather car hood that no other person would find out at all.

[135]

ANDREW.

If it is the falling sickness is on him, I have no objection to that—a plain, straight sickness that was cast as a punishment on the unbelieving Jews. It is a thing that might attack one of a family, and one of another family, and not to come upon their kindred at all. A person to have it, all you have to do is not to go between him and the wind, or fire, or water. But I am in dread trance is a thing might run through the house the same as the cholera morbus.

THOMAS.

In my belief there is no such thing as a trance. Letting on people do be to make the world wonder the time they think well to rise up. To keep them to their work is best, and not to pay much attention to them at all.

ANDREW.

I would not like trances to be coming on myself. I leave it in my will if I die without cause, a holly-stake to be run through my heart the way I will lie easy after burial, and not turn my face downwards in my coffin. I tell you I leave it on you in my will.

[136]

THOMAS.

Leave thinking of your own comforts, Andrew, and give your mind to the business. Did the smith put the irons yet on to the shafts of this coach?

ANDREW.

I will go see did he.

THOMAS.

Do so, and see did he make a good job of it. Let the shafts be sound and solid if they are to be studded with gold.

ANDREW.

They are, and the steps along with them—glass sides for the people to be looking in at the grandeur of the satin within—the lion and the unicorn crowning all. It was a great thought Martin had the time he thought of making this coach!

THOMAS.

It is best for me to go see the smith myself and leave it to no other one. You can be attending to that ass-car out in the yard wants a new tyre in the wheel—out in the rear of the yard it is. [*They go to door.*] To pay attention to every small thing, and to fill up every minute of time shaping whatever you have to do, that is the way to build up a business.

[137]

FATHER JOHN [*bringing in* MARTIN].

They are gone out now—the air is fresher here in the workshop—you can sit here for a while. You are now fully awake, you have been in some sort of a trance or a sleep.

MARTIN.

Who was it that pulled at me? Who brought me back?

FATHER JOHN.

It is I, Father John, did it. I prayed a long time over you and brought you back.

MARTIN.

You, Father John, to be so unkind! O leave me, leave me alone!

FATHER JOHN.

You are in your dream still.

MARTIN.

It was no dream, it was real. Do you not smell the broken fruit—the grapes? the room is full of the smell.

[138]

FATHER JOHN.

Tell me what you have seen, where you have been?

MARTIN.

There were horses—white horses rushing by, with white shining riders—there was a horse without a rider, and someone caught me up and put me upon him and we rode away, with the wind, like the wind—

FATHER JOHN.

That is a common imagining. I know many poor persons have seen that.

MARTIN.

We went on, on, on. We came to a sweet-smelling garden with a gate to it, and there were wheatfields in full ear around, and there were vineyards like I saw in France, and the grapes in bunches. I thought it to be one of the townlands of heaven. Then I saw the horses we were on had changed to unicorns, and they began trampling the grapes and breaking them. I tried to stop them but I could not.

FATHER JOHN.

That is strange, that is strange. What is it that brings to mind? I heard it in some place, *monoceros de astris*, the unicorn from the stars.

[139]

MARTIN.

They tore down the wheat and trampled it on stones, and then they tore down what were left of grapes and crushed and bruised and trampled them. I smelt the wine, it was flowing on every side—then everything grew vague. I cannot remember clearly, everything was silent; the trampling now stopped, we were all waiting for some command. Oh! was it given! I was trying to hear it; there was someone dragging, dragging me away from that. I am sure there was a command given, and there was a great burst of laughter. What was it? What was the command? Everything seemed to tremble round me.

FATHER JOHN.

Did you awake then?

MARTIN.

I do not think I did, it all changed—it was terrible, wonderful! I saw the unicorns trampling, trampling, but not in the wine troughs. Oh, I forget! Why did you waken me?

FATHER JOHN.

I did not touch you. Who knows what hands pulled you away? I prayed, that was all I did. I prayed very hard that you might awake. If I had not, you might have died. I wonder what it all meant? The unicorns—what did the French monk tell me?—strength they meant, virginal strength, a rushing, lasting, tireless strength.

[140]

MARTIN.

They were strong. Oh, they made a great noise with their trampling.

FATHER JOHN.

And the grapes, what did they mean? It puts me in mind of the psalm, *Et calix meus inebrians quam præclarus est*. It was a strange vision, a very strange vision, a very strange vision.

MARTIN.

How can I get back to that place?

FATHER JOHN.

You must not go back, you must not think of doing that. That life of vision, of contemplation, is a terrible life, for it has far more of temptation in it than the common life. Perhaps it would have been best for you to stay under rules in the monastery.

MARTIN.

I could not see anything so clearly there. It is back here in my own place the visions come, in the place where shining people used to laugh around me, and I a little lad in a bib. [141]

FATHER JOHN.

You cannot know but it was from the Prince of this world the vision came. How can one ever know unless one follows the discipline of the Church? Some spiritual director, some wise learned man, that is what you want. I do not know enough. What am I but a poor banished priest, with my learning forgotten, my books never handled and spotted with the damp!

MARTIN.

I will go out into the fields where you cannot come to me to awake me. I will see that townland again; I will hear that command. I cannot wait, I must know what happened, I must bring that command to mind again.

FATHER JOHN.

[*Putting himself between MARTIN and the door.*]

You must have patience as the saints had it. You are taking your own way. If there is a command from God for you, you must wait His good time to receive it.

MARTIN.

Must I live here forty years, fifty years . . . to grow as old as my uncles, seeing nothing but common things, doing work . . . some foolish work? [142]

FATHER JOHN.

Here they are coming; it is time for me to go. I must think and I must pray. My mind is troubled about you. [*To THOMAS as he and ANDREW come in.*] Here he is; be very kind to him for he has still the weakness of a little child.

[*Goes out.*]

THOMAS.

Are you well of the fit, lad?

MARTIN.

It was no fit. I was away—for awhile—no, you will not believe me if I tell you.

ANDREW.

I would believe it, Martin. I used to have very long sleeps myself and very queer dreams.

THOMAS.

You had, till I cured you, taking you in hand and binding you to the hours of the clock. The cure that will cure yourself, Martin, and will waken you, is to put the whole of your mind on to your golden coach; to take it in hand and to finish it out of face.

MARTIN.

Not just now. I want to think—to try and remember what I saw, something that I heard, that I was told to do. [143]

THOMAS.

No, but put it out of your mind. There is no man doing business that can keep two things in his head. A Sunday or a holy-day, now, you might go see a good hurling or a thing of the kind, but to be spreading out your mind on anything outside of the workshop on common days, all coachbuilding would come to an end.

MARTIN.

I don't think it is building I want to do. I don't think that is what was in the command.

THOMAS.

It is too late to be saying that, the time you have put the most of your fortune in the business. Set yourself now to finish your job, and when it is ended maybe I won't begrudge you going with the coach as far as Dublin.

ANDREW.

That is it, that will satisfy him. I had a great desire myself, and I young, to go travelling the roads as far as Dublin. The roads are the great things, they never come to an end. They are the same as the serpent having his tail swallowed in his own mouth.

MARTIN.

It was not wandering I was called to. What was it? what was it?

[144]

THOMAS.

What you are called to, and what everyone having no great estate is called to, is to work. Sure the world itself could not go on without work.

MARTIN.

I wonder if that is the great thing, to make the world go on? No, I don't think that is the great thing—what does the Munster poet call it?—'this crowded slippery coach-loving world.' I don't think I was told to work for that.

ANDREW.

I often thought that myself. It is a pity the stock of the Hearnese to be asked to do any work at all.

THOMAS.

Rouse yourself, Martin, and don't be talking the way a fool talks. You started making that golden coach, and you were set upon it, and you had me tormented about it. You have yourself wore out working at it, and planning it, and thinking of it, and at the end of the race, when you have the winning-post in sight, and horses hired for to bring it to Dublin Castle, you go falling into sleeps and blathering about dreams, and we run to a great danger of letting the profit and the sale go by. Sit down on the bench now, and lay your hands to the work.

[145]

MARTIN [*sitting down*].

I will try. I wonder why I ever wanted to make it; it was no good dream set me doing that. [*He takes up wheel.*] What is there in a wooden wheel to take pleasure in it? Gilding it outside makes it no different.

THOMAS.

That is right, now. You had some good plan for making the axle run smooth.

MARTIN.

[*Letting wheel fall and putting his hands to his head.*]

It is no use. [*Angrily.*] Why did you send the priest to awake me? My soul is my own and my mind is my own. I will send them to where I like. You have no authority over my thoughts.

THOMAS.

That is no way to be speaking to me. I am head of this business. Nephew, or no nephew, I will have no one come cold or unwilling to the work.

MARTIN.

I had better go; I am of no use to you. I am going—I must be alone—I will forget if I am not alone. Give me what is left of my money and I will go out of this.

[146]

THOMAS.

[*Opening a press and taking out a bag and throwing it to him.*]

There is what is left of your money! The rest of it you have spent on the coach. If you want to go, go, and I will not have to be annoyed with you from this out.

ANDREW.

Come now with me, Thomas. The boy is foolish, but it will soon pass over. He has not my sense to be giving attention to what you will say. Come along now, leave him for awhile; leave him to me I say, it is I will get inside his mind.



[*He leads THOMAS out. MARTIN bangs door angrily after them and sits down, taking up lion and unicorn.*

MARTIN.

I think it was some shining thing I saw. What was it?

ANDREW.

[*Opening door and putting in his head.*]

Listen to me, Martin.

MARTIN.

Go away, no more talking; leave me alone.

ANDREW.

O, but wait. I understand you. Thomas doesn't understand your thoughts, but I understand them. Wasn't I telling you I was just like you once? [147]

MARTIN.

Like me? Did you ever see the other things, the things beyond?

ANDREW.

I did. It is not the four walls of the house keep me content. Thomas doesn't know. Oh, no, he doesn't know.

MARTIN.

No, he has no vision.

ANDREW.

He has not, nor any sort of a heart for a frolic.

MARTIN.

He has never heard the laughter and the music beyond.

ANDREW.

He has not, nor the music of my own little flute. I have it hidden in the thatch outside.

MARTIN.

Does the body slip from you as it does from me? They have not shut your window into eternity?

ANDREW.

Thomas never shut a window I could not get through. I knew you were one of my own sort. When I am sluggish in the morning, Thomas says, 'Poor Andrew is getting old.' That is all he knows. The way to keep young is to do the things youngsters do. Twenty years I have been slipping away, and he never found me out yet! [148]

MARTIN.

That is what they call ecstasy, but there is no word that can tell out very plain what it means. That freeing of the mind from its thoughts, those wonders we know when we put them into words; the words seem as little like them as blackberries are like the moon and sun.

ANDREW.

I found that myself the time they knew me to be wild, and used to be asking me to say what pleasure did I find in cards, and women, and drink.

MARTIN.

You might help me to remember that vision I had this morning, to understand it. The memory of it has slipped from me. Wait, it is coming back, little by little. I know that I saw the unicorns trampling, and then a figure, a many-changing figure, holding some bright thing. I knew something was going to happen or to be said, something that would make my whole life strong and beautiful like the rushing of the unicorns, and then, and then— [149]

JOHNNY BACACH'S *voice at window.*

A poor person I am, without food, without a way, without portion, without costs, without a person or a stranger, without means, without hope, without health, without warmth—

ANDREW [*looking towards window*].

It is that troop of beggars. Bringing their tricks and their thieveries they are to the Kinvara

Fair.

MARTIN [*impatiently*].

There is no quiet—come to the other room. I am trying to remember.

[*They go to door of inner room, but ANDREW stops him.*]

ANDREW.

They are a bad-looking fleet. I have a mind to drive them away, giving them a charity.

MARTIN.

Drive them away or come away from their voices.

ANOTHER VOICE.

I put under the power of my prayer

All that will give me help.  
Rafael keep him Wednesday,  
Sachiel feed him Thursday,  
Hamiel provide him Friday,  
Cassiel increase him Saturday.

Sure giving to us is giving to the Lord and laying up a store in the treasury of heaven.

[150]

ANDREW.

Whisht! He is entering by the window!

[JOHNNY *climbs up*.

JOHNNY.

That I may never sin, but the place is empty.

PAUDEEN.

Go in and see what can you make a grab at.

JOHNNY [*getting in*].

That every blessing I gave may be turned to a curse on them that left the place so bare! [*He turns things over.*] I might chance something in this chest if it was open.

[ANDREW *begins creeping towards him*.

NANNY [*outside*].

Hurry on, now, you limping crabfish you! We can't be stopping here while you'll boil stirabout!

JOHNNY.

[*Seizing bag of money and holding it up high in both hands.*]

Look at this, now, look!

[ANDREW *comes behind, seizes his arm*.

JOHNNY [*letting bag fall with a crash*].

Destruction on us all!

MARTIN.

[*Running forward, seizes him. Heads disappear.*]

That is it! O, I remember. That is what happened. That is the command. Who was it sent you here with that command? [151]

JOHNNY.

It was misery sent me in, and starvation, and the hard ways of the world.

NANNY [*outside*].

It was that, my poor child, and my one son only. Show mercy to him now and he after leaving gaol this morning.

MARTIN [*to ANDREW*].

