

FIRESIDE TALES

By Séamus O Loinsigh, Rathcannon, Athlaccá

When the fire burns bright on a winter's night,
And the wind round the chimney screams,
We gather about the hearth and whisper,
About ghosts and haunting dreams.

Of the banshee who howls around a house,
When someone's about to die,
And for miles around can be heard the sound,
Of her haunting, mournful cry.

Of the goblin elves, who disport themselves,
On the nearby rath, when the moon is bright,
And who travel with song, in a caravan long,
To the fairy glen on Walpurgt's night.

The ghosts who haunt the roads at night,
And some come once a year,
Accosting travellers whom they meet,
And filling their hearts with fear.

There's the haunted house, where the suicide hung,
And his shadow is still seen on the wall,
At night the crump, of his last sad jump,
Can be heard in the empty hall.

The priest who returns to say Mass once more,
On the spot where his church used to stand,
These whispered tales, by the fireside bright,
Are the legends of our land.

OUR OWN DEAR COLLEEN BAN

By Tom Hickey, Elm Park, Croom

In a humble Irish homestead,
In a vale called Yellow Town,
Lived a maiden fair and pretty,
As sweet Tory Hill looks down.
Till one day there came a stranger,
Dressed in clothes so rich and rare,
And he won her young heart over,
Words of love he did declare.
When he told her that he loved her,
And that soon his bride she would be,
In the dark of night he stole her,
When no human eye could see.
So with his willing captive,
To the Treaty town they came,
Where Sullivan dressed as cleric,
And a marriage there proclaimed.
But he soon grew tired of Ellen,
He planned to do her in,
As they sailed the lordly Shannon,
To the little town of Glin.
They planned for her a boat trip,
To the far off coast of Clare,
On that voyage they took her young life,
And left her body there.
The law soon captured Scanlan,
That was the murderer's name,
With hands clasped tight in irons,
Back to Limerick Jail he came.
The Judge read out the sentence,
With the black cap on his head,
"For this cruel and savage murder,
You will hang until you're dead".
They hunted down his henchman,
To the far off Tralee Jail,
He soon rejoined his master,
In that endless fiery trail.
When it's moonlight over Tory,
Or the cold grey light of dawn,
Don't forget our little Princess,
And our own dear Colleen Bán.

Footnote: As Ellen Hanley was born and reared in the slopes of Knockfierna, it is fitting to remember her at the Festival. Ironically, her murderer's family also lived on the other side of the hill so fate was cruel to put two people from the beautiful and peaceful place as the characters in Ireland's best known drama.

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THE VALES OF BALLYNOE

Submitted by Betty Fitzgerald

*Dear Munster - home of lovely scenes,
The fairest can be found,
Unmatched by France or storied Greece,
To earth's far ends around.
And not to surpass Killarney's Lakes,
Or Glens of Aherlow,
Roam by the brows of Odelville,
Or the Vales of Ballynoe.*

*Historic Ballingarry,
With your ancient fairy mounds,
Famed castle of De Lacy,
No grander can be found.
It's not by mounds or castles great,
I mean to let you know,
But of deeds of dashing hurlers,
From the Vales of Ballynoe.*

