

BATTLE-
CRIES

TOIR ÒEALBAC
MAC SUÌBNE

ONE SHILLING

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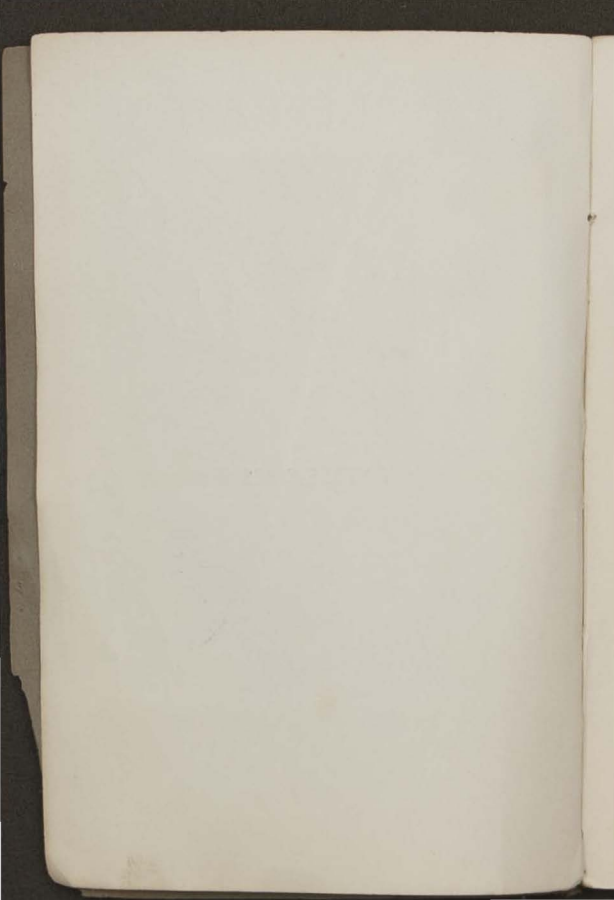


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Battle-Cries

1918

BATTLE-CRIES



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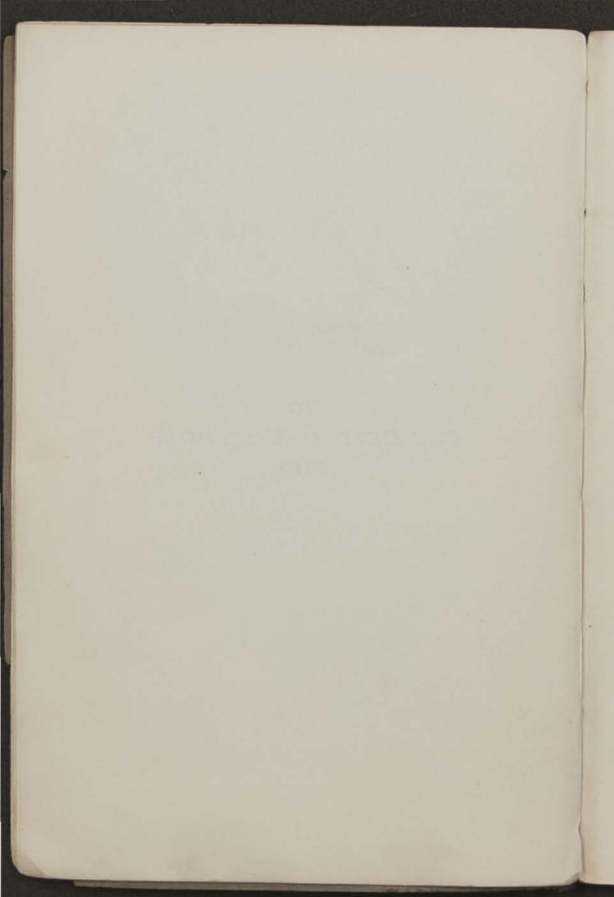
TOIRDEALBÁC MAC SUÍBNE



1918



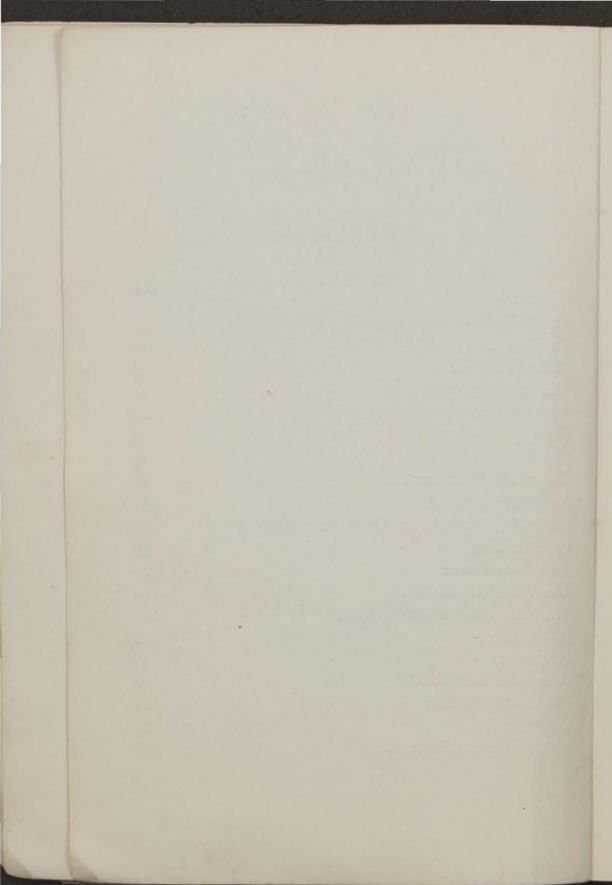
TO
THE DEAD AT EASTERTIDE,
1916.