I was trying to remember it—when he spoke that word it all came back to me. I saw a bright many-changing figure; it was holding up a shining vessel [*holds up arms*]; then the vessel fell and

was broken with a great crash; then I saw the unicorns trampling it. They were breaking the world to pieces—when I saw the cracks coming I shouted for joy! And I heard the command ‘Destroy, destroy, destruction is the life-giver! destroy!’

ANDREW.

What will we do with him? He was thinking to rob you of your gold.

MARTIN.

How could I forget it or mistake it? It has all come upon me now; the reasons of it all, like a flood, like a flooded river. [152]

JOHNNY [*weeping*].

It was the hunger brought me in and the drouth.

MARTIN.

Were you given any other message? Did you see the unicorns?

JOHNNY.

I saw nothing and heard nothing; near dead I am with the fright I got and with the hardship of the gaol.

MARTIN.

To destroy, to overthrow all that comes between us and God, between us and that shining country. To break the wall, Andrew, to break the thing—whatever it is that comes between, but where to begin—

ANDREW.

What is it you are talking about?

MARTIN.

It may be that this man is the beginning. He has been sent—the poor, they have nothing, and so they can see heaven as we cannot. He and his comrades will understand me. But how to give all men high hearts that they may all understand? [153]

JOHNNY.

It's the juice of the grey barley will do that.

ANDREW.

To rise everybody's heart, is it? Is it that was your meaning all the time? If you will take the blame of it all, I'll do what you want. Give me the bag of money then. [*He takes it up.*] O, I've a heart like your own. I'll lift the world, too. The people will be running from all parts. O, it will be a great day in this district.

JOHNNY.

Will I go with you?

MARTIN.

No, you must stay here; we have things to do and to plan.

JOHNNY.

Destroyed we all are with the hunger and the drouth.

MARTIN.

Go, then, get food and drink, whatever is wanted to give you strength and courage. Gather your people together here, bring them all in. We have a great thing to do. I have to begin—I want to tell it to the whole world. Bring them in, bring them in, I will make the house ready.

[*He stands looking up as if in ecstasy; ANDREW and JOHNNY BACACH go out.*]

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*The same workshop.* MARTIN *seen arranging mugs and bread, etc., on a table.* FATHER JOHN *comes in, knocking at open door as he comes; his mind intensely absorbed.*

MARTIN.

Come in, come in, I have got the house ready. Here is bread and meat—everybody is welcome.

*[Hearing no answer, turns round.*

FATHER JOHN.

Martin, I have come back. There is something I want to say to you.

MARTIN.

You are welcome, there are others coming. They are not of your sort, but all are welcome.

FATHER JOHN.

I have remembered suddenly something that I read when I was in the seminary.

MARTIN.

You seem very tired.

[155]

FATHER JOHN *[sitting down]*.

I had almost got back to my own place when I thought of it. I have run part of the way. It is very important; it is about the trance that you have been in. When one is inspired from above, either in trance or in contemplation, one remembers afterwards all that one has seen and read. I think there must be something about it in St. Thomas. I know that I have read a long passage about it years ago. But, Martin, there is another kind of inspiration, or rather an obsession or possession. A diabolical power comes into one's body, or overshadows it. Those whose bodies are taken hold of in this way, jugglers, and witches, and the like, can often tell what is happening in distant places, or what is going to happen, but when they come out of that state they remember nothing. I think you said—

MARTIN.

That I could not remember.

FATHER JOHN.

You remembered something, but not all. Nature is a great sleep; there are dangerous and evil spirits in her dreams, but God is above Nature. She is a darkness, but He makes everything clear; He is light.

[156]

MARTIN.

All is clear now. I remember all, or all that matters to me. A poor man brought me a word, and I know what I have to do.

FATHER JOHN.

Ah, I understand, words were put into his mouth. I have read of such things. God sometimes uses some common man as his messenger.

MARTIN.

You may have passed the man who brought it on the road. He left me but now.

FATHER JOHN.

Very likely, very likely, that is the way it happened. Some plain, unnoticed man has sometimes been sent with a command.

MARTIN.

I saw the unicorns trampling in my dream. They were breaking the world. I am to destroy, destruction was the word the messenger spoke.

FATHER JOHN.

To destroy?

MARTIN.

To bring again the old disturbed exalted life, the old splendour.

[157]

FATHER JOHN.

You are not the first that dream has come to. [*Gets up, and walks up and down.*] It has been wandering here and there, calling now to this man, now to that other. It is a terrible dream.

MARTIN.

Father John, you have had the same thought.

FATHER JOHN.

Men were holy then, there were saints everywhere. There was reverence; but now it is all work, business, how to live a long time. Ah, if one could change it all in a minute, even by war and violence! There is a cell where Saint Ciaran used to pray; if one could bring that time again!

MARTIN.

Do not deceive me. You have had the command.

FATHER JOHN.

Why are you questioning me? You are asking me things that I have told to no one but my confessor.

MARTIN.

We must gather the crowds together, you and I.

[158]

FATHER JOHN.

I have dreamed your dream, it was long ago. I had your vision.

MARTIN.

And what happened?

FATHER JOHN [*harshly*].

It was stopped; that was an end. I was sent to the lonely parish where I am, where there was no one I could lead astray. They have left me there. We must have patience; the world was destroyed by water, it has yet to be consumed by fire.

MARTIN.

Why should we be patient? To live seventy years, and others to come after us and live seventy years it may be; and so from age to age, and all the while the old splendour dying more and more.

[*A noise of shouting.* ANDREW, *who has been standing at the door, comes in.*

ANDREW.

Martin says truth, and he says it well. Planing the side of a cart or a shaft, is that life? It is not. Sitting at a desk writing letters to the man that wants a coach, or to the man that won't pay for the one he has got, is that life, I ask you? Thomas arguing at you and putting you down—'Andrew, dear Andrew, did you put the tyre on that wheel yet?' Is that life? Not, it is not. I ask you all, what do you remember when you are dead? It's the sweet cup in the corner of the widow's drinking-house that you remember. Ha, ha, listen to that shouting! That is what the lads in the village will remember to the last day they live.

[159]

MARTIN.

Why are they shouting? What have you told them?

ANDREW.

Never you mind; you left that to me. You bade me to lift their hearts and I did lift them. There is not one among them but will have his head like a blazing tar-barrel before morning. What did your friend the beggar say? The juice of the grey barley, he said.

FATHER JOHN.

You accursed villain! You have made them drunk!

ANDREW.

Not at all, but lifting them to the stars. That is what Martin bade me to do, and there is no one can say I did not do it.

[160]

[*A shout at door, and beggars push in a barrel. They cry, 'Hi! for the noble master!' and point at* ANDREW.

JOHNNY.

It's not him, it's that one! [*Points at* MARTIN.

FATHER JOHN.

Are you bringing this devil's work in at the very door? Go out of this, I say! get out! Take these others with you!

MARTIN.

No, no; I asked them in, they must not be turned out. They are my guests.

FATHER JOHN.

Drive them out of your uncle's house!

MARTIN.

Come, Father, it is better for you to go. Go back to your own place. I have taken the command. It is better perhaps for you that you did not take it.

[FATHER JOHN *and* MARTIN *go out.*

BIDDY.

It is well for that old lad he didn't come between ourselves and our luck. Himself to be after his meal, and ourselves staggering with the hunger! It would be right to have flayed him and to have made bags of his skin. [161]

NANNY.

What a hurry you are in to get your enough! Look at the grease on your frock yet, with the dint of the dabs you put in your pocket! Doing cures and foretellings is it? You starved pot-picker, you!

BIDDY.

That you may be put up to-morrow to take the place of that decent son of yours that had the yard of the gaol wore with walking it till this morning!

NANNY.

If he had, he had a mother to come to, and he would know her when he did see her; and that is what no son of your own could do and he to meet you at the foot of the gallows.

JOHNNY.

If I did know you, I knew too much of you since the first beginning of my life! What reward did I ever get travelling with you? What store did you give me of cattle or of goods? What provision did I get from you by day or by night but your own bad character to be joined on to my own, and I following at your heels, and your bags tied round about me!

NANNY.

Disgrace and torment on you! Whatever you got from me, it was more than any reward or any bit I ever got from the father you had, or any honourable thing at all, but only the hurt and the harm of the world and its shame! [162]

JOHNNY.

What would he give you, and you going with him without leave! Crooked and foolish you were always, and you begging by the side of the ditch.

NANNY.

Begging or sharing, the curse of my heart upon you! It's better off I was before ever I met with you to my cost! What was on me at all that I did not cut a scourge in the wood to put manners and decency on you the time you were not hardened as you are!

JOHNNY.

Leave talking to me of your rods and your scourges! All you taught me was robbery, and it is on yourself and not on myself the scourges will be laid at the day of the recognition of tricks.

PAUDEEN.

'Faith, the pair of you together is better than Hector fighting before Troy!

NANNY.

Ah, let you be quiet. It is not fighting we are craving, but the easing of the hunger that is on us and of the passion of sleep. Lend me a graineen of tobacco now till I'll kindle my pipe—a blast of it will take the weight of the road off my heart. [163]

[ANDREW *gives her some, NANNY grabs at it.*

BIDDY.

No, but it's to myself you should give it. I that never smoked a pipe this forty year without saying the tobacco prayer. Let that one say did ever she do that much.

NANNY.

That the pain of your front tooth may be in your back tooth, you to be grabbing my share!

[*They snap at tobacco.*]

ANDREW.

Pup, pup, pup! Don't be snapping and quarrelling now, and you so well treated in this house. It is strollers like yourselves should be for frolic and for fun. Have you ne'er a good song to sing, a song that will rise all our hearts?

PAUDEEN.

Johnny Bacach is a good singer, it is what he used to be doing in the fairs, if the oakum of the gaol did not give him a hoarseness within the throat.

ANDREW.

Give it out so, a good song, a song will put courage and spirit into any man at all.

[164]

JOHNNY [*singing*].

Come, all ye airy bachelors,  
A warning take by me,  
A sergeant caught me fowling,  
And fired his gun so free.

His comrades came to his relief,  
And I was soon trepanned,  
And bound up like a woodcock  
Had fallen into their hands.

The judge said transportation,  
The ship was on the strand;  
They have yoked me to the traces  
For to plough Van Dieman's Land!

ANDREW.

That's no good of a song but a melancholy sort of a song. I'd as lief be listening to a saw going through timber. Wait, now, till you will hear myself giving out a tune on the flute.

[*Goes out for it.*]

JOHNNY.

It is what I am thinking there must be a great dearth and a great scarcity of good comrades in this place, a man like that youngster, having means in his hand, to be bringing ourselves and our rags into the house.

PAUDEEN.

You think yourself very wise, Johnny Bacach. Can you tell me, now, who that man is?

[165]

JOHNNY.

Some decent lad, I suppose, with a good way of living and a mind to send up his name upon the roads.

PAUDEEN.

You that have been gaoled this eight months know little of this countryside. It isn't a limping stroller like yourself the Boys would let come among them. But I know. I went to the drill a few nights and I skinning kids for the mountainy men. In a quarry beyond the drill is—they have their plans made—it's the square house of the Brownes is to be made an attack on and plundered. Do you know, now, who is the leader they are waiting for?

JOHNNY.

How would I know that?

PAUDEEN [*singing*].

Oh, Johnny Gibbons, my five hundred healths to you.  
It is long you are away from us over the sea!

JOHNNY [*standing up excitedly*].

Sure that man could not be Johnny Gibbons that is outlawed!

PAUDEEN.

I asked news of him from the old lad, and I bringing in the drink along with him. 'Don't be asking questions,' says he; 'take the treat he gives you,' says he. 'If a lad that has a high heart has a mind to rouse the neighbours,' says he, 'and to stretch out his hand to all that pass the road, it is in France he learned it,' says he, 'the place he is but lately come from, and where the wine does be standing open in tubs. Take your treat when you get it,' says he, 'and make no delay or all might be discovered and put an end to.'

JOHNNY.

He came over the sea from France! It is Johnny Gibbons, surely, but it seems to me they were calling him by some other name.

PAUDEEN.

A man on his keeping might go by a hundred names. Would he be telling it out to us that he never saw before, and we with that clutch of chattering women along with us? Here he is coming now. Wait till you see is he the lad I think him to be.

MARTIN [*coming in*].

I will make my banner, I will paint the unicorn on it. Give me that bit of canvas, there is paint over here. We will get no help from the settled men—we will call to the lawbreakers, the tinkers, the sievemakers, the sheepstealers.

[*He begins to make banner.* [167]

BIDDY.

That sounds to be a queer name of an army. Ribbons I can understand, Whiteboys, Rightboys, Threshers, and Peep o' Day, but Unicorns I never heard of before.

JOHNNY.

It is not a queer name but a very good name. [*Takes up lion and unicorn.*] It is often you saw that before you in the dock. There is the unicorn with the one horn, and what it is he is going against? The lion of course. When he has the lion destroyed, the crown must fall and be shivered. Can't you see it is the League of the Unicorns is the league that will fight and destroy the power of England and King George?

PAUDEEN.

It is with that banner we will march and the lads in the quarry with us, it is they will have the welcome before him! It won't be long till we'll be attacking the Square House! Arms there are in it, riches that would smother the world, rooms full of guineas we will put wax on our shoes walking them; the horses themselves shod with no less than silver!

MARTIN [*holding up banner*].

There it is ready! We are very few now, but the army of the Unicorns will be a great army! [*To JOHNNY.*] Why have you brought me the message? Can you remember any more? Has anything more come to you? You have been drinking, the clouds upon your mind have been destroyed. . . . Can you see anything or hear anything that is beyond the world? [168]

JOHNNY.

