

The Joyce Brothers of Glensheen

By

MANNIX JOYCE

GLENOSHEEN is a picturesque little village in the Ballahoura country in south-east Limerick. Its fame, however, does not rest solely on its beauty, for Glensheen was the native place of two men who won distinction in their day and who are still well remembered. These were the brothers Patrick Weston Joyce and Robert Dwyer Joyce.

Patrick Weston (P. W.) Joyce was a man of many parts, teacher, educationalist, translator, historian, topographer, collector of folk music; while Robert Dwyer Joyce, who qualified as a doctor, is best remembered as a song writer, a song writer in whose verses we find frequent mention of the lovely Glensheen countryside—

Afar in the vales of green 'Houra my heart

*lingers all the day long,
Mid the dance of light-footed maidens,
with the music of Ounanaar's song;
Where the steep hills uprise all empurpled
with the bloom of the bright heather bells,
Looking down on their murmuring daughters,
the blue streams of Houra's wild dells.*

Sunday, 16 June, 1968, saw a simple but very impressive tribute paid to the Joyce brothers in their native village. Members of the Cork city branch of *Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann*, who had originated the praiseworthy idea of visiting places associated with collectors of Irish music, decided to visit Glensheen on that day. They were joined by members of the Kilmallock *Comhaltas* branch, for what was intended to be an informal session of

traditional music that would be held in the open and that might, its promoters hoped, attract an audience of forty or fifty people. Instead of that, a crowd of hundreds of people came along, all anxious to join in this tribute to the Joyce brothers.

It was a beautiful sunny day, the kind of day that organisers of outdoor functions are blessed with only once or twice in a lifetime. And the beauty of the day was only in keeping with the beauty of the setting. The little village of Glenosheen, comprising no more than a handful of houses, stretches along a very short by-road that climbs from the Ardpatrik-Kildorrery road to the Green Wood-Glenanaar-Mallow road. There were crowds all along that short, linking by-road, and sitting on the high stone walls and on the roadside fences; and from the crossroads on the Ardpatrik-Kildorrery road one looked up the sloping village street to the great wooded bulk of Seefin (*Suí Finn*), the highest point of the Ballahouras, which rises 1,702 feet straight over the village, and which to-day provided a majestic back-cloth to the proceedings. And all around were other hills and glens and woods and streams, with brown Castleoliver conspicuous on its height in ancient Clonodfoy. The eyes never ceased to roam up the hillsides and down the glens; but the ears remained willing prisoners of the haunting music of violin, pipe and flute that was the musicians' special tribute to the Joyce who was a collector of music and the Joyce who was a singer of songs.

Michael Joyce, a brother of P.W. and Robert Dwyer Joyce, compiled a very interesting pedigree of the family in 1898. The family, according to this pedigree, was descended from Seán Mór Seoighe (Joyce), who came from the Joyce Country in Galway to Lixnaw in Kerry about the year 1680. It appears that this Seán Mór was employed as a steward by the Earl of Lixnaw, who gave him a large tract of

land for his own use in the Lixnaw district, and also a further considerable amount of land in the Athlacca district in County Limerick.

The arrival of a Galway Joyce in Lixnaw may be accounted for by the fact that there was a surprisingly large amount of friendly communication between the Lixnaw district and West Connacht in the seventeenth and preceding centuries, as Stiofán O hAnracháin notes in his book, *Caint an Bhaile Dhuibh* (p. 5). O'Malleys, for example, were frequent visitors to the Earls of Lixnaw (Fitzmaurices). These numerous Connacht visitors came by sea, and probably transferred to smaller boats which were able to sail up the four miles of the Cashen river which brought them within a mile or two of Lixnaw.

Seán Mór had a son named Risteárd Caol, and he in turn had a son named Bearnárd Rua, who was married to a Bríd Mac Auliffe from Newmarket, Co. Cork. Sometime about the year 1750, Bearnárd Rua and his wife, and his son Gearóid Mór, with perhaps other members of the family, came to live to Athlacca. Gearóid Mór married Maryanne Hogan of Athlacca. Their eldest son Robert became known as Roibeárd an Gaeilgeoir, presumably on account of his more than usual proficiency in his native language, Irish.

In 1783 Roibeárd an Gaeilgeoir went to Glenosheen, and settled on a piece of mountainy land he had acquired by marrying Anne Howard, daughter of John Howard, or Seán Rua Ó hIomhair, as he was known to his contemporaries. Seán Rua Ó hIomhair had originally belonged to Kinsale, but after his house had been accidentally burned he came to Kilfinane on the invitation of his first cousin, James Bible, and settled there. Seán Rua had four sons, Garrett, Richard, James and John, who were all skilled musicians. Indeed P. W. Joyce himself attributed his love and ear for music to

the Howard blood that was in him.

Michael Joyce, the compiler of the Joyce pedigree, remembered Roibeárd an Gaeilgeoir Joyce well, and tells us, "He was a tall handsome man, blessed with a fine voice and well versed in Irish history and legend and all the delightful traditions of the country." He died in 1828.

Roibeárd an Gaeilgeoir had a son, Garrett Joyce (the father of P. W., Robert Dwyer and Michael Joyce) and he too, as were those of his line who preceded him, was distinguished by an epithet, in this case "Garrett the Scholar." This was the name given him by one of the fraternity of the New Lights whom he had vanquished in a disputation on religion in the year 1829. Public disputation of this kind was common at that period. Garrett was a shoemaker by trade, and in addition to his interest in religion he was very fond of poetry and could, it was said, repeat the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* with but very few mistakes.

The census return for 1821, when Garrett was living in Ballyorgan, has the following entry: "Joyce: Garrett Joyce (27) shoemaker; occasionally employed. Betty Joyce (27) wife. Michael Joyce (3) son. John Joyce (1) son."

As a matter of interest it might be mentioned that the census return gives "flax spinner" as the occupation of several people in Ballyorgan at that time.

Although he called him Garrett Barry, it is almost certain that it was to his own father, Garrett the Scholar, that P. W. Joyce was referring in *English as we speak it in Ireland* (pp. 314, 315) when, commenting on the use of the term *Roman* in many parts of Ireland to denote a Roman Catholic, he wrote:—

"Sixty or seventy years ago controversial discussions—between a Catholic on the one hand and a Protestant on the other—were very common. I witnessed many when I was a boy—to my great delight. Garrett Barry, a Roman Catholic, locally noted as a controversialist, was

arguing with Mick Cantillon, surrounded by a group of delighted listeners. At last Garrett, as a final clincher, took up the Bible, opened it at a certain place and handed it to his opponent with: 'Read that heading out for us now if you please.' Mick took it up and read, 'St. Paul's Epistle to the *Romans*.' 'Very well,' says Garrett: 'now can you show me in any part of the Bible 'St. Paul's Epistle to the *Protestants*'? This, of course, was a down blow; and Garrett was greeted with a great hurrah by the Catholic part of his audience. This story is in *Knocknagow* but the thing occurred in my neighbourhood and I heard about it long before *Knocknagow* was written."

As I have already remarked, the Garrett Barry of this story was most likely none other than P. W. Joyce's own father, Garrett Joyce, Garrett the Scholar. Garrett the Scholar was a staunch defender of the elder Faith, and was well equipped for disputation, having committed to memory all the arguments put forward in the famous public controversy that took place in Dublin in April, 1827, between Father Thomas Maguire, parish priest of Inismagrath in the diocese of Kilmore, and the Reverend Mr. Pope from Co. Cavan. The fame of this debate, in which the victory went to Father Maguire, spread across the length and breadth of Ireland. The debate was published in booklet form, and a County Clare poet, Donncha Woulfe, sang about it:—

*Le briathra bríomhara beoil
De Phope go brách rínn ceo*

(With fluent words of mouth
Confounded Pope forever).

The ecumenical spirit was not yet abroad in those days, and perhaps it would be too much to expect that it would in an Ireland on which the Penal night had so lately lifted. The New Lights, one of whom

was out-argued by Garrett Joyce, were particularly active in the Askeaton district in the diagonally opposite corner of the county from Glenosheen. In Askeaton and the surrounding parishes they began a vigorous proselytising campaign under the leadership of the Reverend Richard Murray, a minister from the North of Ireland. This campaign was looked upon with disfavour by the local Protestants, who enjoyed very good relations with their Catholic neighbours. In a note in *Abhráin an Reachtúire* (p. 115) Doctor Douglas Hyde has this reference to the New Lights:

"The New Lights seem to have been some religious sect. Burns alludes to them in his poem *The Twa Herds, or, the Holy Tulzie*. There is a long poem in English, *The New Lights of Askeaton*, written by, I think, a carpenter, after the Irish form of versification. I found it in Galway. It consisted of eight verses . . ." Doctor Hyde gives three verses, the first of which goes as follows:—

*Ye muses now come AID me in admonishing
the PAGANS,
The New Lights of ASKEATON, whose
FATE I do deplore;
From innocence and REASON they are
led to CONDEMNATION,
Their faith they have VIOLATED,
the OCCASION of their woe.
The Mass they have FORSAKEN,
their source and RENOVATION,
To free them from DAMNATION and
SATAN'S violent yoke;
The means of their SALVATION at
the great accounting TABLE,
When mountains shall be SHAKEN and
NATIONS overthrown.*

(Note: The words in capitals indicate the assonantal pattern of the poem. A person familiar with Irish poetry would instinctively emphasise the vowel sound, corresponding to Irish "E," in each case, and

would of course pronounce "Askeaton" as if spelt "Askayton" and "reason" as if spelt "rayson").

And all the work of poetic condemnation was not left to the anonymous versifier from whom I have quoted, for Father Liam Mac Gearailt, parish priest of Newcastle West; Séamas Ó Caoinleabháin, of Strand, near Newcastle West, Eoghan Caomhánach of Kilmallock, and Seán Ó Domhnaill of Athlacca, wrote poems in Irish against the New Lights. It was the last muster of the Gaelic poets of Limerick.

Garrett Joyce ("the Scholar"), the recalling of whose verbal victory over the spokesman of the New Lights, caused us to digress somewhat from our subject, was married to Elizabeth O'Dwyer, who was born at Keale, in the parish of Glenroe, in 1795. She bore him eight sons. Of these, two became famous: Patrick, who was born in 1827 and Robert who was born in 1830. Robert later added his mother's name to his own, and in future was to be known as Robert Dwyer Joyce. About the same time Patrick added the name of his maternal grandmother to his name; hence the name Patrick Weston Joyce.

That name Weston recalls a romantic episode. John O'Dwyer, the maternal grandfather of the Joyces, belonged to a fairly well-off family. His father was William O'Dwyer and his mother a Miss Casey. John was an only son, and was partly spoilt by his mother, who sent him to school in Dublin for three years, where there it is not known for certain, but it may have been Trinity College. His mother wished him to be fully accomplished, but John was more interested in enjoying life than in overburthening himself with learning.

There was at that time in Kilfinane a famous dancing academy for young ladies, and among those attending the academy was one Mary Rosaleen Weston, daughter of a fiery old warrior, Major Weston, of Ballinacurra Weston near Limerick City.