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BATTLE-CRY

GLORY to God, we shall not die without another blow.
Glory to God, the living flood is sweeping all below.

The flame has cleft the darkness, the old and fierce desire
Has even swept the slave into a white and mounting fire.

'Tis no mad dream: I hear the tread of countless marching
men.

Old Ireland is ablaze, ablaze in city, field and glen.

"To arms!" the cry goes down the wind, and with a wild
delight

We rush to arms, and pray "God speed another gallant
fight."

And we had cursed our bitter time of black and freezing
shame—

Christ, on our knees for this brave hour we bless Thy Sacred
Name.

We shall not perish off the land in dastardly disgrace.
Glory to God, we'll do a deed worthy our royal race.

Old Shane the Proud, look up in Heaven, we send it to the
stars:

We shall be proud, and you shall hear the clamour of our
wars.

Old Brian, smiter of the Dane, and you shall hear as we
Shout your great name, and smite the foe and sweep them
to the sea.

What happy field in Heaven holds you, our brave Red Hugh?
But you must flash in spirit down the battle to renew.

And mighty Aodh shall soar above the well-known Yellow
Ford,

And smile to see us bare again the freedom-winning sword.

Oh, shade of valiant Owen Roe, the old black treachery,
That struck you down, has burst upon the ancient enemy.

The evil game they tried again—set their own train afire !
Glory to God, we'll give them now more than their
heart's desire.

Shout for the long-despaired-of fight. By Heaven, we shall
not fail,

Led by the hosted spirits of the warriors of the Gael.

From out the shining East they come, up the undying West,
From Donegal to Desmond, with glory manifest.

But soft, and still awhile the exultation fierce and loud,
Oh, martyred spirit, see where stands our Emmet pale
and proud.

One passionate prayer we breathe below our hushed,
exulting laugh :

We swear it by the living God to write his epitaph.

Oh, by the Cross of Agony, where Christ our Saviour died,
Let not the kiss of death itself by one man be denied.

Oh, Thou who holdest in Thy Hands the issue of this strife,
We freely offer pain in death and every hope in life.

*Only set on the battle swift, and make us fit and free.
Yea, reckon up the price for us, however great it be,
We'll pay it in our best of blood for Ireland's liberty.*

THE BALLAD OF RORY OGUIE

[" But he was O'More, had rights inherited from afar, nigh 2,000 years old.
These he would uphold against all men, and rather be rolled into his
grave than surrender."—STANDISH O'GRADY.]

" RORY is out," and gallant Leix leaps up with a shout and
a laugh.

Rory is out, and the English scribes were writing his
epitaph!

Now ye of the Pale with fury and terror and hate shall be
pale,

For Rory has vowed he will smash your power, and Rory
will never fail.

With bated breath there is whispering behind the English
walls,

As one who fears to breathe his name some daring feat
recalls;

And one, who would boast, with a toss of his head cries
scorn of the Rapparee,

Till one speaks up who had seen him in state as a chieftain
proud and free.

A man from the court, in a hush intense he tells his
breathless tale,

How Rory rode with his retinue to over-awe the Pale:

He came to the Viceroy's palace, strode through with the
mien of a king,

And the Viceroy's minions bent their heads and their
hearts went fluttering.

Rory and fame and freedom! Let one of Rory's men
Tell of the treacheries in fair guise the English played
again.

Away with the tale. But Rory swore fiercely to Heaven's
height,
" 'Tis a fool will parley with the dogs ;" and his great
sword leapt to light ;
And he vowed, till he'd won his native sod, it never should
know the sheath,
For he'd clear the land of the English brood, or himself be
rolled in death.

With the blaze of a lightning flash he swept straight on
the hated horde,
And their tales were dark with the wrath of his soul and
the play of his terrible sword :
But a cloud passed over his glory, and eager they cried,
" he is fled"—
Many, stuck to the earth with fear, prayed deep in their
hearts, he was dead.

Yet out of the cloud and out of eclipse, as from Hell-black
night, a star,
Stood Rory clear in the light again and stripped for the
truceless war ;
And his foes at a breath of his fury were caught in a new
dismay,
In their visions from air, from sea, and from earth he
storms in his fierce array :

A vampire breathing destruction on the mane of the
swiftest wind ;
An ocean-tempest in curbless power to every mercy
blind ;

As fixed as a rock to assail for their legions issuing forth
As red as blood in his wrath as he thunders o'er trembling
earth.

"Pillage and fire and murder of women and children
frail"—

They brought their stories black to glut the ears of the
trembling Pale.

But there's joy in Leix, and the happy child leaps up on
his mother's arm ;

And the maidens are singing—when "Rory is out," their
hearts are free of alarm.

How he smiled at their taunts without answer : But he
reared his race in pride ;

And his gallant wife to his great heart clung and by him
in battle died.