I can not. I don't know what do you want me to tell you at all?

MARTIN.

I want to begin the destruction, but I don't know where to begin . . . you do not hear any other voice?

JOHNNY.

I do not. I have nothing at all to do with Freemasons or witchcraft.

PAUDEEN.

It is Biddy Lally has to do with witchcraft. It is often she threw the cups and gave out prophecies the same as Columcille.

MARTIN.

You are one of the knowledgeable women. You can tell me where it is best to begin, and what will happen in the end.



BIDDY.

I will foretell nothing at all. I rose out of it this good while, with the stiffness and the swelling it brought upon my joints.

[169]

MARTIN.

If you have foreknowledge you have no right to keep silent. If you do not help me I may go to work in the wrong way. I know I have to destroy, but when I ask myself what I am to begin with, I am full of uncertainty.

PAUDEEN.

Here now are the cups handy and the leavings in them.

BIDDY.

[*Taking cups and pouring one from another.*]

Throw a bit of white money into the four corners of the house.

MARTIN.

There! [*Throwing it.*]

BIDDY.

There can be nothing told without silver. It is not myself will have the profit of it. Along with that I will be forced to throw out gold.

MARTIN.

There is a guinea for you. Tell me what comes before your eyes.

BIDDY.

What is it you are wanting to have news of?

MARTIN.

Of what I have to go out against at the beginning . . . there is so much . . . the whole world it may be.

[170]

BIDDY.

[*Throwing from one cup to another and looking.*]

You have no care for yourself. You have been across the sea, you are not long back. You are coming within the best day of your life.

MARTIN.

What is it? What is it I have to do?

BIDDY.

I see a great smoke, I see burning . . . there is a great smoke overhead.

MARTIN.

That means we have to burn away a great deal that men have piled up upon the earth. We must bring men once more to the wildness of the clean green earth.

BIDDY.

Herbs for my healing, the big herb and the little herb, it is true enough they get their great strength out of the earth.

JOHNNY.

Who was it the green sod of Ireland belonged to in the olden times? Wasn't it to the ancient race it belonged? And who has possession of it now but the race that came robbing over the sea? The meaning of that is to destroy the big houses and the towns, and the fields to be given back to the ancient race.

[171]

MARTIN.

That is it. You don't put it as I do, but what matter? Battle is all.

PAUDEEN.

Columcille said, the four corners to be burned, and then the middle of the field to be burned. I tell you it was Columcille's prophecy said that.

BIDDY.

Iron handcuffs I see and a rope and a gallows, and it maybe is not for yourself I see it, but for some I have acquaintance with a good way back.

MARTIN.

That means the law. We must destroy the law. That was the first sin, the first mouthful of the apple.

JOHNNY.

So it was, so it was. The law is the worst loss. The ancient law was for the benefit of all. It is the law of the English is the only sin.

MARTIN.

When there were no laws men warred on one another and man to man, not with machines made in towns as they do now, and they grew hard and strong in body. They were altogether alive like him that made them in his image, like people in that unfallen country. But presently they thought it better to be safe, as if safety mattered or anything but the exaltation of the heart, and to have eyes that danger had made grave and piercing. We must overthrow the laws and banish them. [172]

JOHNNY.

It is what I say, to put out the laws is to put out the whole nation of the English. Laws for themselves they made for their own profit, and left us nothing at all, no more than a dog or a sow.

BIDDY.

An old priest I see, and I would not say is he the one was here or another. Vexed and troubled he is, kneeling fretting and ever-fretting in some lonesome ruined place.

MARTIN.

I thought it would come to that. Yes, the Church too—that is to be destroyed. Once men fought with their desires and their fears, with all that they call their sins, unhelped, and their souls became hard and strong. When we have brought back the clean earth and destroyed the law and the Church all life will become like a flame of fire, like a burning eye . . . Oh, how to find words for it all . . . all that is not life will pass away. [173]

JOHNNY.

It is Luther's Church he means, and the humpbacked discourse of Seaghan Calvin's Bible. So we will break it, and make an end of it.

MARTIN.

We will go out against the world and break it and unmake it. [*Rising.*] We are the army of the Unicorn from the Stars! We will trample it to pieces.—We will consume the world, we will burn it away—Father John said the world has yet to be consumed by fire. Bring me fire.

ANDREW [*to Beggars*].

Here is Thomas. Hide—let you hide.

[*All except MARTIN hurry into next room. THOMAS comes in.*]

THOMAS.

Come with me, Martin. There is terrible work going on in the town! There is mischief gone abroad. Very strange things are happening!

MARTIN.

What are you talking of? What has happened?

THOMAS.

Come along, I say, it must be put a stop to. We must call to every decent man. It is as if the devil himself had gone through the town on a blast and set every drinking-house open! [174]

MARTIN.

I wonder how that has happened. Can it have anything to do with Andrew's plan?

THOMAS.

Are you giving no heed to what I'm saying? There is not a man, I tell you, in the parish and beyond the parish but has left the work he was doing whether in the field or in the mill.

MARTIN.

Then all work has come to an end? Perhaps that was a good thought of Andrew's.

THOMAS.

There is not a man has come to sensible years that is not drunk or drinking! My own labourers and my own serving-men are sitting on counters and on barrels! I give you my word, the smell of the spirits and the porter and the shouting and the cheering within, made the hair to rise up on my scalp.

MARTIN.

And yet there is not one of them that does not feel that he could bridle the four winds.

THOMAS [*sitting down in despair*].

You are drunk too. I never thought you had a fancy for it.

[175]

MARTIN.

It is hard for you to understand. You have worked all your life. You have said to yourself every morning, 'What is to be done to-day?' and when you are tired out you have thought of the next day's work. If you gave yourself an hour's idleness, it was but that you might work the better. Yet it is only when one has put work away that one begins to live.

THOMAS.

It is those French wines that did it.

MARTIN.

I have been beyond the earth. In Paradise, in that happy townland, I have seen the shining people. They were all doing one thing or another, but not one of them was at work. All that they did was but the overflowing of their idleness, and their days were a dance bred of the secret frenzy of their hearts, or a battle where the sword made a sound that was like laughter.

THOMAS.

You went away sober from out of my hands; they had a right to have minded you better.

MARTIN.

No man can be alive, and what is paradise but fulness of life, if whatever he sets his hand to in the daylight cannot carry him from exaltation to exaltation, and if he does not rise into the frenzy of contemplation in the night silence. Events that are not begotten in joy are misbegotten and darken the world, and nothing is begotten in joy if the joy of a thousand years has not been crushed into a moment.

[176]

THOMAS.

And I offered to let you go to Dublin in the coach!

MARTIN [*giving banner to PAUDEEN*].

Give me the lamp. The lamp has not yet been lighted and the world is to be consumed!

[*Goes into inner room.*]

THOMAS [*seeing ANDREW*].

Is it here you are, Andrew? What are these beggars doing? Was this door thrown open too? Why did you not keep order? I will go for the constables to help us!

ANDREW.

You will not find them to help you. They were scattering themselves through the drinking-houses of the town, and why wouldn't they?

THOMAS.

Are you drunk too? You are worse than Martin. You are a disgrace!

[177]

ANDREW.

Disgrace yourself! Coming here to be making an attack on me and badgering me and disparaging me! And what about yourself that turned me to be a hypocrite?

THOMAS.

What are you saying?

ANDREW.

You did, I tell you! Weren't you always at me to be regular and to be working and to be going

through the day and the night without company and to be thinking of nothing but the trade? What did I want with a trade? I got a sight of the fairy gold one time in the mountains. I would have found it again and brought riches from it but for you keeping me so close to the work.

THOMAS.

Oh, of all the ungrateful creatures! You know well that I cherished you, leading you to live a decent, respectable life.

ANDREW.

You never had respect for the ancient ways. It is after the mother you take it, that was too soft and too lumpish, having too much of the English in her blood. Martin is a Hearne like myself. It is he has the generous heart! It is not Martin would make a hypocrite of me and force me to do night-walking secretly, watching to be back by the setting of the seven stars! [178]

*[He begins to play his flute.]*

THOMAS.

I will turn you out of this, yourself and this filthy troop! I will have them lodged in gaol.

JOHNNY.

Filthy troop, is it? Mind yourself! The change is coming. The pikes will be up and the traders will go down!

*All seize THOMAS and sing.*

When the Lion will lose his strength,  
And the braket-thistle begin to pine,  
The harp shall sound sweet, sweet at length,  
Between the eight and the nine!

THOMAS.

Let me out of this, you villains!

NANNY.

We'll make a sieve of holes of you, you old bag of treachery!

BIDDY.

How well you threatened us with gaol, you skim of a weasel's milk! [179]

JOHNNY.

You heap of sicknesses! You blinking hangman! That you may never die till you'll get a blue hag for a wife!

*[MARTIN comes back with lighted lamp.]*

MARTIN.

Let him go. *[They let THOMAS go, and fall back.]* Spread out the banner. The moment has come to begin the war.

JOHNNY.

Up with the Unicorn and destroy the Lion! Success to Johnny Gibbons and all good men!

MARTIN.

Heap all those things together there. Heap those pieces of the coach one upon another. Put that straw under them. It is with this flame I will begin the work of destruction. All nature destroys and laughs.

THOMAS.

Destroy your own golden coach!

*MARTIN [kneeling before THOMAS].*

I am sorry to go a way that you do not like and to do a thing that will vex you. I have been a great trouble to you since I was a child in the house, and I am a great trouble to you yet. It is not my fault. I have been chosen for what I have to do. *[Stands up.]* I have to free myself first and those that are near me. The love of God is a very terrible thing! *[THOMAS tries to stop him, but is prevented by Beggars. MARTIN takes a wisp of straw and lights it.]* We will destroy all that can perish! It is only the soul that can suffer no injury. The soul of man is of the imperishable substance of the stars! [180]

[*He throws wisp into heap—it blazes up.*]

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*Before dawn. A wild rocky place, NANNY and BIDDY LALLY squatting by a fire. Rich stuffs, etc., strewn about. PAUDEEN watching by MARTIN, who is lying as if dead, a sack over him.*

NANNY [*to PAUDEEN*].

Well, you are great heroes and great warriors and great lads altogether, to have put down the Brownes the way you did, yourselves and the Whiteboys of the quarry. To have ransacked the house and have plundered it! Look at the silks and the satins and the grandeurs I brought away! Look at that now! [*Holds up a velvet cloak.*] It's a good little jacket for myself will come out of it. It's the singers will be stopping their songs and the jobbers turning from their cattle in the fairs to be taking a view of the laces of it and the buttons! It's my far-off cousins will be drawing from far and near!

BIDDY.

There was not so much gold in it all as what they were saying there was. Or maybe that fleet of Whiteboys had the place ransacked before we ourselves came in. Bad cess to them that put it in my mind to go gather up the full of my bag of horseshoes out of the forge. Silver they were saying they were, pure white silver; and what are they in the end but only hardened iron! A bad end to them! [*Flings away horseshoes.*] The time I will go robbing big houses again it will not be in the light of the full moon I will go doing it, that does be causing every common thing to shine out as if for a deceit and a mockery. It's not shining at all they are at this time, but duck yellow and dark.

[182]

NANNY.

To leave the big house blazing after us, it was that crowned all! Two houses to be burned to ashes in the one night. It is likely the servant-girls were rising from the feathers and the cocks crowing from the rafters for seven miles around, taking the flames to be the whitening of the dawn.

BIDDY.

It is the lad is stretched beyond you have to be thankful to for that. There was never seen a leader was his equal for spirit and for daring. Making a great scatter of the guards the way he did. Running up roofs and ladders, the fire in his hand, till you'd think he would be apt to strike his head against the stars.

[183]

NANNY.

I partly guessed death was near him, and the queer shining look he had in his two eyes, and he throwing sparks east and west through the beams. I wonder now was it some inward wound he got, or did some hardy lad of the Brownes give him a tip on the skull unknownst in the fight? It was I myself found him, and the troop of the Whiteboys gone, and he lying by the side of a wall as weak as if he had knocked a mountain. I failed to waken him trying him with the sharpness of my nails, and his head fell back when I moved it, and I knew him to be spent and gone.

BIDDY.

It's a pity you not to have left him where he was lying and said no word at all to Paudeen or to that son you have, that kept us back from following on, bringing him here to this shelter on sacks and upon poles.

NANNY.

What way could I help letting a screech out of myself, and the life but just gone out of him in the darkness, and not a living Christian by his side but myself and the great God?

BIDDY.

It's on ourselves the vengeance of the red soldiers will fall, they to find us sitting here the same as hares in a tuft. It would be best for us follow after the rest of the army of the Whiteboys.

[184]

NANNY.

Whisht! I tell you. The lads are cracked about him. To get but the wind of the word of leaving him, it's little but they'd knock the head off the two of us. Whisht!

*Enter JOHNNY BACACH with candles.*

JOHNNY [*standing over MARTIN*].

Wouldn't you say now there was some malice or some venom in the air, that is striking down one after another the whole of the heroes of the Gael?

PAUDEEN.

It makes a person be thinking of the four last ends, death and judgment, heaven and hell. Indeed and indeed my heart lies with him. It is well I knew what man he was under his by-name

and his disguise.

