

Ballads of Peace in War

Michael Earls

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Michael Earls

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HIS LIGHT

Gray mist on the sea,
And the night coming down,
She stays with sorrow
In a far town.

He goes the sea-ways
By channel lights dim,
Her love, a true light,
Watches for him.

They would be wedded
On a fair yesterday,
But the quick regiment
Saw him away.

Gray mist in her eyes
And the night coming down:
He feels a prayer
From a far town.

He goes the sea-ways,
The land lights are dim;
She and an altar light
Keep watch for him.

1

THE COUNTERSIGN

Along Virginia's wondering roads
While armies hastened on,
To Beauregard's great Southern host,
Manassas fields upon,
Came Colonel Smith's good regiment,
Eager for Washington.

HIS LIGHT

But Colonel Smith must halt his men
In a dangerous delay,
Though well he knows the countryside
To the distant host of grey.
He cannot join with Beauregard
For Bull Run's bloody fray.

And does he halt for storm or ford,
Or does he stay to dine?
Say, No! but death will meet his men,
Onward if moves the line:
He dares not hurry to Beauregard,
Not knowing the countersign.

Flashed in the sun his waving sword;
"Who rides for me?" he cried,
"And ask of the Chief the countersign,
Upon a daring ride;
Though never the lad come back again
With the good that will betide.

"I will send a letter to Beauregard,"
The Colonel slowly said;
"The bearer dies at the pickets' line,
But the letter shall be read
When the pickets find it for the Chief,
In the brave hand of the dead."

2

The Countersign

"Ready I ride to the Chief for the sign,"
Said little Dan O'Shea,
"Though never I come from the picket's line,
But a faded suit of grey:
Yet over my death will the road be safe,
And the regiment march away."

"In a mother's name, I bless thee, lad,"
The Colonel drew him near:
"But first in the name of God," said Dan,
"And then is my mother's dear——
Her own good lips that taught me well,

With the Cross of Christ no fear."

Quickly he rode by valley and hill,
On to the outpost line,
Till the pickets arise by wall and mound,
And the levelled muskets shine;
"Halt!" they cried, "count three to death,
Or give us the countersign."

Lightly the lad leaped from his steed,
No fear was in his sigh,
But a mother's face and a home he loved
Under an Irish sky:
He made the Sign of the Cross and stood,
Bravely he stood to die.

Lips in a prayer at the blessed Sign,
And calmly he looked around,
And wonder seized his waiting soul
To hear no musket sound,
But only the pickets calling to him,
Heartily up the mound.

For this was the order of Beauregard
Around his camp that day---
The Sign of the Cross was countersign,
(And a blessing to Dan O'Shea)
And the word came quick to Colonel Smith
For the muster of the grey.

3

A HILL O' LIGHTS

Turn from Kerry crossroads and leave the wooded dells,
Take the mountain path and find where Tip O'Leary dwells;
Tip O'Leary is the name, I sing it all day long,
And every bird whose heart is wise will have it for a song.

Tip O'Leary keeps the lights of many lamps aglow,
Little matters it to him the seasons come or go,
Sure if spring is in the air his hedges are abloom,
And fairy buds like candles shine across his garden room.

Ballads of Peace in War

Roses in the June days are light the miles around,
Tapers of the fuchsias move along the August ground,
Sumachs light the flaming torches by October's grave
And like the campfires on the hills the oaks and maples wave.

All the lights but only one die out when summer goes,
One that Tip O'Leary keeps is brighter than the rose,
Through the window comes the bloom on any winter night,
And every sense goes wild to it, soft and sweet and bright.

Lamps are fair that have the light from flowers all day long,
When the birds are here and sing the Tip O'Leary song,
But a winter window is the fairest rose of all,
When Tip O'Leary's hearth is lit and lamps upon the wall.

4

OFF TO THE WAR

(For Jack)

In a little ship and down the bay,
Out to the calling sea,
A young brave lad sailed off today,
To the one great war went he:
The one long war all men must know
Greater than land or gold,
Soul is the prince and flesh the foe
Of a kingdom Christ will hold.

With arms of faith and hope well-wrought
The brave lad went away,
And the voice of Christ fills all his thought,
Under two hands that pray:
The tender love of a mother's hands
That guarded all his years,
Fitted the armor, plate and bands,
And blessed them with her tears.

OFF TO THE WAR

5

Older than Rhodes and Ascalon
And the farthest forts of sea,
Is the Master voice that calls him on
From the hills in Galilee:
From hills where Christ in gentle guise
Called, as He calls again,
With His heart of love and His love-lit eyes
Unto His warrior men.