Oh, swift for this was his vengeance, straight and fierce
where it fell,

And the English shook with his furious blows, and pause
from their tales a spell ;

For their hate and their wrath of his scourging sword
could but feebly dare to tell.

Rory and fame and freedom ! His arm, will it ever tire ?
But the thought of the great beloved dead is writ in the
lurid fire

Of his war implacable ; and he sets a line for his race,
To never yield a foot to the foe, but in blood if need to
efface

The blight of their touch from Irish earth, and leave of them
never a trace.

And he wrote his will in deeds of fire across his native
land,
Till in his final fight his sword dropped from his conquering
hand.
But the English paused in their shout of joy—from
Wicklow slipping free
The bravest son of Rory's house springs to his destiny.

And Rory's spirit rides the wind, and still rolls on the war ;
And the old hope is high and proud, fixed as the morning
star.

And when the banner and the sword, that he so bravely
bore,
Burn in their final victory, they'll light up the days of yore,
And there shall stand in the track of the sun, our Rory
Ogue O'More.

TO CLONTARF

Hail, Brian, our King, to his proud shining throne
Let the sons of the North yield their sway.
Can they crush him, who conquered when standing alone,
Now he sweeps in Dalcassian array?
In the blaze of his glory our country is one,
May confusion darken her foes!
While we march in our joy in the light of the sun,
Lo! in Norseland pale terror grows.

Hush! some would steal forth in defiance to brave
The wrath of our hero and King.
We'll scatter their banners abroad on the wave,
And again of victory sing.
Kincora is proud, for her clansmen have poured
At her call, North, South, East and West:
We'll welcome the invaders with the naked sword,
By the shore we will give them rest!

CRIMAL'S DREAM



[The last warriors of Coole are driven to earth by the Men of Morna. They are making ready for their last fight, when Crimal arrests them with a prophecy that a saviour is at hand. He relates his dream of Fionn. The eager questionings and ejaculations of the warriors are removed to show the continuity of the piece.]

Oh, Warriors, hear me speak
What I have strange to tell—not now a dream
Of night-time only—one most strange of all,
That opened out before me in the sun,
And wrapped my soul in wonder. I have waited,
Nursing its hope, withholding it till came
Some hour more grim than any we have known,
To breathe its hope to you.

Bascell, recall of late,
One bitter day you bent above the fire,
Watching the flame, till from the anxious chase
Our brothers bore the spoils. I left you thus :
Going to meet them in the wood, there came
To me a vision. First my senses swam
With the sweet cadence of a faery-music,
Then was the world around me all transformed,
The black wild winter softened into spring,
Things distant stood revealed. The farthest wood
Opened before me ; there great hosts I saw,
Weaponed for war, alert and harassed, lo !
Not proud as victors, but with troubled front,
Like warriors after overthrow, who look
Their losses to repair.

[The Warriors surmise the Men of Morna.]

While rapt I gazed ,
There sprang a champion from the forest dim
With all the flashing fire of Long-armed Lugh,
And with a mien immortal. Straight he swept
Single upon the host, and instant havoc
He wrought among the warriors : then there passed
The mist of scattering companies o'er the dream.

Yea, there is more. Again the dream was clear :
No longer in a wood I gazed ; I saw
Him standing by a river. Memory touched
Old things in me ; I knew the place he held—
By Liffey's side where Coole the mighty fell—
"Prophetic dream," I cried, and stood entranced,
In rapture gazing. Warriors, he was mighty,
And yet in form most beautiful ; his face
Was radiant as a sun—twould light the world.
Shield-bearing he, thrice armed, and kingly-robed,
Still did the golden flowing hair proclaim
A youthful warrior ; earth-born, yet he wore
The splendour and the dignity of a god.
While I in wonder gazed, the shining brow
With ominous anger-cloud grew stern and dark,
Most terrible—oh, brothers, we are men
And proven warriors, never known to fear,
But never let me see a foeman's front
With aspect so forbidding, dark and weird,
Threatening hidden terrors.

[The Men of Morna are alluded to.]

Yea, on them
His terrible anger darkened ; in my heart
Surged a wild exultation, then deep awe

Grew over me. On him I gazed and gazed,
While he frowned o'er the water, as if there
His foes were scattering, while some shaméd chief
Sought to make brave his terror-stricken warriors,
And lead them back to battle

Brave Conall, yet not vanished was the dream,
I saw the hero-fury, fierce and wild,
Darken and break ; then like the rapid play
Of cloud o'er sunlight went his vivid wrath,
Leaving the bright face open, till serene
And beautiful and kingly shone his brow.
Then full on me he turned. Think of the dread
A cyclone strikes in men on ocean-wastes,
Then of the softening wonder of the spring-time,
Sunlight on water, all earth melody.
So passed my soul from terror to a dream
Divinely-lighted, Oh, immortal fire,
Soul-strength and wonder-music never floated
Through a tired brain, droused in a veil of sleep.
I knew it was prophetic, and I held
Forth to the victor, trembling, pleading hands ;
'Twas then on me he turned. The hero-fury
Died down in tenderness ; his warrior strength
In awe had held me, but his gentleness
Floated around me like a summer dawn,
And softened through me with a wonder-sweetness,
That never wakened in a woman's dream.
Vain, vain are words, vain any art to trace
The light of a soul's wondering, a form
So beautiful, majestic, radiate
With fire and feeling of a rarer world.