[*Sings.*] Oh, Johnny Gibbons, it's you were the prop to us.  
You to have left us, we are put astray!

JOHNNY.

It is lost we are now and broken to the end of our days. There is no satisfaction at all but to be destroying the English, and where now will we get so good a leader again? Lay him out fair and straight upon a stone, till I will let loose the secret of my heart keening him! [185]

[*Sets out candles on a rock, propping them up with stones.*

NANNY.

Is it mould candles you have brought to set around him, Johnny Bacach? It is great riches you should have in your pocket to be going to those lengths and not to be content with dips.

JOHNNY.

It is lengths I will not be going to the time the life will be gone out of your own body. It is not your corpse I will be wishful to hold in honour the way I hold this corpse in honour.

NANNY.

That's the way always, there will be grief and quietness in the house if it is a young person has died, but funning and springing and tricking one another if it is an old person's corpse is in it. There is no compassion at all for the old.

PAUDEEN.

It is he would have got leave for the Gael to be as high as the Gall. Believe me, he was in the prophecies. Let you not be comparing yourself with the like of him. [186]

NANNY.

Why wouldn't I be comparing myself? Look at all that was against me in the world. Would you be matching me against a man of his sort, that had the people shouting him and that had nothing to do but to die and to go to heaven?

JOHNNY.

The day you go to heaven that you may never come back alive out of it! But it is not yourself will ever hear the saints hammering at their musics! It is you will be moving through the ages, chains upon you, and you in the form of a dog or a monster. I tell you that one will go through Purgatory as quick as lightning through a thorn-bush.

NANNY.

That's the way, that the way.

[*Croons.*] Three that are watching my time to run,  
The worm, the devil, and my son,  
To see a loop around their neck  
It's that would make my heart to lep!

JOHNNY.

Five white candles. I wouldn't begrudge them to him indeed. If he had held out and held up it is my belief he would have freed Ireland! [187]

PAUDEEN.

Wait till the full light of the day and you'll see the burying he'll have. It is not in this place we will be waking him. I'll make a call to the two hundred Ribbons he was to lead on to the attack on the barracks at Aughanish. They will bring him marching to his grave upon the hill. He had surely some gift from the other world, I wouldn't say but he had power from the other side.

ANDREW [*coming in very shaky*].

Well, it was a great night he gave to the village, and it is long till it will be forgotten. I tell you the whole of the neighbours are up against him. There is no one at all this morning to set the mills going. There was no bread baked in the night-time, the horses are not fed in the stalls, the cows are not milked in the sheds. I met no man able to make a curse this night but he put it on my head and on the head of the boy that is lying there before us . . . Is there no sign of life in him at all?

JOHNNY.

What way would there be a sign of life and the life gone out of him this three hours or more? [188]

ANDREW.

He was lying in his sleep for a while yesterday, and he wakened again after another while.

NANNY.

He will not waken, I tell you. I held his hand in my own and it getting cold as if you were pouring on it the coldest cold water, and no running in his blood. He is gone sure enough and the life is gone out of him.

ANDREW.

Maybe so, maybe so. It seems to me yesterday his cheeks were bloomy all the while, and now he is as pale as wood ashes. Sure we all must come to it at the last. Well, my white-headed darling, it is you were the bush among us all, and you to be cut down in your prime. Gentle and simple, everyone liked you. It is no narrow heart you had, it is you were for spending and not for getting. It is you made a good wake for yourself, scattering your estate in one night only in beer and in wine for the whole province; and that you may be sitting in the middle of Paradise and in the chair of the Graces!

JOHNNY.

Amen to that. It's pity I didn't think the time I sent for yourself to send the little lad of a messenger looking for a priest to overtake him. It might be in the end the Almighty is the best man for us all! [189]

ANDREW.

Sure I sent him on myself to bid the priest to come. Living or dead I would wish to do all that is rightful for the last and the best of my own race and generation.

BIDDY [*jumping up*].

Is it the priest you are bringing in among us? Where is the sense in that? Aren't we robbed enough up to this with the expense of the candles and the like?

JOHNNY.

If it is that poor starved priest he called to that came talking in secret signs to the man that is gone, it is likely he will ask nothing for what he has to do. There is many a priest is a Whiteboy in his heart.

NANNY.

I tell you, if you brought him tied in a bag he would not say an Our Father for you, without you having a half-crown at the top of your fingers.

BIDDY.

There is no priest is any good at all but a spoiled priest. A one that would take a drop of drink, it is he would have courage to face the hosts of trouble. Rout them out he would, the same as a shoal of fish from out the weeds. It's best not to vex a priest, or to run against them at all. [190]

NANNY.

It's yourself humbled yourself well to one the time you were sick in the gaol and had like to die, and he bade you to give over the throwing of the cups.

BIDDY.

Ah, plaster of Paris I gave him. I took to it again and I free upon the roads.

NANNY.

Much good you are doing with it to yourself or any other one. Aren't you after telling that corpse no later than yesterday that he was coming within the best day of his life?

JOHNNY.

Whisht, let ye. Here is the priest coming.

FATHER JOHN *comes in*.

FATHER JOHN.

It is surely not true that he is dead?

JOHNNY.

The spirit went from him about the middle hour of the night. We brought him here to this sheltered place. We were loth to leave him without friends. [191]

FATHER JOHN.



Where is he?

JOHNNY [*taking up sacks*].

Lying there stiff and stark. He has a very quiet look as if there was no sin at all or no great trouble upon his mind.

FATHER JOHN [*kneels and touches him*].

He is not dead.

BIDDY [*pointing to NANNY*].

He is dead. If it was letting on he was, he would not have let that one rob him and search him the way she did.

FATHER JOHN.

It has the appearance of death, but it is not death. He is in a trance.

PAUDEEN.

Is it Heaven and Hell he is walking at this time to be bringing back newses of the sinners in pain?

BIDDY.

I was thinking myself it might away he was, riding on white horses with the riders of the forths. [192]

JOHNNY.

He will have great wonders to tell out the time he will rise up from the ground. It is a pity he not to waken at this time and to lead us on to overcome the troop of the English. Sure those that are in a trance get strength, that they can walk on water.

ANDREW.

It was Father John wakened him yesterday the time he was lying in the same way. Wasn't I telling you it was for that I called to him?

BIDDY.

Waken him now till they'll see did I tell any lie in my foretelling. I knew well by the signs, he was coming within the best day of his life.

PAUDEEN.

And not dead at all! We'll be marching to attack Dublin itself within a week. The horn will blow for him, and all good men will gather to him. Hurry on, Father, and waken him.

FATHER JOHN.

I will not waken him. I will not bring him back from where he is.

JOHNNY.

And how long will it be before he will waken of himself? [193]

FATHER JOHN.

Maybe to-day, maybe to-morrow, it is hard to be certain.

BIDDY.

If it is *away* he is he might be away seven years. To be lying like a stump of a tree and using no food and the world not able to knock a word out of him, I know the signs of it well.

JOHNNY.

We cannot be waiting and watching through seven years. If the business he has started is to be done we have to go on here and now. The time there is any delay, that is the time the Government will get information. Waken him now, Father, and you'll get the blessing of the generations.

FATHER JOHN.

I will not bring him back. God will bring him back in his own good time. For all I know he may be seeing the hidden things of God.

JOHNNY.

He might slip away in his dream. It is best to raise him up now.

ANDREW.

Waken him, Father John. I thought he was surely dead this time, and what way could I go face Thomas through all that is left of my lifetime, after me standing up to face him the way I did? And if I do take a little drop of an odd night, sure I'd be very lonesome if I did not take it. All the world knows it's not for love of what I drink, but for love of the people that do be with me! Waken him, Father, or maybe I would waken him myself. [*Shakes him.*] [194]

FATHER JOHN.

Lift your hand from touching him. Leave him to himself and to the power of God.

JOHNNY.

If you will not bring him back why wouldn't we ourselves do it? Go on now, it is best for you to do it yourself.

FATHER JOHN.

I woke him yesterday. He was angry with me, he could not get to the heart of the command.

JOHNNY.

If he did not, he got a command from myself that satisfied him, and a message.

FATHER JOHN.

He did—he took it from you—and how do I know what devil's message it may have been that brought him into that devil's work, destruction and drunkenness and burnings! That was not a message from heaven! It was I awoke him, it was I kept him from hearing what was maybe a divine message, a voice of truth, and he heard you speak and he believed the message was brought by you. You have made use of your deceit and his mistaking—you have left him without house or means to support him, you are striving to destroy and to drag him to entire ruin. I will not help you, I would rather see him die in his trance and go into God's hands than awake him and see him go into hell's mouth with vagabonds and outcasts like you! [195]

JOHNNY [*turning to BIDDY*].

You should have knowledge, Bidy Lally, of the means to bring back a man that is away.

BIDDY.

The power of the earth will do it through its herbs, and the power of the air will do it kindling fire into flame.

JOHNNY.

Rise up and make no delay. Stretch out and gather a handful of an herb that will bring him back from whatever place he is in.

BIDDY.

Where is the use of herbs, and his teeth clenched the way he could not use them? [196]

JOHNNY.

Take fire so in the devil's name, and put it to the soles of his feet.

[*Takes a lighted sod from fire.*]

FATHER JOHN.

Let him alone, I say! [*Dashes away the sod.*]

JOHNNY.

I will not leave him alone! I will not give in to leave him swooning there and the country waiting for him to awake!

FATHER JOHN.

I tell you I awoke him! I sent him into thieves' company! I will not have him wakened again and evil things it maybe waiting to take hold of him! Back from him, back, I say! Will you dare to lay a hand on me! You cannot do it! You cannot touch him against my will!

BIDDY.

Mind yourself, do not be bringing us under the curse of the Church.

[*JOHNNY steps back. MARTIN moves.*]

FATHER JOHN.

It is God has him in His care. It is He is awaking him. [*MARTIN has risen to his elbow.*] Do not

touch him, do not speak to him, he may be hearing great secrets.

[197]

MARTIN.

That music, I must go nearer—sweet marvellous music—louder than the trampling of the unicorns; far louder, though the mountain is shaking with their feet—high joyous music.

FATHER JOHN.

Hush, he is listening to the music of Heaven!

MARTIN.

Take me to you, musicians, wherever you are! I will go nearer to you; I hear you better now, more and more joyful; that is strange, it is strange.

FATHER JOHN.

He is getting some secret.

MARTIN.

It is the music of Paradise, that is certain, somebody said that. It is certainly the music of Paradise. Ah, now I hear, now I understand. It is made of the continual clashing of swords!

JOHNNY.

That is the best music. We will clash them sure enough. We will clash our swords and our pikes on the bayonets of the red soldiers. It is well you rose up from the dead to lead us! Come on, now, come on!

[198]

MARTIN.

Who are you? Ah, I remember—where are you asking me to come to?

PAUDEEN.

To come on, to be sure, to the attack on the barracks at Aughanish. To carry on the work you took in hand last night.

MARTIN.

What work did I take in hand last night? Oh, yes, I remember—some big house—we burned it down—but I had not understood the vision when I did that. I had not heard the command right. That was not the work I was sent to do.

PAUDEEN.

Rise up now and bid us what to do. Your great name itself will clear the road before you. It is you yourself will have freed all Ireland before the stooks will be in stacks!

MARTIN.

Listen, I will explain—I have misled you. It is only now I have the whole vision plain. As I lay there I saw through everything, I know all. It was but a frenzy that going out to burn and to destroy. What have I to do with the foreign army? What I have to pierce is the wild heart of time. My business is not reformation but revelation.

[199]

JOHNNY.

If you are going to turn back now from leading us, you are no better than any other traitor that ever gave up the work he took in hand. Let you come and face now the two hundred men you brought out daring the power of the law last night, and give them your reason for failing them.

MARTIN.

I was mistaken when I set out to destroy Church and Law. The battle we have to fight is fought out in our own mind. There is a fiery moment, perhaps once in a lifetime, and in that moment we see the only thing that matters. It is in that moment the great battles are lost and won, for in that moment we are a part of the host of heaven.

PAUDEEN.

Have you betrayed us to the naked hangman with your promises and with your drink? If you brought us out here to fail us and to ridicule us, it is the last day you will live!

JOHNNY.

The curse of my heart on you! It would be right to send you to your own place on the flagstone of the traitors in hell. When once I have made an end of you I will be as well satisfied to be going to my death for it as if I was going home!

[200]

MARTIN.

Father John, Father John, can you not hear? Can you not see? Are you blind? Are you deaf?

FATHER JOHN.

What is it? What is it?

MARTIN.

There on the mountain, a thousand white unicorns trampling; a thousand riders with their swords drawn—the swords clashing! Oh, the sound of the swords, the sound of the clashing of the swords!

[*He goes slowly off stage. JOHNNY takes up a stone to throw at him.*]

FATHER JOHN [*seizing his arm*].

Stop—do you not see he is beyond the world?

BIDDY.

Keep your hand off him, Johnny Bacach. If he is gone wild and cracked, that's natural. Those that have been wakened from a trance on a sudden are apt to go bad and light in the head. [201]

PAUDEEN.

If it is madness is on him, it is not he himself should pay the penalty.

BIDDY.

To prey on the mind it does, and rises into the head. There are some would go over any height and would have great power in their madness. It is maybe to some secret cleft he is going, to get knowledge of the great cure for all things, or of the Plough that was hidden in the old times, the Golden Plough.

PAUDEEN.