John O'Dwyer saw her, fell in love with her, and the pair eloped and were married. O'Dwyer, if captured, would in all probability have been hanged, for the Major vowed vengeance on the papist who had run away with his daughter. But O'Dwyer had a powerful champion in the person of his neighbour, Captain Oliver of Clonodfof (now Castleoliver), who used his influence not only to mollify the anger of the major but to effect a reconciliation between himself and O'Dwyer as well. O'Dwyer's wife embraced the religion of her husband and became a very devout Catholic. Her husband died at the early age of thirty-six, leaving two sons, William and John, and his daughter Elizabeth, to mourn him. The widow O'Dwyer later married a man named O'Donnell. She died in 1838, in her seventieth year, and is buried in the ancient cemetery on the summit of Ardpatrick hill.

P. W. Joyce was born in Ballyorgan in 1827. Ballyorgan is a village situated about a mile east of Glenosheen, and the Joyces must have been domiciled there for some years—they were there for the 1821 census—before returning to Glenosheen, where they were again living by 1830, and where the future historian grew up.

Glenosheen is an interesting little place. It had a colony of Palatines, descendants of some of the 3,000 Germans who had come as refugees from the Rhenish Palatinate to Ireland in 1709. The largest Palatine settlement was that on the Southwell estate near Rathkeale in County Limerick; and it was from there that a number of Palatine families came to Glenosheen, as well as to nearby Ballyorgan and Garranleash, on the invitation of the local landlord, the Right Honourable Silver Oliver. P. W. Joyce remembered hearing the following lines being recited by neighbours:

*In the year seventeen hundred and nine,
In came the brass-coloured Palatine,
From the ancient banks of the Swabian Rhine.*

In Glenosheen the land given to the Palatines, was unoccupied, so that there were no evictions or clearances to make room for them and, consequently, no ill-feelings among their Irish neighbours. In his book, *The Wonders of Ireland* (p. 205) Joyce says:

"In my early time Glenosheen had a mixture of Catholics and Protestants (chiefly Palatine) about half and half and we got on very well together: in recalling the kindly memories of my boyhood companions, Palatines come up as well as Catholics."

When they first came to Glenosheen, the Palatines he tells us had to clear large areas of wood and scrub to prepare their little farms for cultivation. And at that time, and for many years subsequently, their dress, and even their shoes—with the exception of the soles—were made of canvas; they ate *sauer-kraut*, and they slept between two feather beds, that is, between a feather tick and a heavy feather quilt, the latter being of the type that is still common in many parts of Germany, and which serves as a combined sheet, blanket and quilt. Mostly they were Methodists, but they generally attended the Protestant church. They were steady, sober and industrious: good farmers, understood gardening, kept bees, and were fond of making pastry.¹

The principal Palatine surnames in the Glenosheen district were Altines or Alton, Barkman, Bovenizer, Delmege, Fizzell, Glaizier, Heck, Ligier (Ligonier), Ruttle, Shoultiss, Strough, Stuffle (Stoffel) Young.²

Of considerable interest is a description of his native district that Joyce wrote while still in his early twenties. Apart from the pleasing picture it unfolds, the description shows how every feature of the landscape, as well as the place-names and the doings of the people had impressed themselves indelibly upon him.

"The Ballahoura Mountains," he wrote, "extend for several miles on the borders

of the counties of Cork and Limerick. Commencing near Charleville (now officially Ráth Luirc), they stretch away towards the east, consisting of a succession of single peaks with lone and desolate valleys lying between, covered with heath or coarse grass, where for ages the silence has been broken only by the cry of the heath-cock or the yelp of the fox echoing among the rocks that are strewn in wild confusion over the sides of the mountains. They increase gradually in height towards the eastern extremity of the range where they are abruptly terminated by the majestic Seefin, which projecting forwards—its back to the west and its face to the rising sun—seems placed there to guard the desolate solitudes behind it.

“Towards the east it overlooks a beautiful and fertile valley, through which a little river winds its peaceful course to join the Funsheon; on the west ‘Blackrock of the Eagle’ rears its front—a sheer precipice — over Lyre-na-Freaghawn, a black heath-covered glen that divides the mountains. On the south it is separated by Lyre-na-Grena, the ‘valley of the sun,’ from ‘the Long Mountain’ which stretches far away towards Glenanaar; and immediately in front, on the opposite side of the valley, rises Barna Geeha, up whose sides cultivation has crept almost to its summit. Just under the eastern face of Seefin, at its very base and extending even a little way up the mountain steep, reposes the peaceful little village of Glenosheen.”

And then, at the end of that introduction, he sings his song of praise to Glenosheen:

“Gentle reader, go if you can on some sunny morning in summer or autumn—let it be Sunday morning if possible—to the bottom of the valley near the bank of the little stream and when you cast your eyes up to the village and the great green hill over it, you will admit that not many places even in our own green island can produce a prettier or more cheerful prospect. There is the little hamlet with its white-

washed cottages gleaming in the morning beams and from each a column of curling smoke rises slowly straight up towards the blue expanse. The base of the mountain is covered with wood and several clumps of great trees are scattered here and there through the village, so that it appears imbedded in a mass of vegetation, its pretty cottages peeping out from among the foliage.

“The land on each side rises gently towards the mountain, its verdure interspersed by fields of blossomed potatoes laughing with joy, or of bright yellow corn, or more beautiful still, little patches of flax clothed in their Sunday dress of light blue. Seefin rises directly over the village, a perfect cone; white patches of sheep are scattered here and there over its bright sunny face; and see, far up towards the summit, that long line of cattle, just *after leaving* Lyre-na-Grena, where they were driven to be milked, and grazing quietly along towards Lyre-na-Freaghawn. The only sounds that catch your ear are, the occasional crow of a cock, or the exulting cackle of geese, or the softened low of a cow may reach you, floating down the hillside; or the cry of the herdsman, as with earnest gestures he endeavours to direct the movements of the flock.

“But hear that merry laugh. See, it comes from the brow of the hill where the women of the village are just coming into view, returning from Lyre-na-Grena after milking their cows. Each carries a pail in one hand and a spancel in the other, as they approach the village, descending the steep pathway—the ‘Dray-Road,’ as it is called — that leads from ‘the Lyre,’ a gabble of voices mingled with laughter floats over the village, as merry and as happy as ever rung on human ear. Observe now they arrive at the village, the group becomes thinner as they proceed down the street and at length all again is quietness.

"Happy village! Pleasant scenes of my childhood! How vividly at this moment do I behold that green hill-side, as I travel back in imagination to the days of my boyhood when I and my little brother Robert and our companions—all now scattered over this wide world—ranged joyful among the glens in search of birds' nests, or climbed the rocks at its summit, eager to plant ourselves on its dizzy elevation . . ."³

P. W. Joyce received his early education in some of the hedge schools that were numerous in his part of the country. One such school that he attended was in Fanningstown near his home, and the master there was a man named Conor Leahy, "a very rough diamond indeed though a good teacher and not over severe." One day one of the pupils darted breathlessly into the school to announce that Father Bourke was on his way there. Master and pupils were equally afraid of Father John, a tall stern-looking man with heavy brows. The master instantly bounced up and warned his pupils to be on their very best behaviour while the priest was present. He happened to be standing near the fire-place and he wound up his exhortation by thumping the hob with his fist and declaring, "By this stone if one of ye opens your mouth while the priest is here, I'll knock his brains out after he's gone away." The threat had the desired effect, though in fact, the fear in which Father Bourke was held was apparently misplaced for he was at heart a gentle and kindly man.⁴

One of the ablest of the Munster teachers at that time was a Patrick Murray who kept a school in the upper storey of the market house in Kilfinane. He was particularly eminent in English Grammar and Literature. P. W. Joyce went to his school for one year, when he was very young, and he tells us that "I am afraid I was looked upon as very slow, especially in his pet subject Grammar. I never could be

got to parse correctly such complications as 'I might, could, would, or should have been loving'".

Telling of one of the burning questions that exercised the learning and logic and academic energies of a section of the hedge schoolmasters of the period Joyce says:

"There was one subject that long divided the teachers of Limerick and Tipperary into two hostile camps of learning—the verb *to be*. There is a well-known rule of grammar that 'the verb *to be* takes the same case after it as goes before it.' One party headed by the two Dannahys, father and son, very scholarly men of north Limerick, held that the verb *to be governed* the case following; while the other, at the head of whom was Mr. Patrick Murray of Kilfinane in South Limerick, maintained that the correspondence of the two cases, after and before, were mere *agreement*, not *government*. And they argued with as much earnestness as the Continental Nominalists and Realists of an older time."⁵

The young P. W. Joyce also attended school for a time in Kilmallock. Many years afterwards when describing in his book, *The Story of Ancient Irish Civilisation* (p. 47) how the students in the old monastic schools frequently studied in the open, he was to recall his schooldays in Kilmallock.

"I saw the same custom in full swing" he wrote, "in some of the lay schools before 1847. Many a time I prepared my lesson—with some companions—sitting on the grass beside the old abbey in Kilmallock or perched on the top of the ivy-mantled wall."

He also spent a year attending a science school kept by a teacher named Simon Cox in Galbally. It was a rough sort of school he tells us, but mathematics and the use of the globes were well taught. There were about forty students, and of these half a dozen, including Joyce, were boys; the rest were men, mostly young, but a few in middle life. These latter were schoolmasters — some of them "Poor

Scholars" — bent on improving their knowledge of science in preparation for the opening of schools in their own districts. When school was over in the evenings the "Poor Scholars" all set out in different directions and called at the farmers' houses to ask for lodgings, and rarely were there refusals. In return for food and lodgings however the "Poor Scholars" were expected to help the children of the house at their lessons.⁶

In his account of the Galbally school Joyce marvels at how he escaped being a smoker after his sojourn there! Most of the "scholars" smoked, so that the class room was never quite clear of a fragrant blue haze. He recalled an occasion when a class of ten, of which he was one, were all sitting round the master and all, both master and scholars, except himself, were smoking.⁷

The child is father to the man, and we can surely see something of the great lover and collector of Irish music in the following delightful personal note that Joyce introduces into his description of the Galbally school:

"I was the delight and joy of that school," he wrote, "for I generally carried in my pocket a little fife from which I could roll off jigs, reels, hornpipes, hop-jigs, song tunes, etc. without limit. The school was held in a good-sized room in the second storey of a house of which the landlady and her family lived in the kitchen and bedrooms beneath—on the ground floor. Some dozen or more of the scholars were always in attendance in the mornings half-an-hour or so before the arrival of the master, of whom I was sure to be one—what could they do without me?—and then out came the fife and they cleared the floor for a dance.

It was simply magnificent to see and hear those athletic fellows dancing on the bare boards with their thick-soled, well-nailed heavy shoes—so as to shake the whole house. And not one in the lot was more

joyous than I was; for they were mostly good dancers and did full justice to my spirited strains. At last in came the master; there was no cessation, and he took his seat, looking on complacently 'till that bout was finished when I put up my fife and the serious business of the day was commenced."⁸ One wonders what the people who lived on the ground floor thought of the thick-soled, well-nailed, heavy boots beating time to the music upstairs.