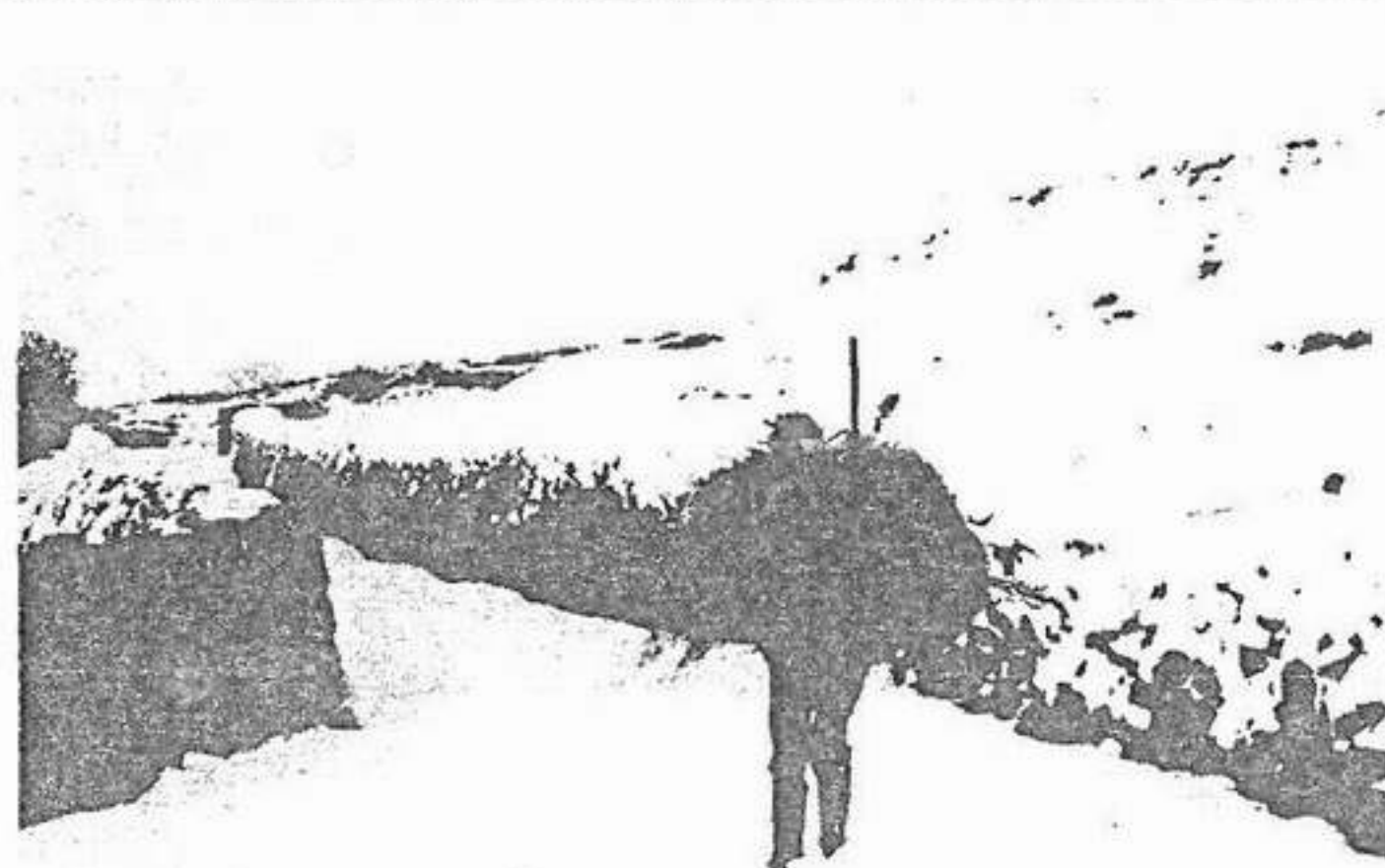
*Con Keefe our dashing Captain,
With Reidy trice of stroke,
Fitzgibbon right in centre,
With Keating heart -of-oak.
McDonnell from Fortwilliam,
Bold Cahill from the 'Roe,
And the pride of Munster - Cathrell,
From the Vales of Ballynoe.*

*There was dashing Timmy Callaghan,
The dairy engineer,
With Dunworth of the Dublin squad,
Swift Noonan like a deer.
There was rousing Billy Monkcton,
With his famous tally-ho,
Who cheered the gallant victors,
From the Vales of Ballynoe.*

*Swift Noonan swings his fine camán,
With Savage, Keefe and Power,
Led on by dashing Hourigan,
With Clifford like a flower.
And gallant Edward Reidy,
With his brother Jim also,
They were victors over Croom abú,
From the Vales of Ballynoe.*

*Dear memory holds their spirits true,
Those darling lads in green,
And how they beat the Liberties,
That day in Carrigeen.
They marched around the fairy mound,
Until evening sun sank low,
They sang and danced until night shades fell,
O'er the Vales of Ballynoe.*