It seemed as if he was talking through honey. He had the look of one that had seen great wonders. It is maybe among the old heroes of Ireland he went raising armies for our help.

FATHER JOHN.

God take him in his care and keep him from lying spirits and from all delusions!

JOHNNY.

We have got candles here, Father. We had them to put around his body. Maybe they would keep away the evil things of the air.

PAUDEEN.

Light them so, and he will say out a Mass for him the same as in a lime-washed church.

[*They light the candles.*]

THOMAS *comes in*.

[202]

THOMAS.

Where is he? I am come to warn him. The destruction he did in the night-time has been heard of. The soldiers are out after him and the constables—there are two of the constables not far off—there are others on every side—they heard he was here in the mountain—where is he?

FATHER JOHN.

He has gone up the path.

THOMAS.

Hurry after him! Tell him to hide himself—this attack he had a hand in is a hanging crime. Tell him to hide himself, to come to me when all is quiet—bad as his doings are, he is my own brother's son; I will get him on to a ship that will be going to France.

FATHER JOHN.

That will be best, send him back to the Brothers and to the wise Bishops. They can unravel this tangle, I cannot. I cannot be sure of the truth.

THOMAS.

Here are the constables, he will see them and get away. Say no word. The Lord be praised that he is out of sight. [203]

Constables *come in*.

CONSTABLE.

The man we are looking for, where is he? He was seen coming here along with you. You have to give him up into the power of the law.

JOHNNY.

We will not give him up. Go back out of this or you will be sorry.

PAUDEEN.

We are not in dread of you or the like of you.

BIDDY.

Throw them down over the rocks!

NANNY.

Give them to the picking of the crows!

ALL.

Down with the law!

FATHER JOHN.

Hush! He is coming back. [*To Constables.*] Stop, stop—leave him to himself. He is not trying to escape, he is coming towards you.

PAUDEEN.

There is a sort of a brightness about him. I misjudged him calling him a traitor. It is not to this world he belongs at all. He is over on the other side. [204]

MARTIN.

[*Standing beside the rock where the lighted candles are.*  
*Et calix meus inebrians quam præclarus est!*

FATHER JOHN.

I must know what he has to say. It is not from himself he is speaking.

MARTIN.

Father John, Heaven is not what we have believed it to be. It is not quiet, it is not singing and making music, and all strife at an end. I have seen it, I have been there. The lover still loves but with a greater passion, and the rider still rides but the horse goes like the wind and leaps the ridges, and the battle goes on always, always. That is the joy of Heaven, continual battle. I thought the battle was here, and that the joy was to be found here on earth, that all one had to do was to bring again the old wild earth of the stories—but no, it is not here; we shall not come to that joy, that battle, till we have put out the senses, everything that can be seen and handled, as I put out this candle. [*He puts out candle.*] We must put out the whole world as I put out this candle [*puts out another candle*]. We must put out the light of the stars and the light of the sun and the light of the moon [*puts out the rest of the candles*], till we have brought everything to nothing once again. I saw in a broken vision, but now all is clear to me. Where there is nothing, where there is nothing—there is God! [205]

CONSTABLE.

Now we will take him!

JOHNNY.

We will never give him up to the law!

PAUDEEN.

Make your escape! We will not let you be followed.

[*They struggle with Constables; the women help them; all disappear struggling. There is a shot.*  
MARTIN *stumbles and falls.* *Beggars come back with a shout.*

JOHNNY.

We have done for them, they will not meddle with you again.

PAUDEEN.

Oh, he is down!

FATHER JOHN.

He is shot through the breast. Oh, who has dared meddle with a soul that was in the tumults on the threshold of sanctity?

[206]

JOHNNY.

It was that gun went off and I striking it from the constable's hand.

MARTIN.

*[Looking at his hand, on which there is blood.]*

Ah, that is blood! I fell among the rocks. It is a hard climb. It is a long climb to the vineyards of Eden. Help me up. I must go on. The Mountain of Abiegnos is very high—but the vineyards—the vineyards!

*[He falls back dead. The men uncover their heads.]*

PAUDEEN [*to* BIDDY].

It was you misled him with your foretelling that he was coming within the best day of his life.

JOHNNY.

Madness on him or no madness, I will not leave that body to the law to be buried with a dog's burial or brought away and maybe hanged upon a tree. Lift him on the sacks, bring him away to the quarry; it is there on the hillside the boys will give him a great burying, coming on horses and bearing white rods in their hands.

*[NANNY lays the velvet cloak over him.]*

*They lift him and carry the body away singing:*

Our hope and our darling, our heart dies with you,  
You to have failed us, we are foals astray!

[207]

FATHER JOHN.

He is gone and we can never know where that vision came from. I cannot know—the wise Bishops would have known.

THOMAS [*taking up banner*].

To be shaping a lad through his lifetime, and he to go his own way at the last, and a queer way. It is very queer the world itself is, whatever shape was put upon it at the first.

ANDREW.

To be too headstrong and too open, that is the beginning of trouble. To keep to yourself the thing that you know, and to do in quiet the thing you want to do. There would be no disturbance at all in the world, all people to bear that in mind!

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## PREFACE TO THE FOURTH EDITION.

THE present version of *The Countess Cathleen* is not quite the version adopted by the Irish Literary Theatre a couple of years ago, for our stage and scenery were capable of little; and it may differ still more from any stage version I make in future, for it seems that my people of the waters and my unhappy dead, in the third act, cannot keep their supernatural essence, but must put on too much of our mortality, in any ordinary theatre. I am told that I must abandon a meaning or two and make my merchants carry away the treasure themselves. The act was written long ago, when I had seen so few plays that I took pleasure in stage effects. Indeed, I am not yet certain that a wealthy theatre could not shape it to an impressive pageantry, or that a theatre without any wealth could not lift it out of pageantry into the mind, with a dim curtain, and some dimly robed actors, and the beautiful voices that should be as important in poetical as in musical drama. The Elizabethan stage was so little imprisoned in material circumstance that the Elizabethan imagination was not strained by god or spirit, nor even by Echo herself—no, not even when she answered, as in *The Duchess of Malfi*, in clear, loud words which were not the words that had been spoken to her. We have made a prison-house of paint and canvas, where we have as little freedom as under our own roofs, for there is no freedom in a house that has been made with hands. All art moves in the cave of the Chimæra, or in the garden of the Hesperides, or in the more silent house of the gods, and neither cave, nor garden, nor house can show itself clearly but to the mind's eye.

[212]

Besides re-writing a lyric or two, I have much enlarged the note on *The Countess Cathleen*, as there has been some discussion in Ireland about the origin of the story, but the other notes<sup>[A]</sup> are as they have always been. They are short enough, but I do not think that anybody who knows modern poetry will find obscurities in this book. In any case, I must leave my myths and symbols to explain themselves as the years go by and one poem lights up another, and the stories that friends, and one friend in particular, have gathered for me, or that I have gathered myself in many cottages, find their way into the light. I would, if I could, add to that great and complicated inheritance of images which written literature has substituted for the greater and more complex inheritance of spoken tradition, to that majestic heraldry of the poets some new heraldic images gathered from the lips of the common people. Christianity and the old nature faith have lain down side by side in the cottages, and I would proclaim that peace as loudly as I can among the kingdoms of poetry, where there is no peace that is not joyous, no battle that does not give life instead of death; I may even try to persuade others, in more sober prose, that there can be no language more worthy of poetry and of the meditation of the soul than that which has been made, or can be made, out of a subtlety of desire, an emotion of sacrifice, a delight in order, that are perhaps Christian, and myths and images that mirror the energies of woods and streams, and of their wild creatures. Has any part of that majestic heraldry of the poets had a very different fountain? Is it not the ritual of the marriage of heaven and earth?

These details may seem to many unnecessary; but after all one writes poetry for a few careful readers and for a few friends, who will not consider such details very unnecessary. When Cimabue had the cry it was, it seems, worth thinking of those that run; but to-day, when they can write as well as read, one can sit with one's companions under the hedgerow contentedly. If one writes well and has the patience, somebody will come from among the runners and read what one has written quickly, and go away quickly, and write out as much as he can remember in the language of the highway.

[213]

W. B. YEATS.

*January, 1901.***FOOTNOTE:**

<sup>[A]</sup> I have left them out of this edition as Lady Gregory's *Cuchulain of Muirthemne* and *Gods and Fighting Men* have made them unnecessary. When I began to write, the names of the Irish heroes were almost unknown even in Ireland.



*The Countess Cathleen.*—I found the story of the Countess Cathleen in what professed to be a collection of Irish folklore in an Irish newspaper some years ago. I wrote to the compiler, asking about its source, but got no answer, but have since heard that it was translated from *Les Matinées de Timothé Trimm* a good many years ago, and has been drifting about the Irish press ever since. Léo Lespès gives it as an Irish story, and though the editor of *Folklore* has kindly advertised for information, the only Christian variant I know of is a Donegal tale, given by Mr. Larminie in his *West Irish Folk Tales and Romances*, of a woman who goes to hell for ten years to save her husband and stays there another ten, having been granted permission to carry away as many souls as could cling to her skirt. Léo Lespès may have added a few details, but I have no doubt of the essential antiquity of what seems to me the most impressive form of one of the supreme parables of the world. The parable came to the Greeks in the sacrifice of Alcestis, but her sacrifice was less overwhelming, less apparently irremediable. Léo Lespès tells the story as follows:—

‘Ce que je vais vous dire est un récit du carême Irlandais. Le boiteux, l’aveugle, le paralytique des rues de Dublin ou de Limerick, vous le diraient mieux que moi, cher lecteur, si vous alliez le leur demander, un sixpence d’argent à la main.—Il n’est pas une jeune fille catholique à laquelle on ne l’ait appris, pendant les jours de préparation à la communion sainte, pas un berger des bords de la Blackwater qui ne le puisse redire à la veillée.

‘Il y a bien longtemps qu’il apparut tout-à-coup dans la vieille Irlande deux marchands inconnus dont personne n’avait ouï parler, et qui parlaient néanmoins avec la plus grande perfection la langue du pays. Leurs cheveux étaient noirs et ferrés avec de l’or et leurs robes d’une grande magnificence.

[215]

Tous deux semblaient avoir le même âge: ils paraissaient être des hommes de cinquante ans, car leur barbe grisonnait un peu.

Or, à cette époque, comme aujourd’hui, l’Irlande était pauvre, car le soleil avait été rare, et des récoltes presque nulles. Les indigents ne savaient à quel saint se vouer, et la misère devenait de plus en plus terrible.

Dans l’hôtellerie où descendirent les marchands fastueux on chercha à pénétrer leurs desseins: mais ce fut en vain, ils demeurèrent silencieux et discrets.

Et pendant qu’ils demeurèrent dans l’hôtellerie, ils ne cessèrent de compter et de recompter des sacs de pièces d’or, dont la vive clarté s’apercevait à travers les vitres du logis.

Gentlemen, leur dit l’hôtesse un jour, d’où vient que vous êtes si opulents, et que, venus pour secourir la misère publique, vous ne fassiez pas de bonnes œuvres?

—Belle hôtesse, répondit l’un d’eux, nous n’avons pas voulu aller au-devant d’infortunes honorables, dans la crainte d’être trompés par des misères fictives: que la douleur frappe à la porte, nous ouvrirons.

Le lendemain, quand on sut qu’il existait deux opulents étrangers prêts à prodiguer l’or, la foule assiégea leur logis; mais les figures des gens qui en sortaient étaient bien diverses. Les uns avaient la fierté dans le regard, les autres portaient la honte au front. Les deux trafiquants achetaient des âmes pour le démon. L’âme d’un vieillard valait vingt pièces d’or, pas un penny de plus; car Satan avait eu le temps d’y former hypothèque. L’âme d’une épouse en valait cinquante quand elle était jolie, ou cent quand elle était laide. L’âme d’une jeune fille se payait des prix fous: les fleurs les plus belles et les plus pures sont les plus chères.

[216]

Pendant ce temps, il existait dans la ville un ange de beauté, la comtesse Kitty O’Donnor. Elle était l’idole du peuple, et la providence des indigents. Dès qu’elle eut appris que des mécréants profitaient de la misère publique pour dérober des cœurs à Dieu, elle fit appeler son majordome.

—Master Patrick, lui dit elle, combien ai-je de pièces d’or dans mon coffre?

—Cent mille.

—Combien de bijoux?

—Pour autant d’argent.

—Combien de châteaux, de bois et de terres?

—Pour le double de ces sommes.

—Eh bien! Patrick, vendez tout ce qui n’est pas or et apportez-m’en le montant. Je ne veux garder à moi que ce castel et le champ qui l’entoure.

Deux jours après, les ordres de la pieuse Kitty étaient exécutés et le trésor était distribué aux pauvres au fur et à mesure de leurs besoins.

Ceci ne faisait pas le compte, dit la tradition, des commis-voyageurs du malin esprit, qui ne trouvaient plus d’âmes à acheter.