Christ with the brave young lad to-day
Who goes to the sweet command,
Strengthen his heart wherever the way,
Whether he march or stand:
And whether he die in a peaceful cell,
Or alone in the lonely night,
The Cross of Christ shall keep him well,
And be his death's delight.

5

THE TOWERS OF HOLY CROSS

(For W. M. Letts)

The roads look up to Holy Cross,
The sturdy towers look down,
And show a kindly word to all
Who pass by Worcester Town;
And once you'd see the boys at play,
Or marching cap and gown.

The gallant towers at Holy Cross
Are silent night and day,
A few young lads are left behind
Who still may take their play;
The Cross and Flag look out afar
For them that went away.

And mine are gone, says Beaven Hall,
To camps by hill and plain,
And mine along by Newport Sea,

THE TOWERS OF HOLY CROSS

Says the high tower of O'Kane;
I follow mine, Alumni calls,
Across the watery main.

Their sires were in the old Brigade
That won at Fontenoy,
Stood true at Washington's right hand,
that were his faith and joy:
From Holy Cross to Fredericksburg
Is many a gallant boy.

Then God be with you, says the Cross,
And the brave towers looking down;
I'll be your cloth, sings out the Flag,
For other cap and gown,
And may we see you safe again,
On the hills of Worcester Town.

6

ALWAYS MAYTIME

(for Gerry)

When May has spent its little song,
And richer comes the June,
Through former eyes the heart will long
For May again in tune;
Though large with promise hope may be,
By future visions cast,
Our memoried thoughts will yearn to see
The happy little past.

And you, my loyal little friend,
(From May to June you go),
What years of loyalty attend
Great comradeship we know;
Yet joy have me in place of tears
To see your road depart,
For whether east or west your years,
A friend stays home at heart.

Then gladly let the Springtime pass
And Summer in its wake;
Ahead are fields of flower and grass

ALWAYS MAYTIME

All fragrant for your sake:
With hearts of joy we say farewell,
With laughter, wave and nod,
It's always May for us who dwell
In seasons close to God.

7

THE STORYTELLER

Tim of the Tales they call me,
With a welcome heart and hand;
But little they hold my brother
For all his cattle and land.

If I be walking the high road
From Clare that goes to the sea,
A troop of the young run leaping
To gather a story from me.

Tim of the Tales, the folk say,
Is known the world around,
For children by taking his stories
To their homes in foreign ground.

I pity my brother his fortunes,
And how he sits alone,
With the money that keeps his body,
But leaves his heart a stone.

And sometimes do I be feeling
A dream of death in my ear,
And a heaven of children calling,
"Tim of the Tales is here."

8

MY FATHER'S TUNES

My father had the gay good tunes, the like you'd seldom hear,
A whole day could he whistle them, an' thin he'd up an' sing,
The merry tunes an' twists o'them that suited all the year,
An' you wouldn't ask but listen if yourself stood there a king.
Early of a mornin' would he give "The Barefoot Boy" to us,
An' later on "The Rocky Road" or maybe "Mountain Lark,"
"Trottin' to the Fair" was a liltin' heart of joy to us,
An' whin we heard "The Coulin" sure the night was never dark.

An' what's the good o' foolish tunes, the moilin' folks 'ud say,
It's better teach the children work an' get the crock o' gold;
Thin sorra take their wisdom whin it makes them sad an' gray,—
A man is fitter have a song that never lets him old.
A stave of "Gillan's Apples" or a snatch of "Come Along With Me"
Will warm the cockles o' your heart, an' life will keep its prime.
Yarra, gold is all the richer whin it's "Danny, sing a song for me"
Or what's the good o' money if you're dead afore your time.

It's sense to do your turn o' work, it's healthy to be wise,
An' have the little crock o' gold agin the day o' rain;
But whin the ground is heaviest, your heart will feel the skies,
If you know a little Irish song to lift the road o' pain.
The learnin' an' the wealth we have are never sad an' gray with us,
The dullest times in all the year are merry as the June:
For we've the heart to up an' sing "Arise, an' come away with us,"
The way my father gave it, an' we laughin' in the tune.

9

A SONG

(For John McCormack)

June of the trees in glory,
June of the meadows gay!
O, and it works a story
To tell an October day.

Blooms of the apple and cherry
Toil for the far-off hours;
Never is idleness merry,
In song of the garden bowers.

Brooks to the sea from mountains,
Yea, and from field and vine:
Rain and the sun are fountains
That gather for wheat and wine.

Cellar and loft shall glory,
Table and hearth shall praise,
Hearing October's story
Of June and the merry days.

10

A BALLAD OF FRANCE

Ye who heed a nation's call
And speed to arms therefor,
Ye who fear your children's march
To perils of the war,—
Soldiers of the deck and camp
And mothers of our men,
Hearken to a tale of France
And tell it oft again.