The best conducted school Joyce attended was one kept by a master named John Condon which was held in the upper storey of the market house in Mitchelstown and was attended by Protestants as well as Catholics. Mr. Condon taught science, including mathematics, surveying and the use of the globes, and also geography and English grammar. He had an assistant who taught Greek and Latin, and Joyce was one of the few who attempted the double work of learning both science and classics. On Saturdays the students used go out to Mr. Condon's farm, complete with theodolite and chain, to learn surveying.⁹

P. W. Joyce remembered the hedge schools and their masters with affection and esteem. These schools had their origin in penal times in Ireland when the Catholic majority were forbidden by law to have schools of their own. But they established their schools despite the law and at great risk, rude cabins of clay or stone that were built in a few hours in some remote place, usually in the shelter of walls, groves or hedges. Hence the description "hedge schools," *scoileanna scairte* or *scoileanna cois clai*. The most numerous kind of hedge schools were those that provided elementary education; but there was also a kind, especially in the towns, that answered to what we now call secondary schools. Of the hedge schools Joyce attended, four were of the latter kind. Of the hedge schools in general he had this to say:

"These schools continued to exist down

to our own time, 'til they were finally broken up by the famine of 1847. In my own immediate neighbourhood were some of them, in which I received my early education; and I remember with pleasure several of my old teachers; rough and unpolished men many of them but excellent solid scholars and full of enthusiasm for learning—which enthusiasm they communicated to their pupils."¹⁰

He referred to the schools again when he came to define "Bog-Latin" in *English as we speak it in Ireland* (p. 218), that book of his on which I have drawn for much of the biographical material so far set down in this article. This was what he had to say of "Bog Latin," a term always used in a mocking or derogatory sense:—

"BOG LATIN: bad incorrect Latin; Latin that had been learned in the hedge schools among the bogs. This derisive and reproachful epithet was given in bad old times by pupils and others of the favoured, legal and endowed schools, sometimes with reason but oftener very unjustly. For those *bog* or hedge schools sent out numbers of scholarly men who afterwards entered the church or lay professions."

There was extraordinary intellectual activity among the schoolmasters of Joyce's youth. Some of them, he tells us, thought and dreamed and talked of nothing else but learning. In their eyes learning was the main interest of the world. They often met on Saturdays to discuss and argue about knotty points of the classics or of science or grammar.¹¹

In the little but all too rare pieces of autobiographical writing that we find in Joyce's works we get some illuminating glimpses of the old, homespun life of the people in pre-Famine times in the Glenosheen countryside. This, of course, was the life he himself knew in his youth; the life that moulded him and left its impress upon him. He saw the generation that had crept out of the burrows when the priest-hunting days were no more. Free to wor-

ship openly again, they had built their first churches which, however, were called "chapels" to distinguish them from what were now the Protestant churches. They were primitive buildings, these post-Penal chapels, and Joyce says:

"When I was a boy I generally heard Mass in one of them, in Ballyorgan, Co. Limerick: clay floor, no seats, walls of rough stone unplastered, thatch not far above our heads. Just over the altar was suspended a level canopy of thin boards, to hide the thatch from the sacred spot: and on its under surface was roughly painted by some rustic artist a figure of a dove—emblematic of the Holy Ghost—which to my childish fancy was a work of art equal at least to anything ever executed by Michelangelo. Many and many a time I heard exhortations from that altar, sometimes in English, sometimes in Irish, by the Reverend Darby Buckley, the parish priest of Glenroe (of which Ballyorgan formed a part), delivered with such earnestness and power as to produce extraordinary effects on the congregation. You saw men and women in tears everywhere around you, and at the few words of unstudied peroration they flung themselves on their knees in a passionate burst of piety and sorrow. Ah, God be with Father Darby Buckley; a small man, full of fire and energy; somewhat overbearing and rather severe in judging of small transgressions; but all the same a great and saintly parish priest."¹²

Joyce mentions Father Buckley again in a note on the march tune, *Here's a Health to Our Leader* in his *Old Irish Folk Music and Songs* (p. 87).

"I heard this tune," he says, "played on the Highland pipes by Lewis O'Brien when I was very young. It was on a Sunday when good old Dr. Ryan, bishop of Limerick (who confirmed me), was coming to administer Confirmation. The parishioners led by their saintly and active parish priest, Father Darby Buckley, met



Patrick Weston Joyce

him in a body at the bridge of Barrabunoky with Lewis O'Brien at the head of the procession playing all the time with the grand blue ribbons flying from the tops of the pipes overhead. And in this manner we escorted the bishop in honour and glory to the chapel."

Joyce tells of an incident that occurred in the neighbouring parish of Kilfinane at the close of the eighteenth century, an incident which indicates clearly how submissive and servile the post-penal Catholic population still was in those years, due, no doubt, to the sense of insecurity that still pressed heavily on them. There was in Kilfinane at that time a large thatched chapel with a clay floor. Father John Sheehy was appointed parish priest of Kilfinane in 1798, and on the Monday

morning following his first Mass in the parish he was astounded to find a man threshing oats on the chapel floor. The man, a Catholic, had been sent there to do the threshing by his master, Captain Charles Oliver, descendant of a Cromwellian planter and local lord of the soil.

Father Sheehy, a big brawny man, and a man of courage and determination, ordered the workman to betake himself and his load of oats out of the chapel forthwith, and told him that if he ever came back with a load of oats or of anything else that he'd break his back for him, and that after that he'd go up and break his master's back for him too.

Oliver when he heard what had happened apparently thought it better not to try out conclusions with the sturdy parish priest, for in future he sent his corn elsewhere to be threshed. During the years that he had been sending his corn to the chapel to be threshed, Oliver would send a couple of workmen on Saturday evening to sweep the floor and clean the place for Sunday's Mass. Father Sheehy's predecessor had, it would seem, never objected to the use to which his church was being put but, as Joyce surmises, "It is likely enough indeed that he himself got a few scratches in his day from the penal laws and thought it as well to let matters go quietly."¹³

P. W. Joyce remembered Father Sheehy as a very old man. He died on 24th October, 1844, aged ninety-five, having been then forty-six years parish priest of Kilfinane.¹⁴

It took a man of some courage to stand up to Captain Oliver, for he virtually held the lives of the local people in his hands. He it was who had the well-loved United Irishman, William ("Staker") Wallis hanged in Kilfinane in the July of 1798, after first having him flogged through the streets of the town and at the fair of Ballinvreena. The air of the *Lament for Staker Wallis*, full of a people's heartbreak, is one of the loveliest of our *caointe*.

A term common in Joyce's youth was *Oliver's Summons*. At harvest time if Captain Oliver had any difficulty in getting the local men to work for him he would send round the district a couple of his servants with a horse and cart who seized some necessary article in each house—a spinning wheel, a bed, the pot, the single table, etc. and brought them all, body and bones, and kept them impounded. Not until somebody from the houses in question came and worked at the harvesting would the seized goods be returned. Oliver, however, paid his reluctant workmen for their labour.¹⁵

As a youth Joyce saw some of the famous cross-country hurling matches—designated *scuaibín*—between parish and parish, with at least five hundred engaged on each side; but that, he adds, was in the time of the eight millions—before 1847.¹⁶ The Famine of Black '47 was obviously the great watershed in his life and in the lives of his contemporaries. And he saw faction fights, with sticks and stones, between the "Three Year Olds" and the "Four Year Olds"¹⁷ at the fairs of Ardpatrick and Kildorrery; and enjoyed watching them, keeping a safe distance however for fear of a flying stone!¹⁸

There can have been very few others who, in the fleeting years of boyhood, absorbed so much of the heritage and the character and the very feel of their native place as did P. W. Joyce. Glenosheen and its people influenced him for all time; they enriched him and made him what he was. No matter where he might be in after years the inner eye was always focussed on the hoary height of Seefin, and the ear of memory still heard the loved songs and music and speech of the Ballahoura country. This is not a little surprising when we consider that for considerable parts of his boyhood he was away from his own immediate district, attending school in such places as Kilmallock, Galbally and Mitchelstown. And he was only eighteen



Robert Dwyer Joyce

years old when the Commissioners of National Education employed him as a teacher.

He quickly made his mark in his chosen profession and before long was appointed principal of the Model School in Clonmel. In 1856 he was one of the fifteen teachers selected and trained to reorganise the National School system.¹⁹ Though a busy man in many spheres, he found time to pursue a course of studies in Trinity College, Dublin, which earned him his B.A. degree in 1861 and his M.A. degree in 1864. And in 1870 Trinity awarded him the honorary degree of LL.D. Four years later he became Principal of the Board of Education's Training College in Marlborough Street, Dublin, which post he occupied until he retired in 1893. Drawing

on his own experience and observations as a teacher he wrote a number of books which were of much value to other teachers. They included *A Handbook of School Management*, *The Teaching of Manual Work in Schools*, *The Geography of the Counties of Ireland*, *How to Prepare for Civil Service Competitions*. By becoming Principal of the Training College in Dublin, P. W. Joyce had reached the highest office in his profession, no mean achievement for a product of the rural hedge schools. But despite his achievements in the field of education it is not as a teacher or educationalist he is best remembered to-day but as historian, collector of music, elucidator of place names and lifelong and loving recorder of the Irish past.

There was many a man in Ireland in the early years of this century who first became acquainted with Irish history in the pages of Joyce's *A Child's History of Ireland*, which was published in 1898. This book was formally approved for use in the national schools in Ireland by the Commissioners of National Education. A criticism sometimes levelled against the book is that its treatment of Irish history is too "safe," that it lacks colour and is not sufficiently inspiring. As against that one must remember that the attitude of the Commissioners to Irish nationality and Irish political aspirations had changed but little since the days when they had sanctioned for use in Irish schools a reading book that contained the following "poem" which the pupils were required to learn and commit to memory:—

*I thank the goodness and the grace
Which on my birth have smiled,
And made me in these Christian days
A happy English child.*

Joyce's great achievement surely was that he was able to write a history of Ireland that the Commissioners felt was objective enough to sanction for use in their schools

and yet, that this history, in so far as it could do so within the limits of five hundred pages, gave the pupils a complete and true account of the fortunes of their country from pagan times right up to the Famine period and the death of Daniel O'Connell. Joyce accomplished a minor revolution when he succeeded in putting a history of Ireland into the hands of the pupils in the national schools for the first time.

A Child's History of Ireland was an attractive little book and was copiously illustrated. The illustrations must have aroused much interest; indeed one might say that they comprised a history within a history. The frontispiece was a colour reproduction of the beautiful ninth-century illuminated Book of Mac Durnan; and among the illustrations in the body of the book were pictures of Irish leaders like Eoghan Rua O'Neill, O Sullivan Beara and Sarsfield; a picture of the field in Ballyneety where Sarsfield destroyed the siege train; facsimiles of the signatures of such figures as Gearóid Iarla, Shane O'Neill and Red Hugh O'Donnell.

In the course of his preface to the book Joyce said:

"... My constant aim has been to make the book easy to read and easy to understand. Above all I have tried to write soberly and moderately, avoiding exaggeration and bitterness, pointing out extenuating circumstances where it was just and right to do so, giving credit where credit is due and showing fair play all round. A writer may accomplish all this while sympathising heartily, as I do, with Ireland and her people. Perhaps this book, written as it is in such a broad and just spirit, may help to foster mutual feelings of respect and toleration among Irish people of different parties and may teach them to love and admire what is great and noble in their history, no matter where found. This indeed was one of the objects I kept steadily in view while writing it. When a

young citizen of Limerick and another of Derry read the account given here of the two memorable sieges I hope it is not too much to expect that the reader in each case, while feeling a natural pride in the part played by his own ancestors, will be moved to a just and generous admiration for those of the other side who so valiantly defended their homes. And the History of Ireland, though on the whole a very sad history, abounds in records of heroic deeds and heroic endurance, like those of Derry and Limerick, which all Irish people of the present day ought to look back to with pride and which all young persons should be taught to reverence and admire."