Aidés par un valet infâme, ils pénétrèrent dans la retraite de la noble dame et lui déroberent le

reste de son trésor . . en vain lutta-t-elle de toutes ses forces pour sauver le contenu de son coffre, les larrons diaboliques furent les plus forts. Si Ketty avait eu les moyens de faire un signe de croix, ajoute la légende Irlandaise, elle les eût mis en fuite, mais ses mains étaient captives— Le larcin fut effectué. Alors les pauvres sollicitèrent en vain près de Ketty dépouillée, elle ne pouvait plus secourir leur misère;—elle les abandonnait à la tentation. Pourtant il n’y avait plus que huit jours à passer pour que les grains et les fourrages arrivassent en abondance des pays d’Orient. Mais, huit jours, c’était un siècle: huit jours nécessitaient une somme immense pour subvenir aux exigences de la disette, et les pauvres allaient ou expirer dans les angoisses de la faim, ou, reniant les saintes maximes de l’Évangile, vendre à vil prix leur âme, le plus beau présent de la munificence du Seigneur tout-puissant. [217]

Et Ketty n’avait plus une obole, car elle avait abandonné son château aux malheureux.

Elle passa douze heures dans les larmes et le deuil, arrachant ses cheveux couleur de soleil et meurtrissant son sein couleur du lis: puis elle se leva résolue, animée par un vif sentiment de désespoir.

Elle se rendit chez les marchands d’âmes.

—Que voulez-vous? dirent ils.

—Vous achetez des âmes?

—Oui, un peu malgré vous, n’est ce pas, sainte aux yeux de saphir?

—Aujourd’hui je viens vous proposer un marché, reprit elle.

—Lequel?

—J’ai une âme a vendre; mais elle est chère.

—Qu’importe si elle est précieuse? l’âme, comme le diamant, s’apprécie à sa blancheur.

—C’est la mienne, dit Ketty.

Les deux envoyés de Satan tressaillirent. Leurs griffes s’allongèrent sous leurs gants de cuir; leurs yeux gris étincelèrent:—l’âme, pure, immaculée, virginale de Ketty! . . . c’était une acquisition inappréciable.

—Gentille dame, combien voulez-vous?

—Cent cinquante mille écus d’or.

—C’est fait, dirent les marchands; et ils tendirent à Ketty un parchemin cacheté de noir, qu’elle signa en frissonnant.

La somme lui fut comptée.

Dès qu’elle fut rentrée, elle dit au majordome:

—Tenez, distribuez ceci. Avec la somme que je vous donne les pauvres attendront la huitaine nécessaire et pas une de leurs âmes ne sera livrée au démon.

Puis elle s’enferma et recommanda qu’on ne vint pas la déranger. [218]

Trois jours se passèrent; elle n’appela pas; elle ne sortit pas.

Quand on ouvrit sa porte, on la trouva raide et froide: elle était morte de douleur.

Mais la vente de cette âme si adorable dans sa charité fut déclarée nulle par le Seigneur: car elle avait sauvé ses concitoyens de la mort éternelle.

Après la huitaine, des vaisseaux nombreux amenèrent à l’Irlande affamée d’immenses provisions de grains.

La famine n’était plus possible. Quant aux marchands, ils disparurent de leur hôtellerie, sans qu’on sût jamais ce qu’ils étaient devenus.

Toutefois, les pêcheurs de la Blackwater prétendent qu’ils sont enchaînés dans une prison souterraine par ordre de Lucifer jusqu’au moment où ils pourront livrer l’âme de Ketty qui leur a échappé. Je vous dis la légende telle que je la sais.

—Mais les pauvres l’ont raconté d’âge en âge et les enfants de Cork et de Dublin chantent encore la ballade dont voici les derniers couplets:—

Pour sauver les pauvres qu'elle aime  
 Ketty donna  
 Son esprit, sa croyance même;  
 Satan paya  
 Cette âme au dévouement sublime,  
 En écus d'or,  
 Disons pour racheter son crime  
*Confiteor.*

Mais l'ange qui se fit coupable  
 Par charité  
 Au séjour d'amour ineffable  
 Est remonté.  
 Satan vaincu n'eut pas de prise  
 Sur ce cœur d'or;  
 Chantons sous la nef de l'église,  
*Confiteor.*

N'est ce pas que ce récit, né de l'imagination des poètes catholiques de la verte Erin, est une véritable récit de carême? [219]

*The Countess Cathleen* was acted in Dublin in 1899 with Mr. Marcus St. John and Mr. Trevor Lowe as the First and Second Demon, Mr. Valentine Grace as Shemus Rua, Master Charles Sefton as Teig, Madame San Carola as Maire, Miss Florence Farr as Aleel, Miss Anna Mather as Oona, Mr. Charles Holmes as the Herdsman, Mr. Jack Wilcox as the Gardener, Mr. Walford as a Peasant, Miss Dorothy Paget as a Spirit, Miss M. Kelly as a Peasant Woman, Mr. T. E. Wilkenson as a Servant, and Miss May Whitty as the Countess Cathleen. They had to face a very vehement opposition stirred up by a politician and a newspaper, the one accusing me in a pamphlet, the other in long articles day after day, of blasphemy because of the language of the demons in the first act, and because I made a woman sell her soul and yet escape damnation, and of a lack of patriotism because I made Irish men and women, who it seems never did such a thing, sell theirs. The politician or the newspaper persuaded some forty Catholic students to sign a protest against the play, and a Cardinal, who avowed that he had not read it, to make another, and both politician and newspaper made such obvious appeals to the audience to break the peace, that some score of police<sup>[B]</sup> were sent to the theatre to see that they did not. I have, however, no reason to regret the result, for the stalls, containing almost all that was distinguished in Dublin, and a gallery of artisans, alike insisted on the freedom of literature, and I myself have the pleasure of recording strange events.

The play has since been revived in New York by Miss Wycherley, but I did not see her performance.

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*The Land of Heart's Desire.*—This little play was produced at the Avenue Theatre in the spring of 1894, with the following cast:—Maurteen Bruin, Mr. James Welch; Shawn Bruin, Mr. A. E. W. Mason; Father Hart, Mr. G. R. Foss; Bridget Bruin, Miss Charlotte Morland; Maire Bruin, Miss Winifred Fraser; A Faery Child, Miss Dorothy Paget. It ran for a little over six weeks. It was revived in America in 1901, when it was taken on tour by Mrs. Lemoyne. It was again played, under the auspices of the Irish Literary Society of New York, in 1903, and has lately been played in San Francisco. [220]

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*The Unicorn from the Stars.*—Some years ago I wrote in a fortnight with the help of Lady Gregory and another friend a five act tragedy called *Where there is Nothing*. I wrote at such speed that I might save from a plagiarist a subject that seemed worth the keeping till greater knowledge of the stage made an adequate treatment possible. I knew that my first version was hurried and oratorical, with events cast into the plot because they seemed lively or amusing in themselves, and not because they grew out of the characters and the plot; and I came to dislike a central character so arid and so dominating. We cannot sympathise with a man who sets his anger at once lightly and confidently to overthrow the order of the world; but our hearts can go out to him, as I think, if he speak with some humility, so far as his daily self carries him, out of a cloudy light of vision. Whether he understand or know, it may be that the voices of Angels and Archangels have spoken in the cloud and whatever wildness come upon his life, feet of theirs may well have trod the clusters. I began with this new thought to dictate the play to Lady Gregory, but since I had last worked with her, her knowledge of the stage and her mastery of dialogue had so increased that my imagination could not go neck to neck with hers. I found myself, too, with an old difficulty, that my words flow freely alone when my people speak in verse, or in words that are like those we put into verse; and so after an attempt to work alone I gave my scheme to her. The result is a play almost wholly hers in handiwork, which I can yet read, as I have just done after the stories of *The Secret Rose*, and recognize thoughts, a point of view, an artistic aim which seem a part of my world. Her greatest difficulty was that I had given her for chief character a man so plunged in trance that he could not be otherwise than all but still and silent, though perhaps with the stillness and the silence of a lamp; and the movement of the play as a whole, if we were to listen to hear him, had to be without hurry or violence. The strange characters, her handiwork, on whom he sheds his light, delight me. She has enabled me to carry [221]

out an old thought for which my own knowledge is insufficient and to commingle the ancient phantasies of poetry with the rough, vivid, ever-contemporaneous tumult of the road-side; to create for a moment a form that otherwise I could but dream of, though I do that always, an art that prophesies though with worn and failing voice of the day when Quixote and Sancho Panza long estranged may once again go out gaily into the bleak air. Ever since I began to write I have awaited with impatience a linking, all Europe over, of the hereditary knowledge of the countryside, now becoming known to us through the work of wanderers and men of learning, with our old lyricism so full of ancient frenzies and hereditary wisdom, a yoking of antiquities, a Marriage of Heaven and Hell.

*The Unicorn from the Stars* was first played at the Abbey Theatre on November 23rd, 1907, with the following cast:—Father John, Ernest Vaughan; Thomas Hearne, a coachbuilder, Arthur Sinclair; Andrew Hearne, brother of Thomas, J. A. O'Rourke; Martin Hearne, nephew of Thomas, F. J. Fay; Johnny Bacach, a beggar, W. G. Fay; Paudeen, J. M. Kerrigan; Bidy Lally, Maire O'Neill; Nanny, Brigit O'Dempsey.

W. B. YEATS.

*March, 1908.*

**FOOTNOTE:**

[B] Mr. Synge has outdone me with his *Play Boy of the Western World*, which towards the end of the week had more than three times the number in the pit alone. Counting the police inside and outside the theatre, there were, according to some evening papers, five hundred.  
—*March, 1908.*

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# THE MUSIC FOR USE IN THE PERFORMANCE OF THESE PLAYS.

[222]

All the music that is printed here, with the exception of Mr. Arthur Darley's, is of that kind which I have described in *Samhain* and in *Ideas of Good and Evil*. Some of it is old Irish music made when all songs were but heightened speech, and some of it composed by modern musicians is none the less to be associated with words that must never lose the intonation of passionate speech. No vowel must ever be prolonged unnaturally, no word of mine must ever change into a mere musical note, no singer of my words must ever cease to be a man and become an instrument.

The degree of approach to ordinary singing depends on the context, for one desires a greater or lesser amount of contrast between the lyrics and the dialogue according to situation and emotion and the qualities of players. The words of Cathleen ni Houlihan about the 'white-scarfed riders' must be little more than regulated declamation; the little song of Leagerie when he seizes the 'Golden Helmet' should in its opening words be indistinguishable from the dialogue itself. Upon the other hand, Cathleen's verses by the fire, and those of the pupils in the *Hour-Glass*, and those of the beggars in the *Unicorn*, are sung as the country people understand song. Modern singing would spoil them for dramatic purposes by taking the keenness and the salt out of the words. The songs in *Deirdre*, in Miss Farr's and in Miss Allgood's setting, need fine speakers of verse more than good singers; and in these, and still more in the song of the Three Women in *Baile's Strand*, the singers must remember the natural speed of words. If the lyric in *Baile's Strand* is sung slowly it is like church-singing, but if sung quickly and with the right expression it becomes an incantation so old that nobody can quite understand it. That it may give this sense of something half-forgotten, it must be sung with a certain lack of minute feeling for the meaning of the words, which, however, must always remain words. The songs in *Deirdre*, especially the last dirge, which is supposed to be the creation of the moment, must, upon the other hand, at any rate when Miss Farr's or Miss Allgood's music is used, be sung or spoken with minute passionate understanding. I have rehearsed the part of the Angel in the *Hour-Glass* with recorded notes throughout, and believe this is the right way; but in practice, owing to the difficulty of finding a player who did not sing too much the moment the notes were written down, have left it to the player's own unrecorded inspiration, except at the 'exit,' where it is well for the player to go nearer to ordinary song.

[223]

I have not yet put Miss Farr's *Deirdre* music to the test of performances, but, as she and I have worked out all this art of spoken song together, I have little doubt but I shall find it all I would have it. Mr. Darley's music was used at the first production of the play and at its revival last spring, and was dramatically effective. I could hear the words perfectly, and I think they must have been audible to anyone hearing the play for the first or second time. They had not, however, the full animation of speech, as one heard it in the dirge at the end of the play set by Miss Allgood herself, who played the principal musician. It is very difficult for a musician who is not a speaker to do exactly what I want. Mr. Darley has written for singers not for speakers. His music is, perhaps, too elaborate, simple though it is. I have not had sufficient opportunity to experiment with the play to find out the exact distance from ordinary speech necessary in the first two lyrics, which must prolong the mood of the dialogue while being a rest from its passions. Miss Farr's music will be used at the next revival of the play.

Mr. Darley's music for *Shadowy Waters* was supposed to be played upon Forgael's magic harp, and it accompanied words of Dectora's and Aibric's. It was played in reality upon a violin, always pizzicato, and gave the effect of harp playing, at any rate of a magic harp. The 'cues' are all given and the words are printed under the music. The violinist followed the voice, except in the case of the 'O', where it was the actress that had to follow.

[224]

W. B. YEATS.

March, 1908.

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## THE KING'S THRESHOLD.

*THE FOUR RIVERS.*

FLORENCE FARR.

The four rivers that run there, Through well-mown level ground  
 Have come out of a blessed well That is all bound and wound  
 By the great roots of an apple, And all fowls of the air  
 Have gathered in the wide branches And keep singing there.

**Transcriber's Note:** To hear this song and any song in this section click on the song title.

### [THE KING'S THRESHOLD.](#)

*THE FOUR RIVERS.*

FLORENCE FARR.

Through well-mown level ground  
 Have come out of a blessed well  
 That is all bound and wound  
 By the great roots of an apple,  
 And all fowls of the air  
 Have gathered in the wide branches  
 And Keep singing there.