* * *

In the east of France by the roads of war,
(God save us evermore from Mars and Thor!}
Up and down the fair land iron armies came,
(Pity, Jesu, all who fell, calling Thy name).

Pleasant all the fields were round every town,
Garden airs went sweetly up, heaven smiled down;
Till under leaden hail with flaming breath,
Graves and ashen harvest were the keep of death.

One little town stood, white on a hill,

Ballads of Peace in War

Chapel and hostel gates, farms and windmill,
Chapel and countryside met the gunner's path,
Till no blade of kindly grass hid from his wrath.

Lo! When the terrain cleared out of murky air,
When mid the ruins stalked death and despair,
One figure stood erect, bright with day,—
Christ the Crucified, though His Cross was shot away.

Flame and shot tore away all the tender wood,
Yet with arms uplifted Christ His Figure stood;
Out reached the blessing hands, meek bowed the head,
Christ! The saving solace o'er the waste of dead.

11

A Ballad of France

France tells the story, make our hearts know well,
Christ His Figure stands against the gates of hell:
Flame and shot may rive the fortress walls apart,
Christ the Crucified will heal the breaking heart.

Wear Him day and night, wherever be the war,
(God save us evermore from Mars and Thor!)
Flag and heart that keep Him fear not shot and flame,
(Strengthen, Jesu, all who stand, calling Thy name).

* * *

Ye who guard a nation's call
And speed to arms therefor,
Ye who pray for brave lads gone
To perils of the war;
Soldiers of the fleet and fort
And mothers of our men,
In the shadow of the Cross
Shall we find peace again.

12

TO ONE IN SUCCESS

A world's new faces greet you,
Ten thousand quick with praise,
But truer stay to meet you
Old friends and other days:
Let fickle changes hurt you,
(The new go quick apart)
One fame shall ne'er desert you
In true hearts like this heart.

13

THE LIFELONG WAR

Still goes the strife; the anguish does not die.
Stronger the flesh is grown from earthy years,
In siege about my soul that upward peers
To see and hold its Good. The spirit's eye
Approves the better things; but senses spy
The passing sweets, spurning the present fears,
And take their moment's prize. Ah, then hot tears
Deluge my soul, and contrite moans my cry!

Courage, my heart: bright patience to the end!
Few years remain; then goes the warring wall
Of sensely flesh, that men will throw to earth.
So be it; so the contrite soul shall wend
A homeward way unto the Captain's call,
Eternally to know contrition's worth.

14

LINDEN LANE

HOLY CROSS: MAY, 1917

(For Major Joseph W. O'Connor, '03)

Birds are merry and the buds
Come along with May:
Lonely is the linden land
For lads that went today.

What calls the May of song
But the fair young spring?
Heard our boys another tune
Stern voices sing.

Bugles blew by land and sea,
And the tocsin drum;
See, brave hearts go down the hill,
Shouting, "Hail, we come."

From the towers that show the Cross,
Staunch the Flag waved out,
And the royal Purple shook
Joyous with the shout.

Heigh-ho! And a lusty cheer,
Down the linden lane:
The pine grove looked but cannot tell
If they'll come home again.

Few may take the homeward road
When the war is done:
Where they fall or when they come,
Hail, to the cause they won.

Till the buds and the merry birds
Come another May,
Cross and Flag aloft shall bless
Brave lads who went today.

THE BOUNDARIES OF A HOUSE

Along the north a mountain crest,
A row of trees runs towards the west;
The south is all a field for play,
For work the east has marked a way;
The night shows all the stars above,
And the long, long day, a mother's love.

16

ATTAINMENT

Let me go back again. There is the road,
O memory! The humble garden lane
So young with me. Let me rebuild again
The start of faith and hope by that abode;
Amend with morning freshness all the code
Of youth's desire; remap my chart's demesne
With tuneful joy, and plan a far campaign
For better marches in ambition's mode.

Ah, no, my heart! More certain now the skies
For joy abide: the cage of tree and sod,
Horizons firm that faith and hope attain,
Far realms of innocence in children's eyes,
And hearts harmonious with the will of God:—
These might I miss if I were back again.

17

THE PHILOSOPHERS

The best of true philosophers
Are the children, after all,—
The children with laughing hearts
And the serious field and ball:
They have a bowl and bubbles,
And hours where rainbows are;
They find, if ever the sun is hid,
In every dark a star.

But, O, the sorry men that make
The wise books of our day!
They cannot smile athwart a cloud,
When black thoughts lead astray;
They cannot add a simple sum,
But talk like drunken men,
And shut their eyes to keep out God
When spring comes in again.