He further expressed a hope that his *Child's History of Ireland*, "though written primarily for children, might also be found interesting and instructive by older people." Finally, he said:

"It may not be unnecessary to say that, except in a few places where I quote, the narrative all through this book is original and not made up by adapting or copying the texts of other modern Irish histories. For good or for bad I preferred my way of telling the story."

Over 80,000 copies of *A Child's History of Ireland* were sold. It was adopted by the Australian Catholic Hierarchy as a text book for all their schools in Australia and New Zealand, and was also adopted by the Catholic School Board of New York. Another of Joyce's histories, *Outlines of the History of Ireland*, sold over 70,000 copies. These were the first popular histories of Ireland, and since they were sold and read in thousands, it would be interesting to know how much they contributed towards preparing the way for the great national revival that led, step by step, to Easter Week, 1916.

It certainly was not Joyce's fault if the majority of Irishmen were not acquainted with their country's history, for in addition to *A Child's History of Ireland* and *Outlines of the History of Ireland*, there came

also from his pen the following works: *A Short History of Ireland*, *The Story of Ancient Irish Civilisation*, *A Concise History of Ireland*, *A Reading Book in Irish History*, *A Social History of Ancient Ireland* (in two large volumes) and *A Smaller Social History of Ancient Ireland*. Incidentally, it might also be mentioned that he wrote *A Concise History of Rome*. As well, Joyce had set about making available Keating's seventeenth-century history of Ireland, *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn*, complete with English translation, notes and vocabulary. Only part I and II of the history was published, these in a volume entitled "*Keating*" for *Students of Gaelic*. It is thought that the reason for his discontinuing the editing and translating of Keating was the more ambitious decision of the Irish Texts Society to publish the *Foras Feasa* in four handsome volumes.²⁰

A Social History of Ancient Ireland is a work that has so far not been superseded, dealing as it does with a side of our history that has been almost completely neglected in the ordinary history books, which chiefly concentrate on military and political events. *A Social History of Ancient Ireland* treats of such things as the family in ancient Ireland; the house; food, fuel and light; dress and personal adornment; agriculture and pasturage; corn mills; public assemblies, sports and pastimes; social customs and observances; the Brehon Laws; art; medicine and medical doctors; death and burial. Joyce truly observed in his introduction to this work that "An important function of History is to depict social and domestic life. If we wish to obtain a clear view of the general state of any particular country in past times, we shall need to have a good knowledge of the people, high and low, rich and poor; their standards of civilisation, religion and learning; their virtues, and failings; their industries, occupations and amusements; their manners and customs; and the sort of life they led day by day in their homes."

Already, as early as 1879, Joyce had produced his *Old Celtic Romances*, retellings in English translation of twelve famous tales from Irish mythology: *The Fate of the Children of Lir*; *The Fate of the Children of Turenn*; *Connla of the Golden Hair*; *The Overflowing of Loch Neagh*; *The Voyage of Maildun*; *The Fairy Palace of the Quicken Trees*; *The Pursuit of the Giolla Dacker and his Horse*; *The Pursuit of Dermot and Grania*; *The Chase of Slieve Cullinn*; *The Chase of Slieve Fuad*; *Oisín in Tír na nÓg*; *The Fate of the Sons of Usna*.

He wrote a very informative preface for this work, supplied helpful notes and appended a list of proper names with their original Irish forms. In the preface Joyce observed that

"Scraps and fragments of some of these tales have been given to the world in popular publications, by writers who not being able to read the originals took their information from printed books in the English language. But many of these specimens have been presented in a very unfavourable and unjust light—distorted to make them look *funny* and their characters debased to the mere modern conventional stage Irishman. There is none of this silly and odious vulgarity in the originals of these fine old tales which are high and dignified in tone and feeling—quite as much so as the old Romantic tales of Greece and Rome."

He went on: . . .

"A translation may either follow the very words, or reproduce the life and spirit of the original; but no translation can do both. If you render word for word you lose the spirit; if you wish to give the spirit and manner you must depart from the exact words and frame your own phrases. I have chosen this latter course."

And having decided on this course when he set about translating the tales, he did his best he says "to render them into simple, homely English . . . as I conceive the old shanachies themselves would have told

them if they had used English instead of Gaelic."

Of course Joyce's English, like the English of O'Curry and O'Donovan, was never an Englishman's English and this, despite the fact that Joyce, as he tells us himself, did for a time endeavour to cultivate a genuine English style. "In early youth," he wrote, "I was a diligent student of English style; and in order to select or form a style for myself I read the best authors:—Addison, Steele, Swift, Johnson, Goldsmith, etc. . . . Johnson dazzled me for a time—especially in *Rasselas*; but I soon found out that he is not a desirable model to follow—so far as style is concerned—and I gave up imitating him. In the end indeed—though after much time and labour—which I think were not wasted—I ceased to imitate anyone and struck out for myself."²¹

The fact which Joyce could not alter was that Irish was his native language and that for him English would remain an acquired language.

James Joyce came up against this problem of the Irishman's ability to handle English. In *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* there is a discussion between the student Stephen Dedalus (James Joyce) and an English-born Jesuit that hinges on the usage of certain English words. And Stephen is made to meditate as follows:

"The language in which we are speaking is his before it is mine. How different are the words *home*, *Christ*, *ale*, *master*, on his lips and on mine! I cannot speak or write these words without unrest of spirit. His language, so familiar and so foreign, will always be for me an acquired speech. I have not made or accepted its words. My voice holds them at bay. My soul frets in the shadow of his language."

In introducing the tales in *Old Celtic Romances* P. W. Joyce refers to the fact that in many of the tales "the leading characters are often made to express themselves in verse, or some striking incident of the story is repeated in a poetical form". Joyce

repeated this practice in his translations, and his facility in turning a verse is seen in the following lines from *Connla of the Golden Hair*:—

*A pleasant land of winding vales, bright
streams and verdurous plains,
Where summer all the live-long year, in
changeless splendour reigns;
A peaceful land of calm delight, of
everlasting bloom;
Old age and death we never know, no
sickness, care, or gloom;
The land of youth,
Of love and truth,
From pain and sorrow free;
The land of rest,
In the golden west,
On the verge of the azure sea!*

—or in these verses describing one of the many wonders seen by *Maildun* and his crew during their Voyage:—

*In a wall-circled isle a big monster they
found.
With a hide like an elephant, leathery
and bare;
He threw up his heels with a wonderful
bound,
And ran round the isle with the speed
of a hare.*

*But a feat more astounding has yet to be
told:
He turned round and round in his
leathery skin;
His bones and his flesh and his sinews he
rolled—
He was resting outside while he twisted
within!*

*Then, changing his practice with marvellous
skill,
His carcase stood rigid and round went
his hide;
It whirled round his bones like the wheel
of a mill—
He was resting within while he twisted
outside!*

*Next, standing quite near on a green little
hill,
After galloping round in the very same
track,
While the skin on his belly stood perfectly
still,
Like a millstone he twisted the skin of
his back!*

*But Maildun and his men put to sea in
their boat,
For they saw his two eyes looking over
the wall;
And they knew by the way that he opened
his throat,
He intended to swallow them, curragh
and all!*

In a note on that final verse Joyce says: "The verse in the original is quite serious; but I could not resist the temptation to give it a humorous turn".

When I was in second or third standard in the primary school one of the teachers used take us for the last quarter of an hour of the school day and read an instalment from *Old Celtic Romances* for us. The reading of a complete story from the book might be spread over the most of a week; and I remember how enthralled we were by the stories, and with what impatience we'd look forward to 3 o'clock when we'd sit in the back desk to hear the master read the next thrilling episode from the tale of the *Giolla Deacair* or from *the Fate of the Sons of Usna*.

We thus became acquainted with our own mythology, and the *dúchas* in us responded to it, in much the same way that an Irish countryman's feet will respond to the rhythm of reel or jig or hornpipe, for the race, it would seem, will always yearn for that which itself has produced and shaped. Ideally, of course, we should have heard the tales in Irish, but our knowledge of Irish at that time was not sufficient for our understanding and enjoying of them. Hearing them in English was the next best thing.

The work which most contributed to making Joyce's name widely known and which has kept it before the public ever since was his three-volume study of *The Origin and History of Irish Names of Places*. It was to be the most permanent of his works, and he chose as his motto for it the words of the fourteenth-century topographical writer, Seán Mór Ó Dubhagáin: *Triallam timcheall na Fódhla*—Let us journey round Fódhla (Ireland). *Ní bhíonn saoi gan locht*, or, if you like, even Homer nods, and Joyce was not always right about the derivations of particular place-names. Furthermore, since his time new sources of information on place-names have come to light and, besides, other workers in this field have made special studies of the place-names of particular districts and are more authoritative for these districts than Joyce is. But having said all that one must then add that *The Origin and History of Irish Names of Places* is still an important work of reference, and has not been superseded, for it alone treats of the place-names of the whole country. And here we might quote from one commentator's opinion of the work:

"His (Joyce's) treatment of this technical subject was most happy; the broad effects of legend, folklore and history cover the dry bones of etymology and led many into this and like fields of Irish work that might have been repelled by other writers . . . However much scientific workers may traverse many of his derivations, based rather on popular forms than on those of the records, they will long continue to use the bulk of his work and to admire the whole".²²

From the information he had gathered together in the three volumes of *The Origin and History of Irish Names of Places* Joyce compiled a very useful little volume called *Irish Local Names Explained*, in which he gives the derivations of some thousands of our place-names.

English as we speak it in Ireland, published

in 1910, is perhaps the most interesting of Joyce's books. The Anglo-Irish dialectical words and phrases discussed by him in this book derived, he explains, from three main sources:

"*First*: the Irish language. *Second*: Old English and the dialect of Scotland. *Third*: independently of these two sources, dialectical expressions have gradually grown up among our English-speaking people, as dialects arise everywhere".

There are phrases that we use every day in English, unaware of the fact that they are pure Irishisms which would never be heard on the lips of an Englishman. Dozens of such phrases will be found in *English as we speak it in Ireland*. For example, in Irish we say of a man who died: *Fuair sé bás*; literally, "he found (or got) death". And this usage has resulted in such a common saying in Hiberno-English as "Come in out of the rain or you'll get your death". And very few Irishmen would find anything unusual about such a description as "a fool of a man". And yet this is a direct translation of a purely Irish usage, *amadán fir*.

English as we speak it in Ireland contains a vocabulary of hundreds of words, some of them Irish, some of them Old English or Scots, some nondescript, that coloured, and that in some cases still colour the English spoken in Ireland. A few examples will suffice.

"BAAN: a field covered with short grass:—'a baan field': 'a baan of cows': i.e. a grass farm with its proper number of cows. Irish *bán*".

"BY THE SAME TOKEN: this needs no explanation; it is a survival from Tudor English".

"CHOOK CHOOK (the *oo* sounded rather short); a call for hens—it is the Irish *tioc*".

"COLDYOY: a bad halfpenny; a spurious worthless article of jewellery.

"GREEDY-GUT: a glutton; a person who is selfish about stuffing himself, wishing to give nothing to anybody else".