*My wish is night and morning,
That the day is nigh at hand,
When again with friends and neighbours,
On Knockfierna's crest I'll stand.
To greet the boys in green and gold,
Where Grionach waters flow,
To win the fight for old Ireland's right,
In the Vales of Ballynoe.*



Winter Scenes on Knockfierna

BALLINGARRY'S VICTORY IN VERSE

By Alicia Fitzgerald

The great County Final we've all come to see,
And a right rousing tussle it surely will be,
On the 25th of November, nineteen seventy nine,
Our team go to Drom in very good time.

The gallant young men in the green and the gold,
Meet Feenagh-Kilmeedy, fearless and bold.
Mark Kelly and Jim Kennedy with hurleys and ball,
D. Fitz and Father Connie say God bless them all.

Canon Lyons has arrived with his beret and 'shawl',
Now walks from the sideline to throw in the ball,
Dan Cagney is here in his great overcoat,
To cheer on the boys despite his sore throat.

Scarce five minutes are o'er when the ball comes our way,
What a beautiful point from Sean Kennedy's play,
Conor Keefe, our full back, playing the game of the year,
No ball will get past him of that have no fear.

Donie O'Grady, our forward, is thick in the fray,
And sure he is there now, the ball comes his way.
He has it, he plays it, hip hip horray,
The green flag goes up for the goal of the day.

Now our Mike Healy goes for the ball,
He has, he holds it, he's beating them all.
Paddy Healy, who played in the final before,
Has young Mike to take over with talent galore.

Jack Kelly, our goalie, now looks for the ball,
'Tis there around somewhere, but where did it fall.
He sees it and saves it, what luck for us all,
Three cheers for Jack Kelly, we've our backs to the wall.

The Fitz brothers three, Dave, Liam and Joe,
With speed and with fitness they baffled the foe,
Joe is outstanding to run with the ball,
Tho' he misses a goal, he scores eight points in all.

John O'Keefe has replaced big Dan who can't play,
With zest he takes over to help save the day,
Our other full back, the brave Conor Snow,
So stalwart and strong, he steals the show.

Tadgh is young, a mere seventeen,
But he leads Father Walsh to sparkle the scene,
Likewise, Sean Dunworth is fast to the ball,
When he puts his mind to it he can hurl them all.

Dave Clifford is brilliant at centre half back,
Again and again he fights off the attack,
Pa Cagney half forward is sturdy and strong,
From centre field to goals, he takes them all on.

Neilly Duggan, the ref, keeps up with the play,
He writes down two names just to keep them at bay,
Half time comes at last, who would have foretold,
One six to one three o'er our rivals of old.

Trainer, Pa Fitz and Tom Burke meet the boys,
Perhaps we are in for a pleasant surprise,
Paddy Healy and Matt are worried no doubt,
There was some straight talk in the Ballingarry dugout.

Wilson Keefe our star captain leads out his team,
His sweetheart is cheering for the gold and green,
Feenagh-Kilmeedy put on a great spurt,
You can tell by their faces Ballingarry are hurt.

But we rally and hurl like never before,
And keep on the pressure 'till we alter the score,
Feenagh-Kilmeedy are brave and are bold,
But they are overwhelmed by the green and the gold.

Now they are worried 'tis late in the day,
Ballingarry are storming, we're taking the sway,
The whistle is blown, one six to one nine,
We are the champions, nineteen seventy nine.

Jim Liston and Molyneaux they followed the ball,
With camera and mike they covered it all,
They showed it on telly night after night,
Give three cheers for Feenagh, the blue and the white.

The shouts and the cheers, will they ever die down,
As we carried the cup through the streets of the town,
What a great celebration in music and lore,
We didn't win a final since nineteen forty four,
We will never forget the scenes of delight,
Did the pubs ever close in the parish that night ?