Far simpler than the Rule of Three
Are the laws of earth and sky;
Yet fools will muddle all true thought,
And pride will have its cry;
The banners with their deadly words
Go reeling on unfurled,
And sin and sadness march along
To the heartbreak of the world.

18

The Philosophers

But the children are the wise men,
With the clearest heart and mind;
If two and one are three, they say,
Then truth is near to find;

THE PHILOSOPHERS

If this be now that once was not,
If things must have a cause,
Then very simple is the sum
That God is in His laws.

The world's men that are fools enough,
They will not speak that way,
But with a cloud of muddled thought
They hide the light of day;
Yet laughing words and candid truth
Abide by field and hall,
Where the best of true philosophers
Are the children, after all.

19

PREPAREDNESS I. THE DRUMMER BOY

You never know when war may come,
And that is why I keep a drum:
For if all sudden in the night
From east or west came battle fright,
And you were sound asleep in bed,
And very soon to join the dead,
You then would gladly wish my drum
Would warn you that the war had come.

So that is why on afternoons
I tell the neighborhood my tunes:
Sometimes behind a fortress bench,
Or where the hedges make a trench,
I beat the drum with all my might,
While people look with awful fright,
Just as they would if war had come,
And heard the warning of my drum.

They must be thankful, I am sure,
Because they now may feel secure,
And rest so safe and sound in bed,