"SHOONAUN: a deep circular basket, made

of twisted rushes or straw and lined with calico; it had a cover and was used for holding linen, clothes, &c. (Limerick and Cork). From Irish *sibhinn* (shiven), a rush, a bulrush: of which the diminutive *siubhnán* (shoonaun) is our word: signifying 'made of rushes'. Many a shoonaun I saw in my day; and I remember meeting a man who was a shoonaun maker by trade".

In various places in *English as we speak it in Ireland* Joyce illustrates the usage of some word, or the prevalence of some custom or tradition by reference to things he himself heard or saw in pre-Famine times in his own district. In this way we learn much about how the old life was lived in his part of the country. And as well, we learn a little about Joyce himself, for *English as we speak it in Ireland* is the only one of his books in which he tells us anything worthwhile about his youth in Glenosheen.

Fifteen years before the founding of the Gaelic League, that is to say in the year 1878, Joyce, who was a member of the Society for the Preservation of the Irish Language, compiled *A Grammar of the Irish Language*, a useful and well-planned little book running to one hundred and thirty-six pages. It was, as Joyce observed, "low enough in price to be within reach of the many". A copy of the 1897 edition, which I have before me as I write, states, *Price to National Schools, 6d.*

Joyce's *The Wonders of Ireland*, published in 1911, contains an interesting assortment of folklore, essays and stories. One of the stories is titled *Garrett Mac Eniry*, and in an introductory note Joyce says: "I wrote this little story when I was very young and put it aside for some years. It was published in the year 1857 in a local newspaper, *The Tipperary Leader*—over the pen-name 'Carnferay': my first appearance in print. It represents faithfully the dialect of the Limerick peasantry of seventy years ago which I think is still much the same as it was then. Most or all of the scenes and

incidents are depicted from real life, as I witnessed them in my boyhood and youth".

Garrett Mac Eniry is the simple, pathetic story of an old couple who have seen all their children grow up and die, and who are left alone at the end of their days in a little village, where practically all the inhabitants are Palatines who are slowly learning Irish ways. When his wife dies the old man's world collapses about him. Everything he rests his eyes on is so charged with memories that he cannot bear to look on them anymore, and he leaves home and goes off to find a brother whom he has not seen since youth, but who now becomes for him the only anchor that will hold in the storm. For one so young as Joyce was when he wrote it, this story of *Garrett Mac Eniry* shows an unusual understanding of, and sympathy with, the ways of old people and a keen perception of the elements of which grief is compounded.

Among the other items in *The Wonders of Ireland* there is a very readable essay on *Spenser's Irish Rivers*, in which Joyce establishes the identity of the rivers and other physical features mentioned by Spenser in the *Faerie Queene*, the *Two Cantos of Mutabilitie* and *Colin Clouts come home again*. Kilcolman, where Spenser lived, lies on the opposite side of the Ballahouras from Glenosheen.

The wonders which Joyce tells about in *The Wonders of Ireland* were first described in such ancient works as the *Book of Ballymote* and Giraldus Cambrensis' *Topography of Ireland*, in which there is a long chapter headed, *Of the Wonders and Miracles of Ireland*. The "wonders" recounted in Joyce's book include: *A Ship and Crew in the Air*, *A Steeple of fire in the Air*, *An Island split in three by a Storm*, *The Man-wolves of Ossory*, *The loney Crane of Inishkea*, *The Bleeding Stone*.

It is generally agreed that the most important books Joyce left us were not any of the ones so far listed—valuable though many of these were—but his four collec-

tions of music and song: *Ancient Irish Music, Irish Music and Song, Irish Peasant Songs in the English Language, Old Irish Folk Music and Songs.*

There are over a hundred airs in *Ancient Irish Music* (published in 1872) as well as the words in Irish or English that go with many of the airs. One of the airs is named *Mór Chluana* (More of Cloyne) and in a note on the air Joyce says:

"I took down this fine tune in 1852 from Lewis O'Brien of Coolfree in the county Limerick; who stated that More was the guardian fairy of Cloyne . . .".

Mór Chluana is in fact the tune that was being mentioned as a likely National Anthem some twenty or more years ago by a considerable body of opinion which held that this tune had everything that *Amhrán na bhFiann*, or the *Soldiers' Song*, lacked in dignity and beauty. Irish words, composed by Osborn Ó hAimhirgín, had by then been wed to the tune of *Mór Chluana*, and both tune and song were now known as *An tAmhrán Dóchais* (The Song of Hope). But its associations with the fight for freedom won the day for *Amhrán na bhFiann*, and it still remains our National Anthem. The claims of *An tAmhrán Dóchais* however were not altogether dismissed, for it was selected as the *Taoiseach's Salute*, and is now played on the Taoiseach's arrival at formal occasions. Of this tune, which Joyce wrote down from his neighbour, Lewis O'Brien, in 1852, and which was one day to be mentioned as a likely National Anthem, Colm Ó Lochlainn had this to say in his booklet, *Anglo-Irish Song-Writers since Moore*:

"This is a very noble tune, full of dignity and one which might well serve as National Anthem or Processional March. It has a solemn rhythm comparable to Haydn's famous Austrian Emperor's Hymn."

Joyce's *Irish Music and Song* contains only songs in the Irish language. This collection was prepared by Joyce for the Society for the Preservation of the Irish Language.

It was after he had gone to reside in Dublin that Joyce began to think seriously about collecting and publishing as much as he could of the large body of Irish song and music that still survived. Always a lover of Irish music, he was surprised when he examined the published collections to discover that a great number of beautiful tunes that he himself knew were unpublished. He made this discovery in the year 1853 through his acquaintance with Doctor George Petrie, who was then engaged in editing his *Ancient Music of Ireland*. Mainly through Petrie's example and, indeed, partly at his suggestion, he set about writing down all the airs he could remember, a task that would continue to engage him to the very end of his long and industrious life.

During vacations he collected tunes and songs in all parts of the country, but principally in the South, noting down whatever he thought worthy, both music and words. He used to give his collections to Petrie, but kept copies of them. Petrie afterwards incorporated them in his own collection, with due acknowledgments to Joyce. Incidentally, it was on those occasions while he was travelling round the country collecting the old songs and music that Joyce first became interested in place-names. He wrote them down and checked on their meanings locally, thus laying the foundations of his three-volume work on *The Origin and History of Irish Names of Places*. He must have had his pockets full of scraps of paper covered with notes at that time. He tells us:

"In the year 1852 when I was drawing up from my memory for Doctor Petrie all the airs I could think of—and for that purpose commonly carried a bit of music paper in my waistcoat pocket—I woke up from sleep one night whistling this fine air ("The Orangeman") in a dream: an air which I had forgotten for years. Greatly delighted, I started up: a light, a pencil and a bit of paper and there was the first bar securely

captured: the bird was, as it were, caught and held by the tail".²³

Joyce's first collection of music was his *Old Irish Folk Music and Songs*, which was published in 1909 and which contains eight hundred and twenty-four airs that had never previously been published. A large number of these airs came from his native district, and to that district, for all that it had given him, he paid his tribute in the preface, saying:

"I spent all my early life in a part of the county Limerick where music, singing and dancing were favourite amusements. My home in Glensheen, in the heart of the Ballahoura mountains, was a home of music and song: they were in the air of the valley; you heard them everywhere—sung, played, whistled; and they were mixed up with the people's pastimes, occupations and daily life. Though we had pipers, fiddlers, fifers, whistlers and singers of our own, wandering musicians were welcomed; and from every one some choice air or song that struck our fancy was sure to be learned and stored up to form part of an ever-growing stock of minstrelsy. As I loved the graceful music of the people from my childhood, their songs, dance tunes, *keens*, and lullabies remained in my memory, almost without any effort of my own: so that ultimately I became, as it were, the general and it may be said the sole, legatee of all this long-accumulating treasure of melody".

And he added, with justified pride in having grown up in such an environment:

"It will be seen then that my knowledge of Irish music, such as it is, did not come to me from the outside in after-life, or by a late study, as a foreign language is learned but grew up from within during childhood and boyhood, to form part of my mind, like my native language".

He remembered all the old neighbours from whom he had collected songs and tunes, and all through the book—and through his other collections as well—

there are the characteristic notes of acknowledgment:

"From the playing of Ned Goggin, the Glensheen fiddler."

"From Norry Dwane of Glensheen, 1846".

"From John Hickey of Ballyorgan".

"From Phil Gleeson of Coolfree near Ballyorgan, noted singer and whistler".

"From Davy Cleary, piper and dancing master, Kilfinane, 1842".

"From the singing of Mrs. Mary Mac Sweeny (his aunt) of Glensheen".

"From Lewis O'Brien of Coolfree".

"From Bill Sheedy, pipe-player Fanningstown, Co. Limerick, 1844".

"From Davy Condon, thatcher, of Ballyorgan, 1844".

"From John Dolan of Glensheen, 1845".

"From Mick Dinneen, Coolfree".

"From the singing of Joe Martin of Kilfinane, Co. Limerick, 1852. He sang an Irish song to it (the tune) of which this is the first verse:

*'Mo chreach a's mo dhiachairt gan ceo
draíochta ar na bóithribh
A's go siúlfainn san oíche lem' chroí geal na
glóire . . .'*"

Some of the notes are full of interest, capturing for us echoes of a world that has completely vanished, as this note in *Old Irish Folk Music and Song* on the tune, *A Mháire's a Mhúirnín*, which Joyce directed to be played "with the variations and ornamentations of the Munster pipers and fiddlers":

"I heard O'Hannigan, a great Munster piper—blind—play these variations (in Mitchelstown, Co. Cork: 1844)—the runs all staccato—with amazing brilliancy and perfection of execution".

Or this note from the same collection (p. 38) on the tune, *Cois taoibh a' Chuain*: "When I learned this tune from the singing of my grandmother about 1850 she was then 90 years of age: she told me she learned it by hearing it played on the violin by her grandmother".



Joyce also learned many airs and songs from his father. Alice Kenny, an old woman from the parish of Glenroe, was another person who supplied him with songs. Among the songs he wrote down from her in the summer of 1853 was one called *An Ceo Draíochta* and he says, in *Ancient Irish Music* (p. 42):—

"I cannot forbear recalling the circumstances under which I obtained this air. I had often heard of old Alice Kenny who was at this time about 70 years of age, as a noted singer in her time; and I set out one day to visit her. When I arrived at her house her grandchildren told me she was up somewhere on the neighbouring hill; so I and my companion set out in search of her; and we found her on the very top, pulling heath to cook her supper. We sat down by a turf-rick and there for two hours she delighted me and delighted herself with her inexhaustible store of Irish airs and songs of all kinds—love songs, *keens*, lullabies, execution songs, etc. I took down several and left her, determined to renew my visit at the first opportunity. But no opportunity came; and I have never seen poor old Alice from that day to this".

One finds it difficult to resist the temptation to go on quoting from the notes one finds in the Joyce collections of music. But one more will have to suffice. This note (from *Old Irish Folk Music and Song*), a beautiful and evocative description, deals with the song, *An Clár Bog Déil*, a song also known as *Cois na Bríde* or *Caiseal Mumhan*. Joyce says:

"I once heard 'Cashel of Munster' sung under peculiarly pleasant and characteristic circumstances when I was a mere child. The people of the village had turned out on a sunny day in June to 'foot' the half-dry turf in the bog at the back of Seefin mountain which rises straight over Glenosheen: always a joyous occasion for us children. Dinner time came—about 1 o'clock: each family spread the white cloth on a chosen spot on the dry clean bog surface. There might have been half a dozen

groups in that part of the bog, all near each other and all sat down to dinner at the same time: glorious smoking hot floury savoury potatoes, salt herrings (hot like the potatoes) and good wholesome *bláthach*, i.e. skimmed thick milk slightly and pleasantly sour—a dinner fit for a hungry king.