I was held breathless till I heard his voice,
More musical than waters in a dream.
Sweep in a wave of harmony : " Brave Crimal,
The power of Morna's men will pass to-morrow."



THE PROPHECY OF FIONN

[Fionn is addressing the Last Warriors of Coole, in their retreat, where they have been holding out against the Men of Morna. He has come to redeem them and has heard the story of their brave struggle. He delivers himself thus :]

It all shall be set down,
And in the memory of the after-time
Our day shall shine with all the glow of dawn-light,
The dream and hope of morning. Bardic song
Shall sing a sweeter triumph than the host
By braver host o'erthrown ; and reverent ears
Shall bend to hear of hero-dreamers' battles,
While pulses quickening, leaping hearts, eyes
glistening
Tell how a people cherish a last hope.
Stern there shall stand a warning to the world
Where dark deeds triumph for a little day,
Beware the dreamer. When a wondering soul
Inspires a dauntless heart, a mind acute,
A hand both strong and quick to strike—beware,
Let tyrannies then tremble. There shall flash,
Like quickening fire thro' the quivering earth,
A message to all nations, like a star
Shattering an ocean-darkness, like a song
Bearing its burden in a single line—
A few men faithful and a deathless dream—
Rouse, rouse, to sound the freedom of a race
And strike slave-souls to fire—awaken, Earth !
No people shall despair who hear it told
From Morna's men so passed the power away.

A CALL TO ARMS

Sons of the Gael, to your glory awaking,
Fling ye to earth all the fears of the slave.
Hark, now our tyrants in battle are shaking ;
Now our old banner forever shall wave.
Where slaves were wont to weep,
Men to the struggle leap :
Lo ! in their thousands they form o'er the plain,
What shall our war-cry be ?
Shout it from sea to sea :
"For God and our country to arms again,"

Long in the gloom was our motherland calling
The sons of our once gallant race to the fray ;
Long were our hopes like the autumn leaves falling—
Now the pure breath of freedom arrests the decay.
Perish the dark despair !
Spirits sing in the air
A rally to battle our land to regain.
Soldiers, with gallant mien
Grasp gun and sabre keen,
And strike for old Ireland in arms again.

Mark, as ye rise how the tyrant is trembling,
Our day fair is dawning, and he in his might
Must yield to the strength of our thousands assembling
In battle-array, and all hot for the fight.
Where is the one who fears ?
Think of the glorious years
Full in the freedom long fought for in vain.

Fling the old flag on high ;
Vow ye to win or die,
And strike for the old cause. To arms again.

Swift now above us the war-clouds are rolling,
But the blaze of our banner is bright in the sky ;
And the crash of our rifles the death-knell is tolling
Of England's dark reign, now the last hour is nigh.
Now make her armies reel
Back from your gleaming steel,
While on their ear falls the old war refrain,
Loudly from wood and glen,
Shout it, my gallant men,
For God and for Ireland. To arms again.



PARLEY

WHAT ! come you at the eleventh hour—
 You ! trembling for your shaking power—
 You ! wolf that would our land devour

 If you were strong ?

But now God's wrath is out at last,
 But now your day is slipping past,
 And the dread thunder-bolt is cast—

 Oh, fierce sweet song !

And now comes retribution fast.

 'Twas prayed for long.

And now you offer terms of peace !
 You see the clouds above increase ;
 You cannot make the thunders cease ;

 Your sun has set.

But still you make a show of state,
 To prove your condescension great—
 But oh, remember, we can wait

 A little yet.

And why you condescend thus late

 We don't forget.

Remember in our bitter woe,
 As we did feel it, lying low,
 That all the world our shame did know :

 Our cup was full,

God, all that agony of shame,
 It scorched us more than any flame,
 For, oh, some souls were still untame,

 Not dead nor dull ;

But you, you ever were the same,

 Unpitiful.

But now, but now the hour is changed ;
Your foes against you all are ranged ;
Your frown is for a smile exchanged ;
 You speak of peace.

But we can read behind a part
You fain would hide, a trembling heart,
Oh, is it strange fierce joy should start ?
 'Tis our release !

While all wild terrors through you dart
 Our hopes increase.

And now 'tis fitter we should write
The terms of peace : we dread no night,
You've spent your strength ; you made the fight ;
 You have not won.

Take hence your weak half-measures now ;
When strong our hearts you could not cow ;
Then to the inevitable bow :
 Your race is run.

Behold us ! Read it on each brow :
 Your day is done.

So, take our terms ; you'll profit well.
What we have suffered, you can tell ;
And now our hearts can even quell
 What vengeance cries.

We will not reckon tears and blood—
God, could we count all, if we would ?
But this, this must be understood :

 Our flag here flies ;
Your power entire ends, ends for good.
 No compromise..

OUR VOW

WHAT is our vow, my brothers,
What are we pledged to do?
To lift our land to freedom.
Pray God we be ever true.

True, yes ; and never falter,
Never forswear the sword ;
And give to the bitter foeman
Never a pleading word.

And, brothers, we are not callous,
Unheeding that blood may be shed ;
But we know that the Lord God judges,
And we know that for us He bled.

And we know that the word is written,
That greater love no man hath
Than to give his life for his brother
On the sacrificial path.