Without wild dreams of fearful dread;
For now they hear me all the day,
As round the yard I march and play,
To let them know if war should come
They'll get the warning of my drum.

~~~~~

20

## Preparedness II. THE SAILOR

A sailor that rides the ocean wave,  
And I in my room at home:  
Where are the seas I fear to brave,  
Or the lands I may not roam?  
At the attic window I take my stand,  
And tighten the curtain sail,  
Then, ahoy! I ride the leagues of land,  
Whether in calm or gale.

Tree at anchor along the road  
Bow as I speed along;  
At sunny brooks in the valley I load  
Cargoes of blossom and song;  
Stories I take on the passing wind  
From the plains and forest seas,  
And the Golden Fleece I yet will find,  
And the fruit of Hesperides.

Steady I keep my watchful eyes,  
As I range the thousand miles,  
Till evening tides in western skies  
Turn gold the cloudland isles;  
Then fast is the hatch and dark the screen,  
And I bring my cabin light;  
With a wink I change to a submarine  
And drop in the sea of Night.

21

## WAR IN THE NORTH

Not from Mars and not from Thor  
Comes the war, the welcome war,  
Many months we waited for  
To free us from the bondage  
Of Winter's gloomy reign:  
Valor to our hope is bound,  
Songs of courage loud resound,  
Vowed is Spring to win her ground  
Through all our northern country,  
From Oregon to Maine.

All our loyal brave allies  
In the Southlands mobilize,  
Faith is sworn to our emprise,  
The scouting breezes whisper  
That help is sure today:  
Vanguards of the springtime rains  
Cannonade the hills and plains,  
Freeing them from Winter's chains,  
So birds and buds may flourish  
Around the throne of May.

Hark! and hear the clarion call  
Bluebirds give by fence and wall!  
Look! The darts of sunlight fall,  
And red shields of the robins  
Ride boldly down the leas;  
Hail! The cherry banners shine,  
Onward comes the battle line,—  
On! White dogwood waves the sign,  
And exile troops of blossoms  
Are sailing meadow seas.

22

## War in the North

Winter's tyrant king retires;  
Spring leads on her legion choirs  
Where the hedges sound their lyres;  
The victor hills and valleys  
Ring merrily the tune:  
April cohorts guard the way  
For the great enthroning day,  
When the Princess of May  
Shall wed within our northlands  
The charming Prince of June.

23

## THE HAPPY TIME

Two gloomy scenes may be,  
Or count you three:  
A building hope all crushed at morn,  
A bridal day in clouds of rain,  
And night that keeps a mother's pain  
For tidings of a child forlorn.

Of happy times count more,  
Admit these four:  
A flower of promise rich with day,  
A son with victories that wear  
A halo on his mother's way:  
And friends whose hearts ring like a chime  
Across the world at Christmas time.

24

## THE TIME OF TRUCE

Two young lads from childhood up  
Drank together friendship's cup:  
Joe was glad with Bill at play,  
Bill was home to Joe always.

On their friendship came the blight  
Of a little thoughtless fight;  
Then, alas! each passing day  
Farther bore these friends away.

There was grief in either heart,  
Bleeding deep from sorrow's dart,  
When in thoughtfulness again  
Each beheld the other's pain.

But the shades of night are furled  
When the morning takes the world,  
And the Christmas days of peace  
Make our little quarrels cease.

Bill and Joe on Christmas Day  
Met as in the olden way;  
Bill put out his hand to Joe,—  
It was Christmas Day, you know.

Bill and Joe are friends again,  
And to them long years remain;  
Time may take them far away,  
They keep Christmas every day.

25

## BETHLEHEM

O ye who sail Potomac's even tide  
To Vernon's shades, our Chieftain's hallowed mound;  
Or who at distant shrines high paeans sound  
In Alfred's cult, old England's morning pride;  
Or seek Versailles, conceited as a bride,  
With garish memories of kins strewn round;

Or lay your spirit's cheek on Forum ground,  
For here a mighty Caesar lived and died:  
To these and other stones, O ye who speed,  
Since there, forsooth, a prince was passing great,  
More zealous let your heart's adoring heed  
The Child most Royal in a crib's estate.  
No poor so poor, no king more king than He:  
Come, better pilgrims, to this mystery.

26

## A VOW-DAY FLOWER

(POVERTY, CHASTITY, OBEDIENCE)

Three little leaves like shamrock,  
And the trefoil's love-lit eyes,  
Whether it takes the sunshine  
Or the shadows from the skies.

And richer than rose or lily  
Is the flower he wears today,  
With triune bloom and fragrance  
From earth to heaven away.

Poverty is the low leaf,  
And one is chastely white,  
And the red love of obedience  
Goes up to God a light.

Grow, good flower, and keep him  
Who wears your bloom today,  
Shadow and sunshine bless him,  
And the trefoil's heavenward way.

27

## THE TREE IN THE TENEMENT YARD

(For T. A. Daly)

America, Ireland and Italy,  
All have known this poor old tree.

\* \* \*

A rickety fence goes round the yard  
And the noisy streets stand high:  
The grassless ground is brown and hard,  
And the cinder pathways, lined with shard,  
Sees but a bit of sky.

Once the yard was fertile and fair,  
And lilac bushes near:  
And a Yankee counted with fretful care,  
Under the solacing shadows there,  
The gain of every year.

The crowded walls of trade arose  
And gloomed the avenue:  
But a Munster man at each day's close  
Built in the tree his hope's rainbows,  
And saw his dreams come true.

The years have thickened the darkened air,  
But the tree is still on guard:  
It comforts the young Italian there,  