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## ON BAILE'S STRAND.

THE FOOL'S SONG.

FLORENCE FARR.

Cuchulain has killed kings, Kings and sons of kings, Dragons out of  
the water and witches out of the air, Banachas and Bonachas and people of the  
woods. Witches that steal the milk, Fomor that steal the children, Hags that have  
heads like hares, Hares that have claws like witches, All riding a-cock-horse,  
Out of the very bottom of the bitter black north.

R

## ON BAILE'S STRAND.

THE FOOL'S SONG.

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Cuchulain has killed kings,  
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Hags that have heads like hares,  
Hares that have claws like witches,  
All riding a-cock-horse,  
Out of the very bottom of the bitter black north.

---

## ON BAILE'S STRAND.

SONG OF THE WOMEN.

FLORENCE FARR.

May this fire have driven out The shape-changers that can put  
 Ruin on a great king's house, Until all be ruinous.  
 Names whereby a man has known The threshold and the hearthstone,  
 Gather on the wind and drive Women none can kiss and thrive,  
 For they are but whirling wind, Out of memory and mind.  
 They would make a prince decay With light images of clay  
 Planted in the running wave; Or for many shapes they have,  
 They would change them into hounds Until he had died of his wounds  
 Though the change were but a whim; Or they'd hurt a spell at him,  
 That he follow with desire Bodies that can never tire  
 Or grow kind, for they anoint All their bodies joint by joint  
 With a miracle-working juice That is made out of the grease



Of the ungoverned unicorn; But the man is thrice forlorn  
 Emptied, ruined, wracked, and lost, That they follow, for at most  
 They will give him Kiss for kiss While they murmur "After this  
 Hatred may be sweet to the taste;" Those wild hands that have embraced  
 All his body can but shove At the burning wheel of love  
 Till the side of hate comes up. Therefore in this ancient cup  
 May the sword-blades drink their fill Of the home-brew there, until  
 They will have for master none But the threshold and hearthstone.

**ON BAILE'S STRAND.**

*SONG OF THE WOMEN.*

FLORENCE FARR.

May this fire have driven out  
The shape-changers that can put  
Ruin on a great king's house,  
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Gather on the wind and drive  
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That he follow with desire  
Bodies that can never tire  
Or grow kind, for they anoint  
All their bodies joint by joint  
With a miracle-working juice  
That is made out of the grease  
Of the ungoverned unicorn;  
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Emptied, ruined, wracked, and lost,  
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While they murmur "After this  
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Those wild hands that have embraced  
All his body can but shove  
At the burning wheel of love  
Till the side of hate comes up.  
Therefore in this ancient cup  
May the sword-blades drink their fill  
Of the home-brew there, until  
They will have for master none  
But the threshold and hearthstone.

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When you were an acorn on the tree top,  
Then was I an eagle-cock;  
Now that you are a withered old block,  
Still am I an eagle-cock.

The image shows four staves of musical notation in treble clef. Each staff contains a series of notes corresponding to the lyrics below it. The notes are simple circles with stems, representing a melody. The lyrics are written in a simple, handwritten-style font below each staff.

THE FOOL'S SONG.—II.

FLORENCE FARR.

When you were an acorn on the tree top,  
Then was I an eagle-cock;  
Now that you are a withered old block,  
Still am I an eagle-cock.

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## DEIRDRE.

MUSICIANS' SONG.—I.

FLORENCE FARR.

*First Musician.*

"Why is it," Queen Edain said, "If I do but climb the stair  
 To the tower overhead When the winds are calling there,  
 Or the gannets calling out, In waste places of the sky.  
 There is so much to think about, That I cry, that I cry?"

*Second Musician.*

But her goodman answered her: "Love would be a thing of naught.  
 Had not all his limbs a stir Born out of immoderate thought.  
 Were he any thing by half, Were his measure running dry,  
 Lovers, if they may not laugh, Have to cry, have to cry."

*The Three Musicians Together.*

But is Edain worth a song Now the hunt begins anew?  
 Praise the beautiful and strong; Praise the redness of the yew;  
 Praise the blossoming apple-stem. But our silence had been wise.  
 What is all our praise to them That have one another's eyes?

**DEIRDRE.****MUSICIANS' SONG.—I.**

FLORENCE FARR.

**First Musician.**

"Why is it," Queen Edain said,  
 "If I do but climb the stair  
 To the tower overhead  
 When the winds are calling there,  
 Or the gannets calling out,  
 In waste places of the sky,  
 There is so much to think about,  
 That I cry, that I cry?"

**Second Musician.**

But her goodman answered her:  
"Love would be a thing of naught  
Had not all his limbs a stir  
Born out of immoderate thought.  
Were he any thing by half,  
Were his measure running dry,  
Lovers, if they may not laugh,  
Have to cry, have to cry."

**The Three Musicians together.**

But is Edain worth a song  
Now the hunt begins anew?  
Praise the beautiful and strong;  
Praise the redness of the yew;  
Praise the blossoming apple-stem.  
But our silence had been wise.  
What is all our praise to them  
That have one another's eyes?

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## DEIRDRE.

MUSICIANS' SONG.—II.

FLORENCE FARR.

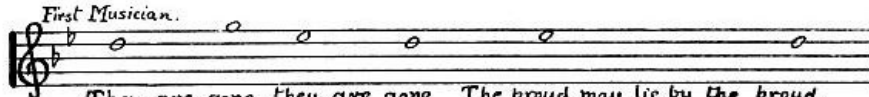
Love is an immoderate thing And can never be content  
 Till it dip an ageing wing, Where some laughing element  
 Leaps and Time's old lanthorn dims. What's the merit in love-play,  
 In the tumult of the limbs That dies out before 'tis day,  
 Heart on heart or mouth on mouth All that mingling of our breath,  
 When love-longing is but drouth For the things that follow death?

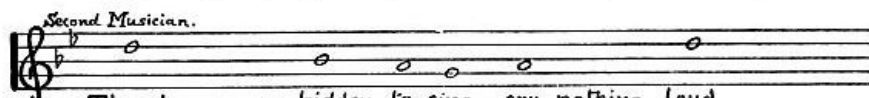
**DEIRDRE.****MUSICIANS' SONG.—II.**

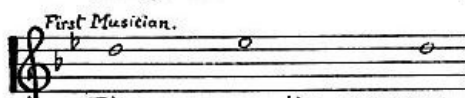
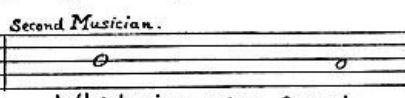
FLORENCE FARR.

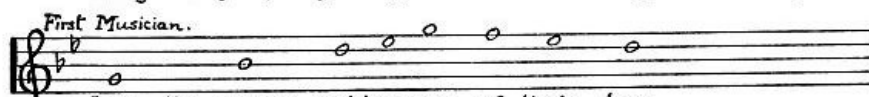
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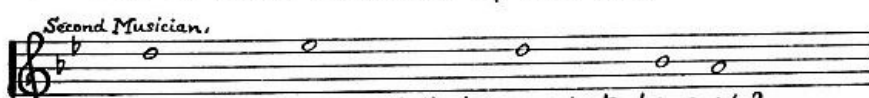
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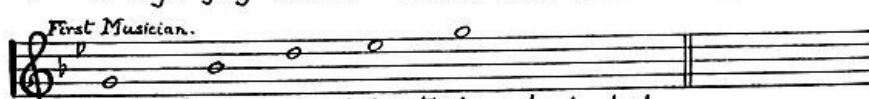
First Musician.  
  
 They are gone, they are gone The proud may lie by the proud.

Second Musician.  
  
 Though we were bidden to sing, cry nothing Loud.

First Musician. Second Musician.  

  
 They are gone, they are gone. Whispering were enough.

First Musician.  
  
 Into the secret wilderness of their love.

Second Musician.  
  
 A high grey cairn. What more is to be said?

First Musician.  
  
 Eagles have gone into their cloudy bed.

**DEIRDRE.****MUSICIANS' SONG.—III.**

FLORENCE FARR.

**First Musician.**

They are gone, they are gone  
 The proud may lie by the proud.

**Second Musician.**

Though we were bidden to sing, cry nothing Loud.

**First Musician.**

They are gone, they are gone.

**Second Musician.**

Whispering were enough.

**First Musician.**

Into the secret wilderness of their love.

**Second Musician.**

A high grey cairn.  
 What more to be said?

**First Musician.**

Eagles have gone into their cloudy bed.

---

## DEIRDRE.

MUSICIANS' SONG.—III.

SARAH ALLGOOD.

*FIRST MUSICIAN*



*They are gone : They are gone; the proud may lie by the proud.*

*SECOND MUSICIAN*



*Though we are bidden to sing, cry nothing loud!*

*FIRST MUSICIAN*



*They are gone, they are gone.*

*SECOND MUSICIAN*



*Whispering were enough.*

*FIRST MUSICIAN.*



*Into the secret wilderness of their love.*

*SECOND MUSICIAN*



*A high grey cairn. What more is to be said?*

*FIRST MUSICIAN*



*Eagles have gone into their cloudy bed.*

**DEIRDRE. MUSICIANS' SONG.—III.**

SARAH ALLGOOD.

**FIRST MUSICIAN**

They are gone:  
They are gone; the proud may lie by the proud.

**SECOND MUSICIAN**

Though we are bidden to sing, cry nothing loud.

**FIRST MUSICIAN**

They are gone, they are gone.

**SECOND MUSICIAN**

Whispering were enough.

**FIRST MUSICIAN.**

Into the secret wilderness of their love.

**SECOND MUSICIAN**

A high grey cairn.  
What more is to be said?

**FIRST MUSICIAN**

Eagles have gone into their cloudy bed.



## SHADOWY WATERS.

ARTHUR DARLEY.

*Forte* *Sailors. And I! And I! And I!*

*Andante* *Deictora: Protect me now, gods, that my people swear by.*

*Andante* *Deictora. I will end all your magic on the instant.*

*Andante* *This sword is to lie beside him in the grave. It was in all his battles. I will spread my hair, and wring my hands, and wail him bitterly, For I have heard that he was proud and laughing, blue-eyed, and a quick runner on bare feet. And that he died a thousand years ago.*

*Moderato* *But no, that is not it. I knew him well, and while I heard him laughing they killed him at my feet.*

*Andante* *For golden-armed Iollan that I loved. Forgael. Have buried nothing but my golden arms.*

*Andante* *Forgael. And knitted mesh to mesh we grow immortal.*

\* The Violinist should time the music so as to finish when Aibric says "For everything is gone".

**SHADOWY WATERS.**

ARTHUR DARLEY.

**Sailors.** And I! And I! And I!**Deictora.** Protect me now, gods, that my people swear by.**Deictora.** I will end all your magic on the instant.<sup>[C]</sup>

This sword is to lie beside him in the grave.

It was in all his battles.

I will spread my hair, and wring my hands, and wail him bitterly,

For I have heard that he was proud and laughing, blue-eyed, and a quick runner on bare feet,

And that he died a thousand years ago.

O! O! O!

But no, that is not it.

I knew him well, and while I heard him laughing they killed him at my feet.

O! O! O! O!

For golden-armed Iollan that I loved.

**Forgael.** Have buried nothing by my golden arms.**Forgael.** And knitted mesh to mesh we grow immortal.**FOOTNOTE:**

<sup>[C]</sup> The Violinist should time the music so as to finish when Aibric says "For everything is gone".

## THE UNICORN FROM THE STARS.

IRISH TRADITIONAL AIRS.

*"The Airy Bachelor."*

*Oh come all ye ai-ry bach-e-lors, come lis-ten un-to me. A ser-geant caught me fowl-ing, and he fired his gun so free... His com-rades came to his re-lief, And I was soon tra-panned... And bound up like a wood-cock That had full-en in-to their hands.*

## THE UNICORN FROM THE STARS

IRISH TRADITIONAL AIRS.

### "The Airy Bachelor."

Oh come all ye airy bachelors,  
 come listen unto me.  
 A sergeant caught me fowling,  
 and he fired his gun so free . . .  
 His comrades came to his relief,  
 And I was soon trapped . . .  
 And bound up like a woodcock  
 That had fallen into their hands.

---

**"Johnnie Gibbons"**

1. Oh Johnnie Gib-bons my five hun-dred healths to you, Its long you're a-way from us ov-er the sea.  
2. Oh John-nie Gib-bons its you were the prop to us, You to have left us, we're fools put a-stray.

**"Johnnie Gibbons."**

1.

Oh Johnnie Gibbons my five hundred healths to you,  
Its long you're away from us over the sea.

2.

Oh Johnnie Gibbons its you were the prop to us,  
You to have left us, we're fools put astray.

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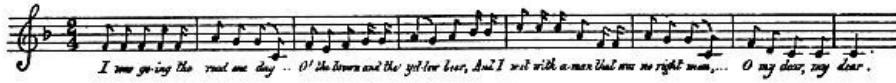
**"The Lion shall lose his strength."**

Oh the Lion shall lose his strength,  
And the bracket thistle pine . . .  
And the harp shall sound sweet, sweet at length  
Between the eight and nine.

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## THE HOUR-GLASS.

*TRADITIONAL ARAN AIR.*



## THE HOUR-GLASS.

*TRADITIONAL ARAN AIR.*

I was going the road one day . . .  
O! the brown and the yellow beer,  
And I met with a man that was no right man, . . .  
Oh my dear, my dear.