THE LIMERICK RAKE

I am a young fellow that's easy and bold,
In Castletownconyers I'm very well known.
In Newcastle West I spent many a note,
With Kitty and Judy and Mary.
My father rebuked me for being such a rake,
And spending my time in such frolicsome ways,
But I ne'er could forget the good nature of Jane,
Agus fágaimid siúd mar atá sé.

My parents had rear'd me to shake and to mow,
To plough and to harrow, to reap and to sow.
But my heart being too airy to drop it so low,
I set out on a high speculation.
On paper and parchment they taught me to write,
In Euclid and grammar they opened my eyes
And in multiplication in truth I was bright,
Agus fágaimid siúd mar atá sé.

If I chance for to go to the town of Rathkeale,
The girls all round me do flock on the square.
Some give me a bottle and others sweet cakes,
To treat me unknown to their parents.
There is one from Askeaton and one from the Pike,
Another from Ardagh my heart has beguiled,
Tho' being from the mountains her stockings are white,
Agus fágaimid siúd mar atá sé.

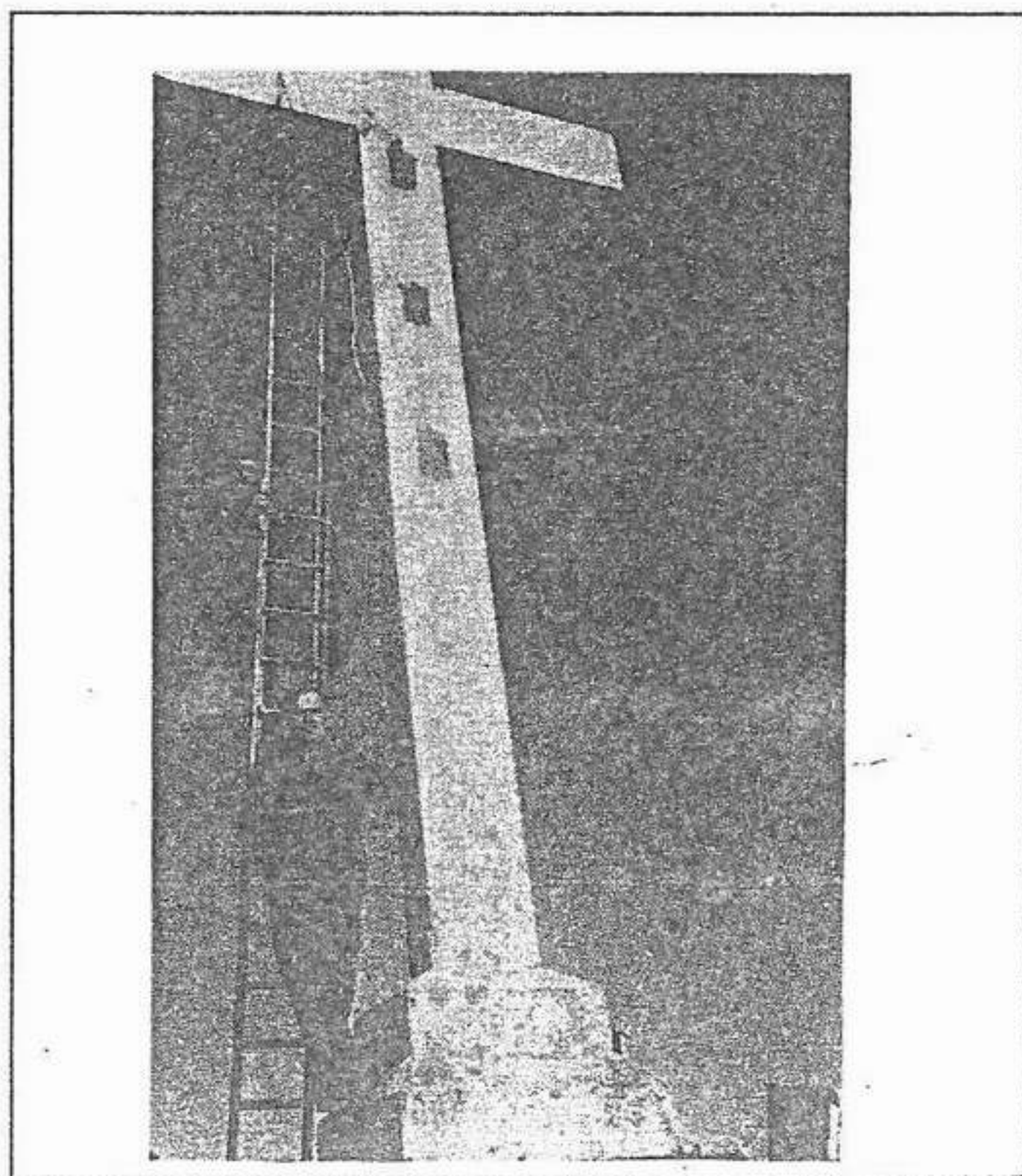
To quarrel for riches I ne'er was inclin'd,
For the greatest of misers must leave them behind,
I'll purchase a cow that will never run dry,
And I'll milk her by twisting her horn.
John Damer of Shronel had plenty of gold,
And Devonshire's treasure is twenty times more,
But he's laid on his back among nettles and stones,
Agus fágaimid siúd mar atá sé.