And we crave not the blood of our foeman,
But to sweep him from Irish earth ;
For our land from his reign is blighted,
Our land that knew once peace and mirth.

And our hearts could be mild and peaceful
If the foe from our midst withdrew,
And we would not rush on his country
The bitter fight to renew.

But, hearken there's born a new danger,
A treacherous cry has gone forth :

We're offered the dream of the ages—
If we yield but a corner of earth.

A thousand times no, shout it, brothers,
And fling the last word at the foe ;
We're true to the faith of our fathers.
That right we shall never forego—

To our land undivided and freedom.
For this countless martyrs have died.
Could we stand by their graves, unforgetting,
While their blood and their earth we belied ?

No, no, the lives lost on the scaffold,
And the hearts that were drained on the field,
And the famine and fever in cabins,
These are wounds not so easily healed.

As he comes with his treacherous treaty,
We think of the treaties he tore—
By the gleam of our steel in the sunlight
We will not be fooled as before.

And now is our course clear and simple,
To sweep him from Irish earth.
For our land from his reign is blighted,
Our land that knew once peace and mirth.

Kneel, kneel by the graves of our martyrs,
Kneel, vow we there never to flinch ;
To win back the land of our fathers,
And yield the foe never an inch.

And glory to God who did guard us.
By His glory imperishable
We'll light our brave cause into freedom,
And new life into Eire instil.

And the splendour, the joy and the music,
She knew once while yet she was young,
Will return as she steps in awakening
To her place in the nations among.

THE SUNLIGHT ON OUR STEEL

WE have seen a new and vivid gleam,
And drunk a wondrous hope ;
Glory beyond the morning's beam
That bathes the mountain slope.
Oh, God, how deep our hearts are thrilled,
What joy our spirits feel,
What radiance keeps our voices stilled—
The sunlight on our steel !

The naked, shining steel,
The liberating steel,
Guard of the free, for liberty
Oh cherish still the steel.

We cherished in our hearts a dream ;
In visions shaped the goal ;
But oh, we hungered for a gleam
To cheer the longing soul.
We wearied out the patient skies
Their promise to reveal,
Till heaven flashed to exulting eyes
The sunlight on our steel.

The naked, shining steel,
The liberating steel,
Guard of the free, for liberty
Oh, cherish still the steel.

And in the splendour of its rays
Our freedom we have won ;
Ireland in glory all ablaze
Stands proudly in the sun.

Oh, God, we pray, before our land
Fetters again shall feel,
The foe must meet us hand to hand—
The sunlight on our steel.

The naked, shining steel,
The liberating steel,
Guard of the free, for liberty,
Oh, cherish still the steel.

AN ODE TO A BULLET



SWIFT messenger of death, your kiss of pain
Lay on my brow, before dishonour base
Shall once again drag low our ancient race.
Peace we disclaim, that is not freemen's peace ;
Give us the hurtling war and your swift fate,
 Rather than the slave-state.
Speed on your wings of fire with sweet release
 Yea, though with kiss of pain,
Seek out a secret corner of my brain.

Parley and peace ! Before we play a part
 To tarnish with new shame
The glory of our new-recovered fame,
Herald of Death, let all war's fury start :
 Let us be free and proud
 Or roll me in my shroud.
 Flash in a breath of flame
While the white lightnings through the heavens dart,
And find your home in this unconquered heart.

Grim Terror of the world, ancient despair
 Runs not in this my song.
No, 'tis the secret happiness of the strong.
For your wild fury now we do not care,
Let those who shiver at the word of war
 Call it what name they will—
 Lo, we are faithful still,
And in the heavens salute our ancient star.
Let them cower low, whimpering, void of breath,
Shrink from your kiss, livid, to think of death—

Here where our martyrs died,
We stand again in pride.
Because we hold the open heart and brain
Ready for your swift summons to the slain,
We claim for our ancient race
Her proud and destined place.
Make of our bodies here what wreck you will,
Spectre of Death, when they lie white and still,
Lo, our proud spirits, sweeping exultant, free,
Shall banish your pale terrors from the land
And purge our earth pure of all tyranny.
And Heaven shall witness of our glory be
Where the survivors stand :
Soft shall the reverent air
Whisper our spirit-music everywhere,
And chant in praise of Freedom's conquering brand
This our exultingly
High Song of Victory.

HOW THEY BROUGHT THE GOOD NEWS TO HEAVEN

(A DREAM.)

'Twas the first that fell in battle as they swept in glory free,
And they flashed to Heaven's shining plain in battle-ecstasy.

And they cried to the radiant Seraphim word of the great
new wars,
And their spirits bathed in battle-light outshone the
splendid stars.

"Speed us swift to the happy field where our old heroes
dwell,
For the first to fall have the privilege the glorious news to
tell."

And the Seraphim clashed their shining wings and swept
to Heaven's height,
For the joy of olden prophesy that had leapt at last to light.

And they circled them round with music and they swept
their souls with fire,
Till the first who fell, in battle-joy flashed into the golden
choir.

And they sang in the height of the music and they burned
with the joy divine,
And Heaven was filled with their glory who fell in the
battle line.

But their spirits in all Heaven's splendour were flushed
with a noble pride

To bear the news to the hero-souls who in other years had
died.