---

# CATHLEEN NI HOULIHAN.

## I.

FLORENCE FARR.

I will go cry with the wo-man,  
 For yellow-haired Donough is dead,  
 With a hempen rope for a neck-cloth,  
 And a white cloth on his head.

## II.

Do not make a great keening  
 When the graves have been dug to-morrow.

## III.

They shall be remembered forever  
 [repeat 3 times]  
 The people shall hear them forever.

# CATHLEEN NI HOULIHAN.

FLORENCE FARR.

## I.

I will go cry with the woman,  
For yellow-haired Donough is dead,  
With a hempen rope for a neck-cloth,  
And a white cloth on his head.

**II.**

Do not make a great keening  
When the graves have been dug tomorrow.

**III.**

They shall be remembered forever  
[repeat 3 times]  
The people shall hear them forever.

---

Three of the following settings are by Miss Farr, and she accompanies the words upon her psaltery for the most part. She has a beautiful speaking-voice, and, an almost rarer thing, a perfect ear for verse; and nothing but the attempting of it will show how far these things can be taught or developed where they exist but a little. I believe that they should be a part of the teaching of all children, for the beauty of the speaking-voice is more important to our lives than that of the singing, and the rhythm of words comes more into the structure of our daily being than any abstract pattern of notes. The relation between formal music and speech will yet become the subject of science, not less than the occasion of artistic discovery; for I am certain that all poets, even all delighted readers of poetry, speak certain kinds of poetry to distinct and simple tunes, though the speakers may be, perhaps generally are, deaf to ordinary music, even what we call tone-deaf. I suggest that we will discover in this relation a very early stage in the development of music, with its own great beauty, and that those who love lyric poetry but cannot tell one tune from another repeat a state of mind which created music and yet was incapable of the emotional abstraction which delights in patterns of sound separated from words. To it the music was an unconscious creation, the words a conscious, for no beginnings are in the intellect, and no living thing remembers its own birth.

I give after Miss Farr's settings three others, two taken down by Mr. Arnold Dolmetsch from myself, and one from a fine scholar in poetry, who hates all music but that of poetry, and knows of no instrument that does not fill him with rage and misery. Mr. Arnold Dolmetsch, when he took up the subject at my persuasion, wrote down the recitation of another lyric poet, who like myself knows nothing of music, and found little tunes that delighted him; and Mr. George Russell ('A.E.') writes all his lyrics, a musician tells me, to two little tunes which sound like old Arabic music. I do not mean that there is only one way of reciting a poem that is correct, for different tunes will fit different speakers or different moods of the same speaker, but as a rule the more the music of the verse becomes a movement of the stanza as a whole, at the same time detaching itself from the sense as in much of Mr. Swinburne's poetry, the less does the poet vary in his recitation. I mean in the way he recites when alone, or unconscious of an audience, for before an audience he will remember the imperfection of his ear in note and tone, and cling to daily speech, or something like it.

[235]

Sometimes one composes to a remembered air. I wrote and I still speak the verses that begin 'Autumn is over the long leaves that love us' to some traditional air, though I could not tell that air or any other on another's lips, and *The Ballad of Father Gilligan* to a modification of the air *A Fine Old English Gentleman*. When, however, the rhythm is more personal than it is in these simple verses, the tune will always be original and personal, alike in the poet and in the reader who has the right ear; and these tunes will now and again have great beauty.

### NOTE BY FLORENCE FARR.

I made an interesting discovery after I had been elaborating the art of speaking to the psaltery for some time. I had tried to make it more beautiful than the speaking by priests at High Mass, the singing of recitative in opera and the speaking through music of actors in melodrama. My discovery was that those who had invented these arts had all said about them exactly what Mr. Arnold Dolmetsch and Mr. W. B. Yeats said about my art. Anyone can prove this for himself who will go to a library and read the authorities that describe how early liturgical chant, plain-song and jublations or melismata were adapted from the ancient traditional music; or if they read the history of the beginning of opera and the 'nuove musiche' by Caccini, or study the music of Monteverde and Carissimi, who flourished at the beginning of the seventeenth century, they will find these masters speak of doing all they can to give an added beauty to the words of the poet, often using simple vowel sounds when a purely vocal effect was to be made whether of joy or sorrow. There is no more beautiful sound than the alternation of carolling or keening and a voice speaking in regulated declamation. The very act of alternation has a peculiar charm.

[236]

Now to read these records of music of the eighth and seventeenth centuries one would think that the Church and the opera were united in the desire to make beautiful speech more beautiful, but I need not say if we put such a hope to the test we discover it is groundless. There is no ecstasy in the delivery of ritual, and recitative is certainly not treated by opera-singers in a way that makes us wish to imitate them.

When beginners attempt to speak to musical notes they fall naturally into the intoning as heard throughout our lands in our various religious rituals. It is not until they have been forced to use their imaginations and express the inmost meaning of the words, not until their thought imposes itself upon all listeners and each word invokes a special mode of beauty, that the method rises once more from the dead and becomes a living art.

It is the belief in the power of words and the delight in the purity of sound that will make the arts of plain-chant and recitative the great arts they are described as being by those who first practised them.



THE WIND BLOWS OUT OF THE GATES OF THE DAY.\*

FLORENCE FARR.

The wind blows out of the gates of the day, The wind blows over the lonely of heart,  
 And the lonely of heart is withered away, While the fairies dance in a place apart,  
 Shaking their milkwhite feet in a ring, Tossing their milkwhite arms in the air  
 For they hear the wind laugh and murmur and sing Of a land where even the old are fair  
 And even the wise are merry of tongue. But I heard a reed of Coolaney say,  
 When the wind has laughed and murmured and sung, The lonely of heart must wither away.

**THE WIND BLOWS OUT OF THE GATES OF THE DAY.[D]**

FLORENCE FARR.

The wind blows out of the gates of the day,  
 The wind blows over the lonely of heart,  
 And the lonely of heart is withered away,  
 While the fairies dance in a place apart,  
 Shaking their milkwhite feet in a ring,  
 Tossing their milkwhite arms in the air  
 For they hear the wind laugh and murmur and sing  
 Of a land where even the old are fair  
 And even the wise are merry of tongue.  
 But I heard a reed of Coolaney say,  
 When the wind has laughed and murmured and sung,  
 The lovely of heart must wither away.

---

O Death's old bony finger Will never find us there In the high hollow townland  
 Where love's to give and to spare; Where boughs have fruit and blossom at all times of  
 the year; Where rivers are running over With red beer and brown beer. An old man  
 plays the bagpipes In a gold and silver wood; Queens, their eyes blue like the ice, Are  
 dancing in a crowd.

Chorus.  
 The little fox he murmured, 'O what of the world's bane?' The sun was laughing sweetly,  
 The moon plucked at my rein; But the little red fox murmured, 'O do not pluck  
 at his rein, He is riding to the townland That is the world's bane.'

**THE HAPPY TOWNLAND.<sup>[D]</sup>**

FLORENCE FARR.

O Death's old bony finger  
 Will never find us there  
 In the high hollow townland  
 Where love's to give and to spare;  
 Where boughs have fruit and blossom  
 at all times of the year;  
 Where rivers are running over  
 With red beer and brown beer.  
 An old man plays the bagpipes  
 In a gold and silver wood;  
 Queens, their eyes blue like the ice,  
 Are dancing in a crowd.

Chorus.

The little fox he murmured,  
 'O what of the world's bane?'  
 The sun was laughing sweetly,  
 The moon plucked at my rein;  
 But the little red fox murmured,  
 'O do not pluck at his rein,  
 He is riding to the townland  
 That is the world's bane.'

**FOOTNOTE:**

<sup>[D]</sup> The music as written suits my speaking voice if played an octave lower than the notation.—F.F.

## I HAVE DRUNK ALE FROM THE COUNTRY OF THE YOUNG.\*

FLORENCE FARR.

I have drunk ale from the Country of the Young And weep because I know all things  
now: I have been a hazel tree and they hung The Pilot Star and the Crooked Plough  
Among my leaves in times out of mind: I became a rush that horses tread:  
I became a man, a hater of the wind, knowing one, out of all things, alone, that his head  
Would not lie on the breast or his lips on the hair of the woman that he loves,  
Until he dies; Although the rushes and the fowl of the air cry of his love with  
their pitiful cries.

**I HAVE DRUNK ALE FROM THE COUNTRY OF THE YOUNG.**<sup>[E]</sup>

FLORENCE FARR.

I have drunk ale from the Country of the Young  
And weep because I know all things now:  
I have been a hazel tree and they hung  
The Pilot Star and the Crooked Plough  
Among my leaves in times out of mind:  
I became a rush that horses tread:  
I became a man, a hater of the wind,  
Knowing one, out of all things, alone, that his head  
Would not lie on the breast or his lips on the hair  
Of the woman that he loves, Until he dies;  
Although the rushes and the fowl of the air  
Cry of his love with their pitiful cries.

THE SONG OF WANDERING AENGUS.

W.B.Y.

The musical score consists of four staves of music in G major and 3/4 time. The lyrics are written below the notes. The first staff contains the first two lines of the poem. The second staff contains the next two lines. The third staff features a long melisma over the words 'And when white moths were on the wing, And moth-like stars were flickering out,'. The fourth staff concludes the poem with the final two lines.

I went out to the hazel wood, Be - cause a fire was in my head,  
And cut and peeled a hazel wand, And hooked a berry to a thread;  
And when white moths were on the wing, And moth-like stars were flickering out,  
I dropped the berry in a stream, And caught a little silver trout.

**THE SONG OF WANDERING AENGUS.**

W.B.Y.

I went out to the hazel wood,  
Because a fire was in my head,  
And cut and peeled a hazel wand,  
And hooked a berry to a thread;  
And when white moths were on the wing,  
And moth-like stars were flickering out,  
I dropped the berry in a stream,  
And caught a little silver trout.

---

THE HOST OF THE AIR.

A.H.B.

The image shows a musical score for the song 'THE HOST OF THE AIR.' It consists of two staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat), and a common time signature (C). The melody is written in a simple, folk-like style. The lyrics are written below the notes. The second staff continues the melody and ends with a double bar line. The lyrics are written below the notes.

O' Driscoll drove with a song The wild duck and the drake From the  
tall and the tufted reeds of the dear Hart Lake.

**THE HOST OF THE AIR.**

A.H.B.

O'Driscoll drove with a song  
The wild duck and the drake  
From the tall and tree tufted reeds  
Of the drear Hart Lake.

**FOOTNOTE:**

[E] To be spoken an octave lower than it would be sung.  
—F.F.

## THE SONG OF THE OLD MOTHER.

W.B.Y.

I rise in the dawn, and I kneel and blow  
 Till the seed of the fire flicker and glow;  
 And then I must scrub and bake and sweep  
 Till stars are beginning to blink and peep;  
 And the young lie long and dream in their bed  
 Of the matching of ribbons for bosom and head,  
 And their day goes over in idleness,  
 And they sigh if the wind but lift a tress;  
 While I must work because I am old,  
 And the seed of the fire gets feeble and cold.

**THE SONG OF THE OLD MOTHER.**

W.B.Y.

I rise in the dawn, and I kneel and blow  
 Till the seed of the fire flicker and glow;  
 And then I must scrub and bake and sweep  
 Till stars are beginning to blink and peep;  
 And the young lie long and dream in their bed  
 Of the matching of ribbons for bosom and head,  
 And their day goes over in idleness,  
 And they sigh if the wind but lift a tress;  
 While I must work because I am old,  
 And the seed of the fire gets feeble and cold.

**Transcriber's Notes:**

Obvious punctuation errors repaired.

Page 25, stage direction, mixed case “TEIg” was changed to “TEIG” (TEIG and SHEMUS go out)

Page 70, “marhsalled” changed to “marshalled” (marshalled into rude order)

Page 112, “The CHILD” changed to “THE CHILD” to match rest of usage in text (THE CHILD makes a)

Page 214, “*Les Matinéés de Timothé Trimm*” was retained as printed as it appears spelled this way in more than one text. More common is “*Les Matinéés de Timothée Trimm*.”

Page 216, “apre” changed to “après” (Deux jours après)

Page 217, “Des” changed to “Dès” (Dès qu’elle fut)

Page 218, “enchainés” changed to “enchaînés” (enchaînés dans une prison)

#### **Music Transcriber’s Notes:**

Rhythms have been added to all songs where words are to be spoken on a single note, to match the rhythm of speech.

Shadowy Waters—Although Yeats states in his notes on the music (pp. 223-24) that this piece was played on a violin in actual performance, he states that it is meant to be “Forgael’s magic harp.” For that reason, and reasons of improved sound in midi, a harp sound has been used.

The Airy Bachelor—in bar 3, the second and fourth quarter notes have been corrected to eighths. In “Johnnie Gibbons,” bar 1, the first note should be a dotted quarter. In “The Lion shall lose his strength,” bar 3, the first note should be a dotted quarter.

I—The rests should be quarter rests. II and III—The key and time signature are missing in the original, so the transcriber has guessed at them and adjusted the rhythm to the words.

The Song of Wandering Aengus—a sixteenth rest and fermata have been added to bar 7 to match the rhythm of the other lines in the song.

The Song of the Old Mother—In bars 3 and 19, the first note should be sharp. In the line “And they sigh if the wind but lift a tress,” the eighth note for “but” should be in the next bar.

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