This cow can be milked without clover or grass,
For she's pamper'd with corn, good barley and hops,
She's warm and stout, and she's free in her paps,
And she'll milk without spancel or halter.
The man that will drink it will cock his caubeen,
And if any one coughs there'll be wigs on the green,
And the feeble old hag will get supple and free,
Agus fágaimid siúd mar atá sé.

If I chance for to go to the market of Croom,
With a cock in my hat and my pipes in full tune,
I am welcome at once and brought up to a room,
Where Bacchus is sporting with Venus.
There's Peggy and Jane from the town of Bruree,
And Biddy from Bruff and we all on the spree,
Such a combing of locks as there was about me,
Agus fágaimid siúd mar atá sé.

There's some says I'm foolish and more says I'm wise,
But being fond of the women I think is no crime,
For the son of King David had ten hundred wives,
And his wisdom was highly recorded.
I'll till a good garden and live at my ease,
And each woman and child can partake of the same,
If there's war in the cabin theirselves they may blame,
Agus fágaimid siúd mar atá sé.

And now for the future I mean to be wise,
And I'll send for the women that acted so kind,
And I'll marry them all on the morrow by and by,
If the clergy agree to the bargain.
And when I'm on my back and my soul is at peace,
These women will crowd for to cry at my wake,
And their sons and their daughters will offer their
prayer,
To the Lord for the soul of their father.



*Vincent & Stephèn Houllhan erecting the Lights on
Knockfierna Cross December 1990*

OH, SWEET ADARE

Gerald Griffin

Oh, sweet Adare, oh, lovely vale,
Oh, soft retreat of sylvan splendour.
Nor summer sun nor morning gale,
E'er hailed a scene more softly tender.
How shall I tell the thousand charms,
Within thy verdant bosom dwelling,
When lulled in Nature's fost'ring arms,
Soft peace abides and joy excelling.

Ye morning airs, how sweet at dawn
The slumbering boughs your song awaken,
Or linger o'er the silent lawn
With odour of the harebell taken.
Thou rising sun, how richly gleams,
Thy smile from far Knockfierna's mountain,
O'er waving woods and bounding streams,
And many a grove and glancing fountain.

Ye clouds of noon, how freshly there,
When summer heats the open meadows,
O'er parched hall and valley fair,
All coolly lie your veiling shadows.
Ye rolling shades and vapours gray,
Slow creeping o'er the golden heaven,
How soft ye seal the eye of day,
And wreath the dusky brow of even.

In sweet Adare the jocund Spring
His notes of odorous joy is breathing,
The wild birds in the woodland sing,
The wild flowers in the vale are breathing.
There winds the Maigne, as silver clear,
Among the elms so sweetly flowing,
There fragrant in the early year
Wild roses on the banks are blowing.