And they cried to the shining leader of the soaring
Seraphim :

“Oh, speed us swift to their happy field to the sound of
our battle-hymn.”

And they formed in their battle order, and the angels
ringed them round,

And a hush fell over Heaven at their music's noble sound.

A shining leader led them, and, lo! at a heavenly sign
They swept in their glory forward, who fell in the battle
line.

But the light of their dauntless spirits was flashed to a field
afar

Where the dauntless spirits of other days beheld a splendid
star.

And they rose in the gleam of its beauty, a dazzling
company,

And they cried in a voice: “’Tis the promised star, the
star of the brave and free.”

“Long have we bathed in the glory that God has poured
on these heights,

But now he unrolls the destined dream, and sends us the
light of lights,

The crowning star of His Beauty, His Vision, the light of
lights.”

And up in a stately column like soldiers who need no
word,
They form to wait with their spirits high for the glory long
deferred.

And out of the shining distance, with the blaze of a million
stars,
Flashed forth the exultant spirits new-come from the
glorious wars.

And they came in a rush of music while the angels ringed
them round,
White with the great sun's splendour, they swept to the
sacred ground,

Where the olden heroes waited—oh, God, for an angel
hand
To write of the joy of the meeting there of the brave
united band.

When the news is heard of the victory of the white and the
green and the gold,
Quick with the sweeping music, the warriors proud of old
Fight all their battles over again as they hear the story
told.

Old Cormac of soul-deep wisdom sings of the brave and
wise,
And Conn, the Hundred-fighter, peals forth his battle-
cries.

And Brian, the great Dane-queller, cries: "They shall be
ever free,

Who form them straight in the battle-line as one from sea
to sea."

See Shane in the light of Heaven toss his splendid head in
pride :

"In the worst of days our gallant men Clan London
hordes defied."

And Owen Roe to the mighty Aodh cries out
triumphantly :

"For the soldier-work we were always fit, by the soldier's
sword we are free."

Hear Red Hugh laugh to MacSwiney : "Is there aught our
Heaven lacks" ?

That great chief shook with the olden joy as he swung in
his shining tracks,

"Oh for an hour in Ireland now, and my brave battle-axe."

And Fiach MacHugh and Rory Ogue, whom the joy of
Heaven fills.

Shout for the fire of Leix of old, and the light of the
Wicklow hills.

And Emmet and Tone and Davis, the proud and the gay
and serene

Are swept in the glory prophetic : but soft in the light is
seen.

Where Mitchel turns to his brothers, saying, ever as void
of guile :

"Down comes old Carthage with a crash."—Heaven is in
his smile !

They are all in the flush of the morning, they are all in
the light elate,
For they all have the olden spirit still, who have passed
from the olden hate.

And now they pause from exulting, and clear in one mighty
voice,
They cry to the whole of Heaven : " For the glorious earth
rejoice :

" For the land that has justified us, for the mighty deed it
has done,
For its splendid pride as it lifts its head to the white
majestic sun."

And that is the morning music we hear in the Dawn's
white fire,
Where our souls are hushed in the glory and our foes with
the night retire.

After the age-long years and wars, by the Infinite God,
we, we
Are given the time and the deed to do, to strike old
Ireland free,
Are given our foremost place in the sun and our splendid
destiny.

PROCLAMATION.

PROCLAIMED! I pause before the cry of treason.
Yes, I will never cross the peace again,
I will receive your laws and hail your reason,
And I will praise your justice to all men.
Yes, I will meekly bend as you have spoken,
And banish that dear hope my soul has nursed,
When I shall never get again a token
That, doing so, my soul would be accursed.

When every flower that makes the spring-time holy
Shall fail to stir that hope within my breast ;
In darker hours in all depression lowly
When no soft wind breathes over my unrest ;
When I turn to the torrent's wild commotion,
And it foams not to rouse a thought in me ;
When as of old I wander to the ocean
And find but there a mute, submissive sea.

Or when in hope to hear one stray voice even,
I search the pasture land a whole day long,
And see the lark soar *silently* to heaven
And never once salute mine ear with song.
When I shall see the lakes beneath the mountains
Flash up no smile of greeting to the sun ;
When I shall see the streams from Nature's fountains
Without a murmur through the valley run.

When I, alone, in midnight darkness, fearing,
Thinking on all the terrors of the day,

Must feel God's strength that made us strong and
daring

Will never more support us in the fray ;
When I must know that all the world around us
Is stripped of all its glory and its light,
All Nature dead, while pale Despair surrounds us
To lock us into grim, eternal night.

Then you may come in might, proclaiming treason,
And you may bend me to your power of Hell,
Pleading—as Satan did of old—of reason,
Ah, the old plea, so old, we know how well !
Hear our last word : While there's a hope in Heaven,
While but a breath of air still fans the sky,
We will think freedom worth a fight, though even
We know to win it thousands yet must die.



TO A LATE COMER

ON THE OCCASION OF A CERTAIN CONTROVERSY.

LATE convert to the freeman's sword,
You come to teach us now our part !
But we shall speak the final word,
We who the first to arm did start.

Not for the Empire do we stand,
But for our own historic race ;
Now to make good our old demand,
Now to win back our old proud place.

Come you, will you the sword unsheath ?
Come, burning at our country's call :
Swear by the living God, till death
You'll place old Ireland first of all.