Who sees the future blossoming fair  
From the tree in the tenement yard.

\* \* \*

America, Ireland and Italy  
All have loved this poor old tree.

28

## OLD HUDSON ROVERS



## Ballads of Peace in War

(For Joyce Kilmer)

When the dreamy night is on, up the Hudson river,  
And the sheen of modern taste is dim and far away,  
Ghostly men on phantom rafts make the waters shiver,  
Laughing in the sibilance of the silver spray.  
Yea, and up the woodlands, staunch in moonlit weather,  
Go the ghostly horsemen, adventuresome to ride,  
White as mist the doublet–braize, bandolier and feather,  
Fleet as gallant Robin Hood in an eventide.

Times are gone that knew the craft in the role of rovers,  
Fellows of the open, care could never load:  
Unalarmed for bed or board, they were leisure's lovers,  
Summer bloomed in story on the Hyde Park Road.  
Summer was a blossom, but the fruit was autumn,  
Fragrant haylofts for a bed, cider–cakes in store,  
Warmer was a cup they know, when the north wind caught 'em  
Down at Benny Havens' by the West Point shore.

Idlers now–and loafers pass, joy is out of fashion,  
Honest fun that fooled a dog or knew a friendly gate,  
Now the craft are vagabonds, sick with modern passion,  
Riding up and down the shore, on an aching freight;  
Sullen are the battered looks, cheerless talk or tipsy,  
Sickly in the smoky air, starving in the day,  
Pining for a city's noise at Kingston or Po'keepsie,  
Eager more for Gotham and a great White Way.

Rich is all the countryside, but glory has departed,  
What if yachts and mansions be, by the river's marge!  
Dim though was a hillside, lamps were happy–hearted,  
Near the cove of Rondout in a hut or barge.  
Silken styles are tyrants, fashion kills the playtime,  
Robs the heart of largess that is kindly to the poor,  
Richer were the freemen, welcome as the Maytime,  
Glad was boy or maiden, seeing Brennan of the moor.  
29

### Old Hudson Rovers

Send us back the olden knights, tell no law to track 'em,  
Give to boy and maid the storytellers as of yore,  
Millionaires in legend–wealth, though no bank would back 'em,

But old Benny Havens by the West Point Shore.  
Off with lazy vagabonds, social ghosts that shiver,  
Give to worthy road-men the great green way,  
And we'll hear a song again up the Hudson river,  
Ringing from a drifting raft, set in silver spray.

30

## A WINTER MINSTER

(For Fr. C. L. O'Donnell)

The interlacing trees  
Arise in Gothic traceries,  
As if a vast cathedral deep and dim;  
And through the solemn atmosphere  
The low winds hymn  
Such thoughts as solitude will hear.  
To lead your way across  
Gray carpet aisles of moss  
Unto the chantry stalls,  
The sumach candelabra are alight;  
Along the cloister walls,  
Like chorister and acolyte,  
The shrubs are vested white;  
The dutiful monastic oak  
In his gray-friar cloak  
Keeps penitential ways  
And solemn orisons of praise;  
For beads upon the cincture-vine  
Red berries warm with color shine,  
And to their constant rosary  
The bedesmen firs incline;  
And fair as frescoes be  
Among the shrines of Italy,  
These lights and shadows are,  
Impalpable in gray and green  
Upon the hills afar  
And the gold westering sun between.  
The music! Hark!  
Oh, an it be no rapturous lark,

Yet has the lesser chant  
The blessedness of song.  
The snowbird mendicant  
Intones the antiphon—  
Et laboremus nos;

31

A Winter Minster

And all the grottoed aisles along,  
Where servitors rejoice,  
The chorused echoes run—

Oremus nos.

The inspiration of the breeze  
Gives every reed a voice  
From tenebrae and silences;  
Over the valleys borne,  
Come organ harmonies;  
And when the low winds call,  
The pines with miserere mourn  
A requiem musical,  
Softer than moonbeams fall  
Across the starry oriels of night,  
Flooding the azure round  
With hushed delight  
And sanctity of sound.

32

## **THE DARK LITTLE ROSE**

IRELAND

THE DARK LITTLE ROSE

When shall we find the spring come in,  
And the fragrant air it blows?  
And when shall the bounty of summer win  
Fairer than fields of Camolin  
For the dark little Rose?

Long was the winter, the storms how long!  
What flower may live i' the snows!  
No bloom shall last under heels of wrong,  
If the heart–blood be not deathless strong,  
As the dark little Rose.

Sing hers the culture sweeter than rain  
That healed old Europe's woes;  
Older than bowers of Lille and Louvain  
Grew by the Rhine and the towns of Spain  
From the dark little Rose.

Leagues in the sunlight never shall fail  
While the broad, round ocean flows;  
Though never a fleet goes up Kinsale,  
See, all the world is within the pale  
Of the dark little Rose.

33

## THE MONK MAELANFAID

Maelanfaid saw a tiny bird  
A–grieving on the ground,  
And O, the sad lament he heard,  
That sorrow's self might sound:  
He could not read a note or word  
The song of grief inwound.

Maelanfaid went within his cell  
To keep a fast and pray,  
To listen to a voice would tell

THE MONK MAELANFAID

The mystery away:  
What was the red long pain befell  
The bird of grief all day?

"Maelanfaid," airy voices call,  
"MacOcha Molv is dead,  
Who killed no creature great or small,  
Who helped all life instead:  
Now griefs of bird and blossom fall  
Around his funeral bed."

34

## THE YOUNG ADVENTURERS

We will go adventuring, will you come adventuring,  
Hail, to all who sail with us the seven pleasant seas:  
All the shores with lily bells, all the flutes of woodland dells  
Are calling like a legend upon a fragrant breeze.

