

Selected Poetry

Counting Sheep

Half-awake I walked
 A dimly-seen sweet hawthorn lane
 Until sleep came
 I lingered at a gate and talked
 A little with a lonely lamb.
 He told me of the great still night,
 Of calm starlight
 And of the lady moon who'd stoop
 For a kiss sometimes.
 Of grass as soft as sleep, of rhymes
 The tired flowers sang;
 And ageless April tales
 Of how, when sheep grew old,
 As their faith told,
 They went without a pang
 To far green fields, where fall
 Perpetual streams that call
 To deathless nightingales.

And then I saw, hard by,
 A shepherd lad with shining eyes,
 And round him gathered one by one
 Countless sheep, snow-white;
 More and more they crowded
 With tender cries
 'Till all the field was full
 Of voices and of coming sheep.
 Countless they came, and I
 Watched, until deep
 As dream-fields lie,
 I was asleep.

—W. P. R. KERR, in the *London Mercury*.

Slievenamon

All alone, all alone, by the seawashed shore,
 All alone in the festive hall;
 The great hall is gay while the huge waves roar,
 But my heart is not there at all.
 It flies far away, by night and by day,
 To the time and the joys that are gone.
 I never shall forget the sweet maiden that I met
 In the Valley of Slievenamon.
 I never shall forget the sweet maiden that I met
 In the Valley of Slievenamon.

It was not the grace of her queenly air,
 Nor her cheeks of roses glow;
 Nor her soft dark eyes, nor her curling hair,
 Nor was it her lily white brow.
 'Twas the soul of truth, and melting ruth
 Her smile like the summer dawn,
 That stole my heart away, on that bright summer day
 In the Valley of Slievenamon.
 That stole my heart away, on that bright summer day
 In the Valley of Slievenamon.

In the festive hall by the sea-washed shore,
 My restless spirit cries—
 "My love, oh, my love, shall I ever see you more,
 My land, will you ever arise?"
 By night and by day I will ever, ever pray
 As lonely this life goes on,
 To see my flag unrolled, and my true love to unfold,
 In the Valley of Slievenamon.
 To see my flag unrolled, and my true love to unfold,
 In the Valley of Slievenamon.

The Game of the Gael

(Air: "The Top of Cork Road.")

Of late they are giving a deal of attention
 To physical culture with every invention;
 Without being too bold, sure I'd just like to mention,
 That hurling's the manliest art of them all!
 A tonic for all, 'tis the surest and best,
 Good for the shoulders, the arms, and the chest.
 If you're nausey or needy,
 Or ever feel seedy,
 A cure that is speedy—the ash and the ball.

Don't talk about Soccer or Rugby or Cricket,
 Or such foreign games, for they're not on my ticket,
 With our old-fashioned pastime their best we can lick it.
 For all their amusements are lazy and lame!
 What we want here is some frolic and fun,
 For Irishmen, all and for everyone—
 Sport with a dash in it,
 Clatter and clash in it,
 Something with ash in it—surely a game!

Hurling's a sport with a genuine swing in it,
 Rhythm and reason and plenty of ring in it,
 Faith! and a taste of an old Irish sting in it,
 Racing and chasing the stout leather ball.
 Here's, then, a health to our forefathers' game;
 With changes of time, sure 'tis ever the same.
 For tumbling and tearing,
 And dashing and daring,
 And "devil may caring"—the game of them all!

—PHILIP O'NEILL, Kinsale.

The Moon Behind the Hill

I watched last night the rising moon
 Upon a foreign strand,
 Till memories came, like flowers in June,
 Of home and fatherland;
 I dreamt I was a child once more
 Beside the rippling rill,
 Where first I saw in days of yore
 The moon behind the hill.

It brought me back the visions grand
 That purpled boyhood's dreams;
 Its youthful loves, its happy land,
 As bright as morning's beams.
 It brought me back my own sweet Nore,
 The castle and the mill,
 Until my eyes could see no more
 The moon behind the hill.

It brought me back a mother's love,
 Until, in accents wild,
 I prayed her from her home above
 To guard her lonely child;
 It brought me one across the wave,
 To live in memory still,
 It brought me back my Kathleen's grave,
 The moon behind the hill.

The Coulin

Tho' the last glimpse of Erin with sorrow I see,
 Yet, wherever thou art shall seem Erin to me;
 In exile thy bosom shall still be my home,
 And thine eyes make my climate wherever I roam.

To the gloom of some desert, or cold rocky shore,
 Where the eye of the stranger can haunt us no more,
 I will fly with my Coulin, and think the rough wind
 Less rude than the foes we leave frowning behind.

And I'll gaze on thy gold hair, as graceful it wreathes,
 And hang o'er thy soft harp as wildly it breathes;
 Nor dread that the cold-hearted Saxon shall tear
 One chord from that heart, or one lock from that hair.

—THOMAS MOORE.

G. S. Bruce & Co.

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