After dinner there was always a short interval for rest and diversion—generally rough joyous romping. On this occasion the people, with one accord, asked Peggy Moynahan to sing them a song. Peggy was a splendid girl, noted for her singing: and down she sat willingly on a turf bank. In a moment the people clustered round, all play and noise and conversation ceased; and she gave us the *Clár Bog Déil* in Irish with intense passion, while the people—old and young, including myself and my little brother, Robert—sat and listened, mute and spellbound".

And looking back over the vanished years, he added:

"I have good reason to fear that the taste for intellectual and refined amusements—singing, music, dancing, story-telling, small informal literary clubs and meetings, etc.—once so prevalent among the people of my native district, which often expressed itself in scenes such as I describe here, is all gone; and we shall never witness the like again. Is *mór an trua é. More's the pity!*"

Joyce retired from his post as Principal of Marlborough Street Training College in 1893, at the age of sixty-six, and it was from that time onward that he wrote most of his books. The zeal and devotion he brought to his chosen task of preserving knowledge of the past for future generations was remarkable. As a man Joyce remained very much a countryman. "He was a retiring unpretentious man . . . was happiest at his studies and never sought the limelight".²⁴ He interested himself and distinguished himself in many fields, but it was to the collection of the old songs and music of Ireland he really gave his heart. In his youth he had taken intense delight in the musicians and singers of his native



The village of Glenosheen with Seefin in the background.

Glenosheen and, to misquote Wordsworth ever so slightly—

*The music in his heart he bore
Long after it was heard no more.*

He acted as music adjudicator at the very first *Oireachtas* organised by the Gaelic League, and was on the panel of adjudicators for the Dublin *Feis Cheoil*. He was a member of a number of learned societies and of more popular societies devoted to Irish culture. For many years he was an active member of the Royal Irish Academy and of the Royal Society of Antiquaries, being elected president of the latter society in 1906. As well, he was one of the commissioners concerned in the publication of the Brehon Laws.

In 1856 he married Caroline, daughter of Lieutenant John Waters, of Baltinglass, by whom he had three sons and two daughters. His eldest son, Weston St. John Joyce, was the author of a popular book called *Dublin and its Neighbourhood*.

Patrick Weston Joyce died at his home, Barnalee, Rathmines, on 7 January, 1914, at the age of eighty-seven. He had been ill for five weeks but almost to the very end he had continued to work on a further

collection of Irish music which he had hoped to see published. Few men can have loved the old songs, the old music, the old traditions of Ireland better than he. He was buried in Glasnevin on 9 January, 1914.

The tributes paid to him were many. In the course of an Obituary in the *Irish Independent* of 10 January, 1914, Eoghan Ó Neachtain wrote:

"Tá an Dr. P. Seoighe tar éis bháis, go ndéana Dia trócaire ar a anam! Is fada an saol a fuair sé . . . agus is fóinteach an chaoi ar chaith sé a lá, is fóinteach an chaoi, deirim, ar chaith sé é . . . Fear cliste a bhí ann ó thús agus fear ioldánach ó thús go deireadh . . . Scríobh sé . . . leabhar do pháistí ag insint stair na hÉireann. Tá an leabhar sin le fáil fós agus ceann níos deise ná é níl ann i leith pictiúir ag cur síos ar dheise agus ar mhaise dhána in Éirinn. Scríobh sé gráiméar Gaeilge roimh aimsir Chonradh na Gaeilge agus ba mhór an leas do lucht foghlama na teanga an leabhar sin . . . Solas na bhFlaitheas go dtuga Dia don údar a chaith a dhúthracht ar son na hÉireann".

A writer in the *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries* (Vol. 45 (1915) 69-71) paying tribute to him, spoke of Joyce having been born

“ . . . in sight of the Ballahoura Mountains and the Galtees and, as so often, the impression of the surroundings of his boyhood left its mark on all his after life. In one of his books, English as we speak it in Ireland, he gives us clues to these influences, recollections of the passionate piety of the peasantry in the little thatched, earth-floored chapel, of the rough but scholarly hedge schoolmasters, of the dancers for whom (like another Goldsmith) he played on the fife, and of the traditions of the glens and fields”

In the course of his lifetime Joyce amassed a great amount of knowledge about his native country, knowledge, very much of which might have otherwise been lost. And tireless as he was in the amassing of this knowledge he was equally tireless in imparting it to others. In all, he wrote thirty books, twenty-four of them about Ireland; and in the Royal Irish Academy and the National Library there are manuscript collections of music that he never lived to publish.

P. W. Joyce followed in the footsteps of Bunting and Petrie, of O'Donovan and O'Curry, reaching, however, a larger public than any of these four had reached, for the fields he laboured in were more numerous and, as well as that, he principally wrote not for scholars but for the ordinary people of Ireland, people such as he had known in that lovely and never-forgotten countryside round about Glenosheen.

ROBERT DWYER JOYCE

Robert Dwyer Joyce, P. W's brother, was born in Glenosheen in 1830 and, like his brother, was educated in local hedge-schools. At school he was soon to prove himself of more than average intelligence, displaying in particular an aptitude for languages. While still in his teens he entered the service of the Commissioners of National Education and trained as a teacher. For several further years he continued to

study under the direction of his brother, P. W., whom he was eventually to replace as Principal of the Clonmel Model School, when P. W. was chosen by the Commissioners to do a special course of study in connection with the reorganisation of the National School system.

In 1857 he resigned his post as teacher and went to Queen's College, Cork, where he studied medicine, taking his M.D. in 1865. During his time at Queen's College he won a number of scholarships and prizes, but since these sources were not adequate to keep him and pay for his studies he supplemented them through part-time teaching and through his writings. He contributed poems, articles and stories to such papers as *Nation*, *Harp* (Cork), *Dublin Saturday Magazine*, *The Celt*, *Irishman*, *Irish People* (this was the organ of Fenianism) and *The Universal News*, this latter a Catholic paper published in London, the editor at that time being John Francis O'Donnell, a gifted young Limerick poet. Joyce's contributions to these papers usually appeared above the pen-name "Feardana," or, sometimes, "Merulan."

His first collection of poems appeared in 1861, under the title *Ballads, Romances and Songs*. This is the collection which in a later edition, and with additions, was to appear under the title, *Ballads of Irish Chivalry*.

Joyce's first love was literature, and even after he had taken his M.D. we find him accepting the post of Professor of English Literature in the Preparatory Department of the Catholic University in Dublin. Soon afterwards he was elected member of the Royal Irish Academy, his sponsors being the Earl of Dunraven and Professor Kells Ingram, the latter author of the famous song, *Who fears to speak of '98*.

Joyce, an ardent believer in Irish freedom, had been attracted to the Fenian movement, and his contributions to the nationalist journals of the time bear testimony to the

strength of the views he held as to Ireland's right to be free. Marcus Bourke states of him that he "was always on the fringe of the extreme nationalist movement, though not apparently a member of the I.R.B."²⁵ When the Fenian Rising failed to come off in 1865 he was extremely disappointed; and although a bright future seemed in store in his own land for the young medico and *litterateur* he left Ireland and sailed for the United States in 1866, going, we are told, because "British rule in Ireland did not suit his ideas of freedom."²⁶

He settled in Boston, where his career both as a doctor and a literary man was crowned with success. Among those who were to become his ardent admirers and friends were such Boston literary figures as ex-Governor Long, John C. Abbott, Wendell Phillips and Doctor Oliver Wendell Holmes.²⁷ In 1868 and 1871, respectively, Joyce published in Boston two small volumes of Irish tales in prose, *Legends of the Wars in Ireland* and *Irish Fireside Tales*; and several others of his prose stories—all on Irish themes—were contributed to various magazines. He had already written a novel, *The Squire of Castletown*, which was published in *The Irishman*.

A new edition of *Ballads, Romances and Songs*, but this time under the title *Ballads of Irish Chivalry*, was published by Patrick Donahue of Boston in 1872, but very soon after it had come from the press, it was destroyed in the great Boston fire of 1872. A third edition, prepared by P. W. Joyce, appeared in 1908.

As to the poems that make up *Ballads of Irish Chivalry*, I might here quote the opinion of Doctor George Sigerson (author of *Bards of the Gael and Gall*), who wrote the short unsigned preface for the 1861 edition.

"They were not", wrote Sigerson, "of that literary school which seemed as perfect and as trite as if they were machine-made. On the contrary they had a certain wild

flower freshness about them which recalled the rivers, glens and woody mountains, the romance of love in sylvan glades, revels of moonlight fairies, feats of daring and unknown vivid legends of the land we love. The author evidently had a thorough knowledge of the old airs sung throughout the country, for a large number of his verses were written to those airs and were songs in reality as well as in name. The legendary poems, like the others, came direct from living sources, not from books, and led to a new fair land of enchantment, achievement and high endeavour."²⁸

The poems in *Ballads of Irish Chivalry* show not only Joyce's deep knowledge of Irish history in general but also his remarkable knowledge of the local history and legends of the South. In particular he was steeped in the lore of his own Ballahourah country. Only a man who truly loved the traditions of the people would have amassed such a great store of local knowledge as he possessed. And his familiarity with every hill and glen and stream in his native district could only have come from his having explored them all, again and again. We know that ever since his boyhood, one of his great delights lay in "Walking long distances from early morning 'till night with his favourite companions, sketching old castles and churches, or in the shooting and fishing parties . . ."²⁹

Small wonder then if his native district figures so often in his songs. He introduces a legend of Ardpatrick in the poem, *The Well of the Omen*. First he paints a picture of olden times when

*At morn up green Ard-Patrick the Sunday
bell rang clear,
And downward came the peasants with
looks of merry cheer,
With many a youth and maiden by
pathways green and fair,
To hear the Mass devoutly and say the
Sunday prayer;*

And the meadows shone around them while
 the skylarks gay were singing,
 And the stream sang songs amid the flowers
 and the Sunday bell was ringing.
 And then he mentions the legend of the
 holy well that is situated near the site of the
 old Patrician foundation:—

There is a well sunk deeply by old Ard-
 Patrick's wall;
 Within it gaze the peasants to see what
 may befall:
 Who see their shadows down below, they
 will have merry cheer;
 Who see not any shadows shall die within
 the year.
 There staid the youths and maidens where
 the soft green grass was springing,
 While the stream sang songs amid the
 flowers and the Sunday bell was ringing.

Doctor Sigerson, in the quotation already
 given, spoke of a large number of Joyce's
 compositions being songs in reality as well
 as in name. Doctor Sigerson had in mind
 such compositions as *Along with my Love*
I'll go, *Roving Brian O'Connell*, *The Drynan*
Dhun, *Johnnie Dunlea*, *Song of Galloping*
O'Hogan, *Fair Maidens' Beauty will soon fade*
away and *The Old Love and the New Love*—

I sat within the valley green,
 I sat me with my true love,
 My sad heart strove the two between,
 The old love and the new love:—
 The old for her, the new that made
 Me think on Ireland dearly;
 While soft the wind blew down the glade
 And shook the golden barley.