Let Saxon, Teuton, Slav and Frank
Riot in war, and win who will—
Form our brave legions, rank on rank,
For Ireland one, invincible.

We'll ring our coast with steel around—
Aye, beat the invader to the sea ;
But first we'll smash on Irish ground
England's accurst ascendancy.

Not yet the Teuton stirs our dread,
Not over us his banners frown,
There's the old menace here instead.
Who shot our helpless people down ?

By the old valour of our race,
The old flag on the wind shall wave.
'Tis still the English foe we face—
Onward to freedom or the grave!

THE WOMEN OF IRELAND

THEY never failed us in the hour
When Ireland fought and fell,
And how they took their martyrdom
Let Ireland's story tell.
Now Ireland stands to front the foe
In battle once again,
And Ireland's women, quick with pride,
Leap forward with the men.

But not as men with blow for blow—
A mission they divine,
Where through the battle's heat they press
Along the battle line ;
Not weaponed, though the danger's rife,
Through fire at duty's call
They pass with undefended breast
To where the wounded fall.

But undiscerning death is there,
And they must pay the toll :
They brave the terror with the men,
And with them fill the roll.
Oh, Ireland will remember all
When sounds her victory,
And crown her women with her men
In proudest liberty.

THE MARCH OF THE CORK BRIGADE

Air—"The Groves of Blackpool," or "Finceen the Rover."

A RALLY ! The trumpet is sounding !
Through Ireland again rings the call,
And gallant old Cork comes in thousands,
Each man sworn to conquer or fall,
By the blood of our fathers before us,
Our county from mountain to sea
Is marching in strength and in glory
To the old fighting town by the Lee.

I shout for the hosting of Ireland.
But glory to God when I see
Our own boys in green with their rifles
From the old fighting town by the Lee.

The spirits of all who have fallen
To win back the rights of our race,
Rise up in their glory in Heaven,
The pride of the Gael on each face ;
And they pray to the high God of Battles,
Till God's great decree flashes forth—
And down they are speeding in splendour
To bear the glad tidings to earth.

They rally from over high Heaven
To rouse every heart in our land,
But hurrah for our boys who were ready
And waiting the word of command.

Wolfe Tone has passed over Bantry,
Red Hugh has appeared at Kinsale,

And the spirit of great Tadg-an-Osna
Swept proudly up old Shannon Vale ;
O'Sullivan's clans, who went northward
In the grief of their black bitter day,
Have arisen, their faces to Beara,
They are marching back down Ceimaneigh.

A last glorious rally for freedom !
Cork rises from mountain to sea,
And hurrah for a place in the vanguard
For our own fighting town by the Lee !

BALLINADEE

(1915)

THEY are gathering down the mountain side,
And up the valleys deep,
The Spirit calls them far and wide,
That never more shall sleep ;
The old true spirit, free and brave,
That gives our foe the lie,
And even nerves the trembling slave
To have his own or die.

Our foe had thought the last fight made,
But now they see again
Our boys set, serious, unafraid,
Through driving wind and rain ;
No merry meeting in the sun,
They gather in a gale,
To-morrow they will march as one
Against the leaden hail.

Many will fall, but many, too,
In victory shall stand,
And we shall prove our prophets true,
And free our Irish land.
Boys, in that sacred moment kneel,
Praise God who all things wills :
He kept the Spirit's deathless watch
On our unconquered hills.

BEFORE THE LAST BATTLE

God, we enter our last fight.
Thou dost see our cause is right ;
Make us march now in Thy sight
 On to victory.

Let us not Thy wrath deserve
In the sacred cause we serve ;
Let us not from danger swerve,
 Teach us how to die :
Death for some is in reserve
 Before our flag can fly.

All the agony of years,
All the horrors, all the fears,
Martyrs' blood, survivors' tears
 Now we offer Thee,
As an endless holocaust
For the freedom we have lost ;
God, restore it, though the cost
 Greater still must be :
Let Thy grace attend our host
 On to victory.

See, we open our own hearts.
Every wrong that in them smarts,
Every secret pain that starts,
 We, too, offer Thee.
Every dearest hope's decease,
Every fear that rocks our peace,
Every cross with pain's increase,
 Burthened though we be ;

FRAGMENT

(April, 1916)

THE stream, the heathery slope, the field of corn,
The unpretentious cottage in the vale ;
The rich red earth, seed-bearing, full of joy,
Tells of the golden promise soon to be—
Where shall I be in the autumn, when the flower
Is waving o'er these fields?—

Sacrifice that shall not cease,
Till our land be free.

Thou hold'st freedom in Thy Hand,
Thou can'st liberate our land,
Hear us ; grant our one demand,
Ireland's liberty.

We ask not her chains to rive
And the sacred deed survive,
That we may rejoice alive
In her victory.