The wild duck seeks the sedgy bank
Or dives beneath the glistening billow
Where graceful droop and clustering dank
The osier bright and rustling willow;
The hawthorn scents the leafy dale,
In thicket lone the stag is belling,
And sweet along the echoing vale
The sound of vernal joy is swelling.

FATHER CASEY



A dozen or more landlords, they made their last appeal,
Got no money from the tenants, and should leave old Abbeyfeale.

Come to the dedication, see the monument unveil,
To dear old Father Casey, in the town of Abbeyfeale.

Excursion trains from Dublin, Limerick, Cork and Clare,
All want to see the monument, in Abbeyfeale's big square.
Come to the dedication, see the monument unveil,
To dear old Father Casey, in the town of Abbeyfeale.

The town band it will play Roosevelt's favourite tune,
And the other one from Dublin play "The Rising of the Moon",
Come to the dedication, see the monument unveil,
To dear old Father Casey, in the town of Abbeyfeale.

The best of beef and mutton, lamb and fatted veal,
From O'Connor and Maloney's will be cooked in Abbeyfeale,
Come to the dedication, see the monument unveil,
To dear old Father Casey, in the town of Abbeyfeale.

TOAST

I was poor when I was born and poor I will be,
Until Ireland from England once more will be free,
The green flag raised up and the Union Jack down,
In Dublin City and Abbeyfeale Town.

PATRICK'S NIGHT IN HEAVEN

By Leo Maguire (If you feel like singing, do sing an Irish song)

Patrick's Night in heaven, and the Irish own the place,
You'd think the very angels were sprung from Heber's
race.

Saint Patrick sits in glory and they throng around his
throne,
While he smiles with pride and pleasure on the clan he
calls his own.

"My children, oh! my children, gather 'round me here a
while,
And we'll talk of that dear place we love, the little Western
Isle.

I know I had my troubles there and so had all of you,
But, sure it's heaven's portal, the door we all came
through".

"Come, someone, sit beside me, I want to feel you near:
O'Connell, over this side and Ignatius Rice just here.
Ah, now, I'm right! Tell Thomas Moore to bring his harp
along,
And maybe John McCormack would oblige us with a
song".

"Tell me, where is Michael Collins ? Ah, he's there with
Cathal Brugha,
For endless talk I never met the beating of you two".
And Collins said, "We're trying to think, both Cathal here
and I,
A shadow came between us once, we can't remember
why".

"Don't vex yourselves with such, my sons, all that was
long ago,
You lived for God and Ireland: that's all you need to
know.
But hush! Here come the ladies! See, Saint Brigid leads
the way,
With Mother Mary Aikenhead, make room for them, I
pray".

"Come, Catherine McAuley, there's room for plenty
more:

But Constance Markievicz, of course, would rather pace
the floor.

With Connolly and Larkin, Mike Mallin too, I see,
Oh! let me look around once more on this goodly
company".

"Ah! gentle Gerald Griffin and Clarence Mangan too,
And Patrick Pearse and Sarsfield - but, what's that wild
hurroo ?

Kevin Barry's chasing Colbert down the Halls of Para-
dise,
The people down below will gaze with wonder on the
skies".

"There'll be shooting stars aplenty with those boyos
kicking 'round,
The astronomers will all have different stories, I'll be
bound!

Come, Tommy Moore, strike up your harp, we want
McCormack's song,
He'll surely get a chorus from this grand Irish throng".

"There's Kickham here, and Davis: Peadar Kearney and
McCall,
Keegan Casey and O'Longain, good rhymester one and
all.

Come, make the heavens ring tonight and crown this
glorious scene,
Let John McCormack start us on the Wearing of the
Green".

"And while you sing I'll pray to God that He may evermore
Encircle with His Providence that wild and rocky shore,
And lead our people onward 'til they gaze on heaven's
light,
Sure, that's my prayer for Ireland on this, our festive
night".

(Reprinted from "The Faithful and the Few" - songs and recitations by Leo Maguire, well-known Radio Elreann broadcaster. He will be long remembered for his Saturday radio programme: Walton's Musical Instruments, 4/5 North Frederick St. and 90 Lower Camden St.)