'Twas hard the mournful words to frame,
 To break the ties that bound us—
 'Twas harder still to bear the shame
 Of foreign chains around us;
 And so I said, "The mountain glen
 I'll seek next morning early,
 And join the brave United Men":
 While soft winds shook the barley.

While sad I kissed away her tears,
 My arms around her flinging,
 The foeman's shot burst on our ears,
 From out the wild wood ringing.
 The bullet pierced my true love's side,
 In life's young spring so early,
 And there upon my breast she died,
 While soft winds shook the barley.

I bore her to the wild wood screen;
 And many a summer blossom
 I placed, with branches soft and green,
 Above her gore-stained bosom:
 I wept and kissed her pale pale cheek,
 Then rushed o'er vale and far lea,
 My vengeance on the foe to wreak,
 While soft winds shook the barley.

And blood for blood, without remorse,
 I've tak'n at Oulart Hollow,
 While mourners placed my true love's corse
 Where I full soon will follow;
 Around her grave I wander drear,
 Noon, night and morning early,
 With breaking heart whene'er I hear
 The wind that shakes the barley.

Joyce's fine dramatic piece, *The*
Blacksmith of Limerick, has long been a
 favourite recitation. It tells the story of the
 blacksmith who, when the Williamites
 attempted to storm Limerick city in August,
 1690, left Sarsfield's horse unshod, for there
 was more urgent work to do—

The blacksmith raised his hammer and
 rushed into the street,
 His 'prentice boys behind him, the ruthless
 foe to meet:
 High on the breach of Limerick with
 dauntless hearts they stood,
 Where bombshells burst and shot fell thick
 and redly ran the blood.

There is a great variety of themes in
Ballads of Irish Chivalry. Eoghan Rua
 Ó Néill, Sarsfield, O'Sullivan Beare,
 Gearóid Iarla, Finneen O'Driscoll, Spenser,

the Norman de Courcy figure in them, as do legendary figures like *An Gadaí Dubh Ó Dubháin* (the Black Robber O'Dwan) and the White Lady of Bruff. The songs celebrate battles and romances. One of them, describing the siege of Cragmour—or Carriganoura—Castle near Mitchelstown, by the Cromwellians, or Puritans, (whom Joyce calls "Crop-ears") has an unusual refrain:—

One morn, at the sack of Cragmour,
A cock and a sparrow were speaking,
While beneath where they sat on the tower
The Crop-ears their fury were wreaking—
Were wreaking in blood, fire and smoke—
"Ah! the castle is gone, bone and marrow,
And my poor Irish heart it is broke",
Said the brave jolly cock to the sparrow.

"For the Crop-ears will have us full soon,
And our bed will be no bed of roses;
They will starve us right dead to the tune
Of a psalm that they'll twang through
their noses;
Never more shall I crow in the hall,
For the gloom there my bosom would
harrow—
May the fiend whip them off, psalms and
all,"
Said the brave jolly cock to the sparrow.

"No more", said the sparrow, "we'll see
Irish gallants come in late and early;
No more shall they hunt o'er the lea,
Where the sweet autumn wind shakes
the barley;
Never more shall they dance on the bawn,
Or ride from the gate like an arrow!"
"Ah! no more shall I wake them at dawn",
Said the brave jolly cock to the sparrow.

But the chief of Cragmour soon returned,
And the Crop-ears right sorely he
hammered;
Then the sparrow with gleefulness burned,
And "Hurra for my Irish!" he
clamoured;—

And "Hurra for the chief of Cragmour!
There is joy through my flesh, bone and
marrow;
For his victory I'll crow hour by hour",
Said the brave jolly cock to the sparrow.

As was the case with his brother, P. W., Robert Dwyer Joyce's thoughts always returned to his native locality, to Seefin and Ardpatrick and Glenanaar and the tiny Grena stream that flows through Lyre-na-Grena—

I wish I sat by Grena's side,
With the friends of boyhood-tide,
With the maids the brilliant-eyed,
Playful, wild and airy,
Who taught me that love could go
From maid to maiden to and fro,
But turning with fonder glow
Back to you, my Mary.

I wish I sat by Grena's stream,
In the ruddy sunset beam,
Where the wavelets leap and gleam
On through dell and wildwood;
Ne'er half so fleet and free
As the fairy feet of glee
That danced 'neath the summer tree
In our dreamy childhood.

I wish I sat by Grena's wave,
Hopes fulfilled that boyhood gave,
Where the woods clothe gorge and cave,
Storied hill and plain, love;
You placed beside me there,
Laughing, loving, kind and fair,
Long parted far but ne'er,
Ne'er to part again, love!

And speaking of Joyce's songs, not many people know that he was the author of *The Boys of Wexford*. He based this song on an old Wexford ballad which he had frequently heard sung in his own home in Glenosheen.

In Boston, a city then enjoying a reputation for literary activity, Doctor Oliver

Wendell Holmes, author of *The Autocrat at the Breakfast Table*, *The Poet at the Breakfast Table*, *Over the Teacups*, etc. was in the habit of inviting his literary friends to dine with him, and Joyce was one of those who used frequently sit at the doctor's hospitable board, equally enjoying the conversation and the food. Joyce himself was a fine conversationalist and raconteur; and, as well, was a man of commanding appearance.

His energy seemed boundless. In 1876 his epic poem *Deirdre* was published. Based on the ancient tragic story of the Ulster princess Deirdre and the Sons of Usna, the poem sold over 10,000 copies inside a few days, much to the delight of Joyce's many friends. A good example of the poetic style he cultivated in his retelling of the old tragedy is found in the warning uttered by the seer, Caffa, when he hears of the birth of Deirdre:—

*For thou, all beautiful, shalt wake the fire
Of jealous anger and insane desire
In many a hero's heart; and war's red field
Shall gleam with levelled lance and brazen
And thirsty sword, where hostile banners rise
Of Kings renowned, to win thy smiles and
Alas! for in thy day and all for thee,
Great Usna's sons shall die by treachery
And the King's wrath; and from that deed
Fair Eman's halls shall feed the ravening
Of war and carnage, kindled by the light
Of thy destroying glances, 'till the night
Of woe enwrap the land accurst of men,
O Deirdre, evil fate beyond our ken!*

In 1879 he published another epic poem, *Blanid*, this too based on one of the old tales of high tragedy from the *Rúraiocht* or Red Branch cycle. Incidentally, a short poem that he wrote on the fly-leaf of a copy of *Blanid* which he was presenting to a friend reveals something of the thoughts and feelings of the author himself:

*I had two lives, one full of all unrest,
One full of heavenly joys of heart and brain.
In one I walk around in grief and pain
And hear the deep sighs of the saddened
And groanings of the stricken ones and see
The sad pale face of death and misery—
The poor man's load of grief, the rich man's
And I feel leer of sin, 'till I am sad;
In one I wander thro' a magic town,
Paven with pearls and in bright garlands
From those bright meads of Asphodel that
The glorious hill of Poesy—the glad,
The green delightful hill, whose cliffs of
Each day with eyes of rapture I behold.³⁰*

Joyce was very sensitive to the sufferings of others, whether those others were at home in Ireland, under foreign rule, or in the teeming back streets or slums of Boston. Ireland was ever uppermost in his thoughts, and it grieved him constantly that she should be unfree and that he should be in exile from her. Father Crowley sees in the following lines from Joyce's *The Despair of Cuhallin* an outward expression of the grief and mental agony that eventually "shook his well-knit frame."

*No kindly counsel of a friend
With soothing balm the heart can mend;
I walk alone in grief and make
My bitter moan for her dear sake,
For loss of love is man's worst woe,
And I am suffering and I know.
Earth, air and sun and moon and star,
Of man's strange soul but mirrors are,
Bright when the soul is bright and dark
As now, without one saving spark,
While the black tides of sorrow flow;
And I am suffering and I know.*

*To my sad eyes that sorrow dims
The greenest grass the swallow skims,*

*The flowers that once were fair to me,
The meadows and the blooming tree
Dark as funereal garments grow;
And I am suffering and I know.*³¹

Joyce became very closely associated with the Fenian movement in the United States. When leaving Ireland for America he had taken with him a sword which had belonged to one of his mother's family. This particular O'Dwyer had gone to France with the Wild Geese after the signing of the Treaty of Limerick in 1691. He joined the French army and fought in the War of the Spanish Succession, and was killed in 1707 at the battle of Almansa, where the English were defeated by the Duke of Berwick. O'Dwyer's sword was brought back to Ireland, presumably by a comrade, and was given to his family, and passed eventually to Elizabeth O'Dwyer, mother of P. W. and Robert Dwyer Joyce. The latter had inscribed on it the words, *Buille ar son Éireann*—a blow for Ireland. And that is what Robert Dwyer Joyce hoped himself to strike some day—a blow for Ireland.

He was far from Ireland however when the Fenians struck their blow for Ireland in March, 1867. The last fight of the Fenian Rising took place on 31 March, 1867, at Kilclooney Wood, a few short miles south of Joyce's native Glenosheen. That was the fight in which the chivalrous Fenian leader, Peter O'Neill Crowley, lost his life. When news of Kilclooney reached Joyce he wrote a long poem in memory of Crowley, and of the fight that he and his comrades had made. The patriotic spirit of the author is well revealed in this stirring poem:—

*God bless you, Peter Crowley,
For the holy work you wrought;
God rest your soul in heaven's bright bowers
For the lesson you have taught—
Fair Freedom 'till the end of time
Shall fondly point to it;
That lesson in your heart's best blood*

*For trampled nations writ—
That in their struggles to be free
And gain their rights again,
One true man, dead for liberty,
Is worth ten living men!*

*The beacon fires enkindled
By Emmet and by Tone,
Bright have they glowed on Freedom's road
To lead our footsteps on—
O Martyr! on that dangerous way
A flame gleams now from thine
As high and clear but still more near
To Freedom's holy shrine,
Where graved above the gate we see
By Freedom's trenchant pen,
"One true man, dead for liberty,
Is worth ten living men."*

*'Twas down in wild Kilclooney,
At the dawning of the day,
The redcoats circled round the wood,
To catch their gallant prey.
Young Kelly and the stout Mac Clure
And Crowley, brave and bold—
He slept as sleeps the lion king
In his rocky mountain hold—
Perchance he dreamt that vision free
Within his woody den—
One true man, dead for liberty,
Is worth ten living men.*

*Hark! 'Twas the foeman's summons
That on their slumbers broke,
And answering quick that hostile call
The outlaws' rifles spoke.
The captured Kelly and Mac Clure
Saw fearless Crowley stand,
With a bullet wound on his forehead fair,
And a broken trigger hand.
And they heard him shout full lustily
Adown the wooded glen,
"One true man, dead for liberty,
Is worth ten living men!"*

*A brave dash at the foeman,
And through their frightened ranks,
And down the shaggy mountain side*

To Ounageeragh's banks—
 With pistol in his good left hand,
 And the red blood on his right;
 There turned he with a dauntless heart
 To fight his last brave fight.
 And well he knew, that soldier free,
 That Fenian hero then,
 One true man, dead for liberty,
 Is worth ten living men.

A volley from the redcoats,
 From him one pistol ball,
 That brought a foeman to the earth,
 And then 'twas silent all.
 He tottered for a moment's space,
 Then fell into the tide
 That round the hero foamed and whirled
 With his heart's blood crimsoned wide
 "God's mercy on my soul!" cried he,
 And gasped he forth again,
 "One true man, dead for liberty,
 Is worth ten living men!"