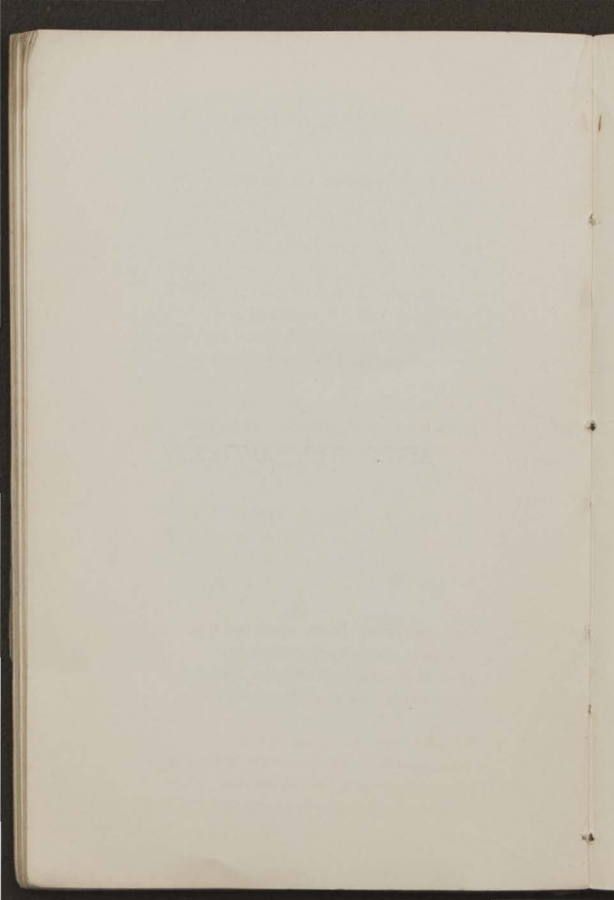
We but ask that she shall thrive
And rest our fate with Thee,

We know not what must befall,
Marching at our country's call ;
Make us strong who must yield all
That she may not die.

Those who will survive the fight,
Still attend them with Thy light ;
Thou, our hope in darkest night,
Then their guardian be ;
And hold our dear land in Thy sight
Erect and firm and free.



AFTER THE BATTLE



EVE OF DEPORTATION

(Richmond Barrack, Dublin, May, 1916)

WE rest to-night beneath the doom,
That, ere to-morrow's sun goes down,
Will banish us—but not in gloom—
Beneath our ancient foeman's frown—

Will banish us from Irish earth,
Our sacred land, our martyred dead,
Where all our hopes and dreams have birth,
To where our foeman's hate is bred—

But not in gloom, because they gave,
Who struck for Ireland that great blow,
Assurance that we still can brave
All the massed power of the foe.

And here, hushed, in the dark of night,
Filled with the thought the morrow brings,
Vision is swift and hope is bright—
We hear, oh Dead, your whisperings.

Oh, conquering Dead, again you rise,
And pass where we in silence lie,
With that same spirit in your eyes
With which you went from us to die.

Ah, the same spirit, but in wise
That breathes through us its secret fire—
What terrors can the foe devise,
Now we are filled with your desire !

You prayed to live for Ireland's sake ;
You died that Ireland might not die.
Lo ! now we follow in your wake,
Sustained, for you are hovering nigh.

All purified in the great strife,
Your spirit came with your last breath :
You are the arbiters of Life,
Because you triumphed over Death.

.
It strikes the hour : we hear our call
Constant, for each one understands,
Because we too will render all
God will place freedom in our hands.

CASEMENT

(Executed 3rd August, 1916)

THEY have immortalised another day
Who struck you down. And oh, we burn with pride
Because of you, our peerless one, who died
In the old proud, unbending, Irish way.

Fearless and kingly, you ; as base were they,
Smarting at your disdain, they villified
The soul we loved. Who now its light can hide,
Where it soars liberated from the clay ?

And you are victor. See their rabble rage
As the bolt falls, and shout their hellish glee,
Frenzied with hate and their impotency,
While you hand on to us our heritage
And make us sharers in your victory :
One with our conquering Dead you rule the age.

TO THE DEAD AT EASTERTIDE

(1916)

BUT yesterday you stood with us against the crowd.
We were not then a host, oh Dead, dispraise was loud.
Ah, not as loud, as deep, as pure as now your praise,
Who died, and brought us back the dream of purer days.

Yet still the many pause—they do not understand.
Children, they, wondering, touch the pure mysterious brand
You lit, and nursed to flame, till grew and grew the fire,
And you went forth to death—death, ah but your desire.

Over all broken plans. They were material things,
And the step seemed so wild—wild, now reflection brings:
All our contrivings were vain. God put them away.
'Twas God broke the plan, letting the spirit have sway.

Ah, how the spirit rose on its wings, and its flight
Gleamed in the dark, and challenged, and put to affright
The power material, holding our land in its chains,
Till the voice of the many, who trembled, that power
disdains.

Ah, but their praise is in wise that was not your wise ;
They have seen the earth rock but not the light in the skies.
Turn, turn but once, and draw them to gaze on the stars,
They try to bend down your dream to their own petty wars.

Ah, and your war was great, divine, and moved to your
dream ;
And the earth you loved as it caught from your vision a
gleam.

Show them the earth in its glory, its beauty, its pride,
Kissed by the spirit, and pure, at its breath beautified.

Ah, but we stand, whom you knew, in the clamour all mute;
Silent we've taken the banner, its glory salute.
Give us to guard and advance it, your pure, burning brand,
To blaze in our battle, and light your dream in the land.

Oh, our brothers, our comrades, our champions, you gave
To victory its meaning, to the hope of our tyrants a grave:
This earth shall be ours for the deed of your last Easter
 morn,
When it laboured in pain of your pain, and the spirit was
 born.



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