Throw away the haughty cares, children here are millionaires,  
Laughter take for baggage and give your laugh a song;  
We must sail the seas of grass, round the isles of clover pass,  
And delve in leagues of shadowland, when clouds come along.

Caves are walled with treasure trove, rich as any south-sea cove,  
Bullion of the meadow where the gold sun flows;

Round the reefs of mignonette, up the waves of violet,  
Fragrant go our sails and spars with attar of the rose.

On, gay adventurers, bravely ride the billowy furze,  
Golden foil and dewy pearls are swaying to a tune:  
Quaff the brew of red raspberry through the vine veils gossamery.  
Till we turn when night comes down alleys of the moon.

Yea, with laughter in our sails and our hearts a book of tales,  
Down the silver roadways, a homeward hymn we say:--  
Praise the Lord ye great and small, flower and weed majestic,  
For pleasant seas that God gave adventurers today.

35

## THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH

(For Osceola and Pocahontas)

Was it a hundred years ago,  
Or was it but yesterday,  
When we found the roads that grow  
Blossom and song of May?  
Maybe it was but yesterday,  
Or a hundred years ago.

The roads from Bersabee to Dan  
Are old and quickly tire,  
But to the heart of child or man  
Youth is a fairy fire:  
Our youthful roads, they never tire  
From Bersabee to Dan.

Ponce de Leon found no spring,  
But legend's long, long ruth;  
But the grace of God is a magic thing  
Abides with chivalrous youth:  
The grace of God that brings no ruth  
For them who find the spring.

There is a land, there is a May  
Beyond the graveyard tree;  
Ten thousand years are like a day  
Of a youth that we shall see:  
Our young hearts pass the graveyard tree  
To a land forever in May.

36

## THE BONNIE PRINCE O' SPRING

## Ballads of Peace in War

The little green soldiers are here at last,  
With their waving blades and spears;  
And across the hills they are marching fast  
With the drill of a thousand years:  
And I wave afar, and I shout, Hurrah!  
Till I hear their echoing cheers.

A bonnie prince is at their head,  
And his love the legions know:  
For he gives them rest where the twigs are red  
At the hedges cool in a row:  
And afoot are they soon to a birdlike tune  
On the northward march to go.

Oh, I am leal to the marching men,  
To my bonnie Prince I'm true;  
For he tells me the way to his tented glen,  
And the secret password too:  
And he sets in my hair a blossom to wear,  
Like his own good horsemen do.

Then I will follow on all the day  
Where the bonnie Prince has led,  
Till we drive the Winter foeman away  
And throne my Prince instead:  
And sing willaloo! With the birds, willaloo!  
For the Winter King is dead.

37

## ON A TRAIN

(For Christine and Tom)

Oases are charming 'mid the Afric sands,  
Beautiful is summer after rain;  
But the sweetest blossoms may be eyes and hands,  
And two playful children on a train.

Aileen and her brother, home from holiday,  
Left behind them Narragansett town;  
Innocence like music followed all the way,

ON A TRAIN

## Ballads of Peace in War

Summer glowed upon the cheeks of brown.

She that was their escort read a magazine:  
They were young, and trains are dull at night;  
All the passing signals, red and blue and green,  
Counted up the miles for young delight.

I was there behind them, earnest in a book:  
Lo, the journey turned to fairyland,  
When, like magic mirrors, dusty windows took  
Aileen's dancing eyes and waving hand!

That is how it happened on a creeping train,  
How a play began without a word,—  
Peekaboo reflections in a window-pane,  
Such a story-hour was never heard.

Aileen and her brother, strangers were to me;  
They were friendly for the cloth I wore;  
And through leagues of window, youthful play could see  
We were friends to be for evermore.

So we passed the hamlets, passed the miles of night  
In a fairyland of silent games,  
Till the travel ended in the Worcester light,—  
Yet we parted, strangers in our names.

38

### On a Train

But a fortnight later, by an autumn tree,  
Aileen and her brother came my way,  
And another, glad to tell the names of them and me,  
And to hear how travellers can play.

Life is but a journey, say we evermore,  
Passing lights the years have, like a train;  
Three good friends will travel up to heaven's door,  
With the world a merry window-pane.

39



## THE COLUMBINE

Gray lonely rocks about thee stand,  
Ignored of sun and dew,  
Yet is thy breath upon the land,  
To thy vocation true.

So come they character to me  
That works in sunless ways,  
And I shall learn to give with thee  
Dark hills a constant praise.

40

## TWO SEANICHIES

(For Aedh)

'Tis the queerest trade we have, the two of us that go about,  
I that do the talkin', and the little lad that sings,  
We to tell the story of a Land you ought to know about,—  
The wonder land of Erin and the memories it brings.

Sure it is a wonder land, richer than the books it is,  
Full of magic stories and a hopeful heart of song;  
Faith, and near the mountains and the sunny lakes and brooks it is,  
Like the olden seanichies, the pair of us belong.

Far and broad our journeyin' , up and down the land we go,  
Today among the mountains and tomorrow by the sea;  
Pleasant are the roads with us, and to a welcome grand we go,  
Erin wins the heart of you, whoever you may be.

Erin's heart will capture you, if you will but listen now,

## Ballads of Peace in War

Great she was afore the Danes and all her Saxon foes,  
After that the sorrows came, sure your eyes will glisten now,  