To the town upon the Funcheon³²
 The hero's corse they bore,
 And never such a sight was seen
 By Funcheon's winding shore.
 The women gathered all around
 To join his sister's wail.
 And the men with stern eyes sadly bent
 On the Martyr's corse so pale.
 They felt that lesson of the free,
 Their proud hearts warming then,
 One true man, dead for liberty,
 Is worth ten living men!

From the town upon the Funcheon
 On stout shoulders went his bier,
 With laurels decked and the fairest flowers
 Of the springtime of the year;
 Unto the ancient churchyard,
 Where lay his sires full low,
 The mighty concourse wound along
 With mournful pace and slow—
 His country's tyrants shook to see
 The lesson taught them then,
 One true man, dead for liberty,
 Is worth ten living men.

In the red grave lies our Martyr
 With his glorious laurel crown,
 In the pride of youth and manliness
 And unforget renown—
 And could you see the looks I saw
 Around his clay-cold bed,
 With swelling breast you'd proudly say,
 "Old Ireland is not dead!"
 With clenched hands you'd cry with me
 In voice of thunder then—
 "One true man, dead for liberty,
 Is worth ten living men!"

We'll build him up a monument
 With Emmet, Sheares and Tone,
 And with all our country's martyrs,
 When Ireland is our own.
 We'll build it on some old green hill,
 Where the Irish winds shall blow
 Their histories round admiring earth
 To the nations in their woe;
 And with our swords the legend free
 We'll carve upon it then—
 "One true man, dead for liberty,
 Is worth ten living men!"

Joyce was a close and trusted friend of such Fenian leaders as O'Donovan Rossa, John Devoy and James J. O'Kelly, and his name figures fairly frequently in the correspondence edited by Desmond Ryan and William O'Brien in *Devoy's Post Bag*.³³

When John Boyle O'Reilly reached America after his escape from the convict colony in Australia, Joyce was one of the small group who succeeded in getting him a post on the influential paper, *The Boston Pilot*.³⁴ And later he and O'Reilly were on the committee of Boston Fenians who welcomed Devoy and other released Fenians on their arrival in that city in 1871. O'Reilly, with characteristic modesty, described the committee as being composed of "the eight first Irishmen in Boston and myself."

In 1871 Joyce and O'Reilly were among the Fenians who supported Devoy when the latter intimated his willingness to back

the "New Departure", the name given to the alliance forged between the American Clan na Gael (the ungrammatical name of this militant organisation arose through somebody, not too familiar with Irish, writing the name intended, *Clanna Gael*, as Clan na Gael) on the one hand and Parnell, Davitt and the Land Leaguers on the other. A year later Joyce was a member of the committee appointed to ensure the success of Parnell's American visit.³⁵

But although he gave his blessing to the "New Departure" Joyce believed that Irish freedom would not be won without a fight, and he continued to busy himself planning new methods of casting guns and improving the Fenian gunpowder factories, with a view to militant action in Ireland.³⁶

He was not without some military training himself, for he held the rank of colonel in the army of the United States, and he numbered among his acquaintances many of the officers of the Maryland and Massachusetts' regiments. We are told that the walls of several rooms of his residence were covered with maps of battlefields in Europe and the United States.³⁷ And he knew, and he was glad of it, that

"The old hope still lingered in Erin
Of a fight for her mountains and plains".

Boston, when Doctor Joyce settled there, was fast becoming, socially and politically, a city of fashion, wealth and influence. With the close of the Civil War many of the most prominent men in New England took up residence there. It quickly became, we are told, "the hub of the universe"; its population rising from 250,256 in 1870 to 448,477 in 1890. By the latter year the Irish population in the city was 30,000. The young Irish physician found conditions favourable for a successful career.³⁸

Doctor Joyce was not only admitted to, but was courted by, the best society. But it to was the working classes of the Irish population that his heart really went out. He

understood them intimately, and was friend as well as physician to them; and they, in their turn revered him. He allowed no barrier of professional formality to intrude itself into his relationship with them; he spoke to them as man to man, and his sincerity and his cheerful words and manner were often the only remedy required to cure the pangs and aches of some "poor exile of Erin."

It often happened that when he called to see some poor or needy patient he discovered that what really was needed was not medicine so much as food; and in such cases he invariably went to the nearest store and paid for food to be sent to the patient.³⁹

The man who feels much suffers much. And it was so in a marked degree with Robert Dwyer Joyce. His great sympathy with those who sorrowed or were ill; and his deep involvement in the cause of Irish freedom would ultimately tax his strength beyond the breaking point. He found his only real relaxation in his writing. Having already written two long epic poems on Irish mythological themes he now planned a third such poem, *The Courtship of Etain*. but this was never completed. After seventeen strenuous years in Boston his health began to fail and he decided to return to Ireland.

Father Crowley (author of *Irish Poets and Novelists*) and a mutual friend visited him in his rooms in Chambers Street, Boston, about a month before his departure for Ireland. Though but a shadow of his former self, Father Crowley tells us that he yet seemed vigorous and talked eloquently all the time. After some remarks about his imminent return to Ireland he changed the conversation to Irish history and literature. His ruling passion was still strong. Father Crowley's friend remarked:

"Come what may, Doctor, you have left your impress on the literature of your native land and established a lasting fame."

"Fame, I suppose," remarked Father

Crowley, "affords very poor consolation to a man when about to close his eyes to earthly things."

"On that point," said Doctor Joyce, "I do not agree with you. I think it affords one great consolation. It is a great deal to leave behind a name that is likely to be cherished in the hearts of a grateful people. I do not however," he continued, "draw all my consolation from that source. The priest was with me yesterday and I am prepared for any kind of journey now. If the worst comes I am not without hope of a happy resurrection."⁴⁰

Robert Dwyer Joyce left Boston in September, 1883. A Boston journal, wishing him *bon voyage*, said:

"Dr. Joyce returns to the land of his birth after an unbroken absence of twenty years, during which time he has achieved distinction here in medicine as well as in literature. He at once attracted attention by his professional ability and fidelity and obtained a large practice. His kindly nature led him to give a goodly number of young medical students the benefit of his advice and encouragement and he presided over classes of physicians who derived great benefit from his practical instruction. He was also a lecturer in Harvard Medical School."⁴¹

And before long an Irish journal had this to say of him, in the course of an obituary:—

"He was greatly beloved in Boston which he left with the good wishes of rich and poor alike; and on the day of his departure a large party of the chief citizens escorted him on board the Cunard steamship *Marathon* to give him a loving good-bye. He will long be remembered by the poor Irish population of Boston, for he was as ready with his dollars to relieve their necessities as he was with his medical skill to alleviate their ailments!"⁴²

Robert Dwyer Joyce died in the home of his brother P. W. Joyce, in Dublin, on 24 October, 1883. He had received the Last Sacraments from an old friend of his, Father C. P. Meehan, author of *The Fate and Fortunes of the Earls of Tyrone and Tyrconnell*. He was buried in Glasnevin.

In the course of a lecture on Joyce and his poetry, delivered on 10 January, 1916, Doctor George Sigerson, President of the National Literary Society—the same who had written the preface for Joyce's first collection of poems fifty-five years earlier—recalling that Joyce was a Munster man, said:—

"Munster had, indeed, been a wonderland of chivalry because of its great Norman-Irish feudatories, whose tragic

SOURCES

1, *Wonders of Ireland*. P. W. Joyce. p. 205; 2, *Ibid* p. 206; 3, *Ibid* p. 206; 4, *English as we speak it in Ireland*. pp. 71, 161; 5, *Ibid* pp. 152, 153; 6, *Ibid* pp. 156, 157; 7, *Ibid* p. 158; 8, *Ibid* pp. 158, 159; 9, *Ibid* pp. 155, 156; 10, *Ibid* p. 151; 11, *Ibid* p. 152; 12, *Ibid* p. 146; 13, *Ibid* pp. 147, 148; 14, *The Diocese of Limerick from 1691 to Present Time*. Begley. p. 628; 15, *English as we speak it in Ireland* pp. 184, 185; 16, *Ibid* p. 276; 17, *Ancient Irish Music*. P. W. Joyce p. 32; 18, *English as we speak it in Ireland* p. 342; 19, Article—"Yesterday"—by D. F. Moore in *Evening Press*, 16,9,1959; 20, Article—"The Joyce Brothers from Limerick"—by Cathal O'Shannon, *Evening Press*, 19,1,1962; 21, *Wonders of Ireland* p. 115; 22, Obituary in *Journal of Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, 45 (1915) 69-71; 23, *Old Irish Folk Music and Songs*. P. W. Joyce. p. 4; 24, Article—"Yesterday"—by D. F. Moore in *Evening Press*, 17,9,1959; 25, *John O'Leary*. Marcus Bourke. p. 66; 26, Article by Rev. D. O. Crowley in *Irish Poets and Novelists*. Published San Francisco, 1893; 27, *Ibid*; 28, *Irish Book Lover*. Feb.-March 1916, p. 131; 29, Article on R. D. Joyce by W. B. Doyle in *Limerick Leader*, 5,8,1950; 30, *Ibid*; 31, Father Crowley's article in *Irish Poets and Novelists*. See 26 above.; 32, The town on the Funcheon is Mitchelstown; 33, Cathal O'Shannon's article on Joyce brothers in *Evening Press*. See 20 above; 34, *Ibid*; 35, *Ibid*; 36, Feature "Window on the Past" *Irish Press*, 24,10,1962; 37, W. B. Doyle's article in *Limerick Leader*. See 29 above; 38, *Ibid*; 39, *Ibid*; 40, Father Crowley's article in *Irish Poets and Novelists*. See 26 above; 41, W. B. Doyle's article in *Limerick Leader*. See 29 above; 42, *Irish Times* report of funeral of R. D. Joyce 27,10,1883; 43, *Irish Book Lover*. Feb.-March 1916. p. 131.

Other sources are acknowledged in body of the article.

The extract from the 1821 census return is from a manuscript copy of certain entries for the Kilfinane-Ardpatrick district made by the late Pádraig Ó Ruairc, formerly of Ardpatrick and Dublin, before the destruction of the originals in the Four Courts in 1922.

fortunes were like red rubies in history, as their ruined castles stand out like wrecks on earth. But none could understand the country; none could feel with that vivid intensity which its picturesque life demanded, save one who had a poet's imagination, a complete knowledge of its written records and a thorough, minute and familiar friendship with unwritten popular life, its sentiments and traditions. Such a man was he. There was but one other quality required—that he should have a high love of honour, the true spirit of chivalry. That, too, he possessed. Joyce was a knight of the old times when knighthood

was in flower. He was an open-air poet; traces of his knowledge and love of nature are in almost every poem. Trees, bushes, berries, wild plants of all kinds, are familiar to him, as are the ways of sea gulls and ravens, wild deer and wolves . . . in 1883 he came 'to die at home at last.' It might be said that his spirit outwore the scabbard, but what an honour for the scabbard to have sheathed and preserved unsullied so pure, so bright and so chivalrous a spirit."⁴³

The memory of the Joyce brothers of Glenosheen deserves to be kept alive. Each, in his own way, did good work for Ireland at a time when such work was sorely needed.

GABHAIM BUÍOCHAS LEO

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