Up, my lad, and sing for them "The Dark Little Rose."

Rest awhile and I will tell the fame of Tara's Hall to them,  
All the deeds of valor and a thousand scenes of joy,  
Wicklow hills and Derry fields where Killarney calls to them.  
Come, my lad, it's Ninety-Eight and sing "The Croppy Boy."

Long ago the stranger came and learned to love the ways of her,  
Irish more than Irish the Norman foe became;  
Sure and here across the sea you give your hearts to praise of her,  
The tear and smile within her eyes that ever are the same.

Not for gold or little fame the two of us to go about,  
I that do the talkin', and the little lad that sings,  
We to win your love for her, the Land you're glad to know about,  
The wonder land of Erin and the memories it brings.

41

## THE GREEN BRIGADE ON THE FIELD OF CORN

Where is the war ye march unto,  
From the early tents of morn?  
And what are the deeds ye hope to do,  
Brave Grenadiers of Corn?  
Pearls of the dew are on your hair,  
And the jewels of morning light,  
Pennants of green ye fling to the air,  
And the tall plumes waving bright.

Gaily away and steady ye go,  
Never a faltering line:  
Forward! I follow and try to know  
Word of your countersign:  
Hist! The spies of the tyrant sun  
Eagerly watch your plan,  
Lavish with bribes of gold, they run  
Down to your outmost man.

Steady, good lads, go bravely on  
By the parching hills of pain,  
An armor of shade ye soon may don  
And meet the allies of rain:

And night in the bivouac hours will sing  
Praise of the march ye made,  
And into your pockets good gold will bring,  
Men of the Green Brigade.

Yea, and upon September's field,  
When the long campaign is done,  
With arms up–stacked, your hearts will yield  
Conquest of rain and sun:  
The pennants and plumes will then be sere,  
Your pearls delight no morn,  
But tents of plenty will bless the year,  
Brave Grenadiers of Corn.

42

## ALLELUIA HEIGHT

Obedience to the seasons' marshall–rod,  
That is a law of God,  
Here beauty passes with her gorgeous train,  
On paths that range from bud to grain.  
O, here the searching eyes  
In traffic for the soul's good gain  
Earn wealth of rare delight.  
Far pathways of surprise,  
In color's frumenty bedight,  
Lead off from avenues of day  
Through miles of pageantries:  
And from the starry chancels of the night  
And the inscrutable farther skies,  
Beyond where trackless comets stray,  
Outspreads a world in thought's array.  
And lo! the heart's true voices sing  
From the exulting reverent breast,  
And lips proclaim, with adoration blessed,  
Glad Alleluias to the King.

Prompt is our praise unto a jewelled queen  
In all her courtly splendor set,  
(Fair as those fairylands are seen

By childhood's other sight):  
But if in pauper mien,  
Too poor for stray regret  
Where crowded streets affright  
She stood in beggary,  
Unknown, though faithful to her high degree,—  
O, then her praise 'twere easy to forget.  
Yet ever here,  
For all of time's prompt fickleness—  
From plenteous June and wide largess  
Of full midsummer days,  
To dwarf December pitiless  
Amid the earth's uncomplimented ways—

Yea, constant through the changeful year,  
This queenly Height commands our praise.  
To stand in meek unflinching hardihood  
When fortune blows its storm of fright,  
And work to full effect that good  
Resolved in open days of clearer sight—  
O, this is worth!  
That daily sees the soul  
To braver liberties give birth,  
That heeds not time's annoy,  
And hears surrounding voices roll  
Perennial circumstance of joy.  
Then come not only when the springtime blows  
The old familiar strangeness of its breath  
Across the long-lain snows,  
And chants her resurrected songs  
About the tombs of death;  
Nor yet when summer glows  
In roseate throngs  
And works her plenitude of deeds  
By tangled dells and waving meads,  
Come here in beauty's pilgrimage:  
Nor when the autumn reads  
Illuminate her page  
With tints of magicry besprent  
Of iridescent wonderment—  
(As scrolls in old monastic towers,  
Done in an earnest far-off age).  
But choose to come in winter hours  
To see how character can live,  
How noble character will give  
Through desolate distress  
And cold neglect's duress,  
The fulness of its powers  
And win the soul its victor sign.  
Yea, come when in a peasant gown,

Amid the ample banners of the pine,

And the resounding harpers of the vine,  
Lone winter holds upon the Height  
Her court in full renown.  
Obedient her courtiers go,  
Their gonfalons aloft and bright,  
And scatter pearls of snow;  
Her sturdy knighthood wear for crown  
Prismatic sheen in young delight,  
And wave the cedar oriflamme on high;  
While windward heralds cry,  
Across the battlements of earth  
To parapets along the sky,  
The lauds of character's full worth.

The winter passes and the days come in  
Vibrant with spring.  
And men find welcome at the Easter tomb,  
Reward they win,  
Who make their hearts with courage sing  
Through Lenten opportunity of gloom:  
(Not as the Pharisees,  
With faces lacrimose,  
Who wear pretence of ashen woes,  
And murmur like the tuneless bees,  
Whose honies are hypocrisies),  
But men of character's delight,  
Who like this valiant Height  
Still serving through the bleakest day,  
With humble offerings of sound and sight,  
Do steadfast stand and pray:  
O, count those souls of noble worth,  
And God's good pleasure on His earth,  
Who still, if joy or pain  
Brings sun or rain,  
Heroic sing  
The law of Alleluia to the King.