

**AFTERMATH OF
EASTER WEEK.**



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FOREWORD.

A year ago one might have said, "Here is a garland for the graves of those who died"; now one must say, "Here are flowers for the altars of those who live for ever" Many thought then, like the Athenian statesman, that the spring was taken out of the year; at present they think rather of the grain of wheat which falls into the ground and dies, to bring forth much fruit.

The Nation's life has been purified and renewed; and, among other things, the national literature has experienced a new impetus and inspiration. A few friends of the Association which has been engaged in the noble work of assisting the families of those who suffered for their connection with the Easter Rising, now wish, for the benefit of the Fund to publish some of the poems that have been written. It is to be hoped that the public will respond generously, not so much for the sake of the poems themselves, as for the cause they are intended to help, and the illustrious dead whom they commemorate.

18th September, 1917.

Rev. P. Browne D.D.
Maynooth

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REQUIEM

Tears for the dead, but not for them
Spirits of wind and fire and flame,
For these a lordlier requiem.

Tears for the dead, who in the gloom
Of old despairs forlornly grope,
Forgetful that the dawn is come.

Tears for such living, but for them
Spirits of wind and flame and fire,
Raise we a loftier requiem,
Build we a lordlier funeral pyre.

Blow to us, wind of deathless hope,
And wake the swift avenging flame
Exultant, of their heart's desire.

THE SEANACHIE TELLS ANOTHER STORY

Once upon a time in our townland
This vision came of a funeral band:
Coffins of gold and each silver hearse
Had a breast-plate with a shining verse,
While all the proud mourners on the march
Would reach from here to Saint Peter's Arch.

As sixteen coffins went by Kilgar,
A flaming spear leapt up to a star;
A sign that the men who lived in death
Were those who had drawn the hero breath;
England had bullets and burning lime,
And Ireland has names that march with time.

SIXTEEN DEAD MEN

Hark in the still night! Who goes there?
"Fifteen dead men." Why do they wait?
"Hasten, comrade, Death is so fair."
Now comes their Captain through the dim gate.

Sixteen dead men! What on their sword?
"Their Nation's honour proud do they bear."
What on their bent heads? "God's holy word;
All of their Nation's heart blended in prayer."

Sixteen dead men! What makes their shroud
"All of their Nation's love wraps them around."
Where do their bodies lie, brave and so proud?
"Under the gallows-tree in prison ground."

Sixteen dead men! Where do they go?
"To join their regiment where Sarsfield leads,
Wolfe Tone and Emmet there well do they know,
There shall they bivouac telling great deeds."

Sixteen dead men! Shall they return?
"Yea, they shall come again, breath of our
breath."

They on our Nation's hearth made old fires
burn,
Guard her unconquered soul, strong in their
death."

QUAE EST ISTA QUAE PRO-
GREDITUR QUASI AURORA
CONSURGENS, PULCHRA
UT LUNA, ELECTA UT SOL.

Because they died and at the darksome door
Of death's house never quailed, nor o'er their
eyes

Passed a faint hand to blot the shapes that
rise

When blood runs cold and freezes at the core,
But kept her form before them to adore,
The passionate Dark Rose whose strange
surprise

Of beauty nerved them to their enterprise
Till death nor life had moment any more,
They have passed to a galaxy of stars,
And throned her in an ether with no cloud,
A sun round which their circling orbits gleam,
While we through spaces of our prison bars
Watch in the firmament their courses proud
And feel life's light is darkness to their dream.

“THE REBELS”

Not that they knew well, when they drew the
blade

That breaks for victory if gain were planned,
You never gave without a trembling hand;
But when they heard of sacred truth waylaid,
And meanness with grandiloquence gainsaid,
And Freedom, in the name of Freedom, banned;
And Friendship in this foulness, this, England—
This was the cause of that good fight they made.

They heard your mobsters mouthing at the
hordes,

Who care not so the fight increase their store,^o
Hawking your honour on the sandwich boards;
But their's is safe, and to these things unlinked
They stood apart; and Death withholds them
more,

Separate for ever and aloof—distinct.

TO IRELAND, 1916

These are your sons who bore your time of
waiting

Smitten and mocked by brutal soldiery;

Each now has risen from the cross of hating

Winged with white flames of love and liberty.

Little Dark Rose, the rain is in their faces,

Mourn not the past of agony and drouth;

Proud-eyed and strong, they stride the starry
spaces,

Laughter has flowered from every bleeding
mouth.

Weep not their wounds who loved your eyes of
sorrow,

Red wine of joy stains every pierced side,

Sons of young Angus, princes of the morrow,

Sunlight and wind acclaim the crucified!

LACRYMAE RERUM

Souls, your high fate with our sad thoughts
allied

Has brought into the spring our Hallow-eve,
And lengthening days of life returning grieve
Holding the vigil of your passion tide.

Fresh flowers and leaves forget their wonted
pride

And over all the fields conspire to weave
A wreath for hopes your lives could not achieve
A funeral tribute to your hearts that died.

So life at each recurring vernal bloom
Shall by your memory be overthrown;
No more a Victor on triumphal ways.

'Twill come, but in procession to your tomb,
While south-west winds that lead the spring
intone

Your *Dies Irae* to the end of days.

THE BOREEN, 1916

They whisper in the dark boreen,
Where all their mumbled words are mean,
Of who was wrong, and who was right,
(The hoots of blind bats in the Night!)—
From starry space we hear you sing,
O ye who grew the Eagle's wing.

They stumble on by crooked ways,
With empty clamours fill their days,
The nothingness of all they say
Is stamped upon an alien clay—
“Hearts to the golden sun” you sing,
O ye who know the Eagle's wing.

“Be wise, be wise” our old fools cry,
“You'll get your own wings by and by”—
And mumble on of insect things,
Of empire flights on pismire wings—
“Strain for the Golden sun” you sing,
O ye who soar on Eagle's wing.

They shuffle down their dank boreen
By stagnant pools and on between
The lichened walls that map their sway

And mark them from freedom's highway—
“ Eyes to the Golden sun ” you sing,
O ye who sweep on Eagle's wing.

Green meads and all the laughing seas,
The purple hills, the forest trees,
The glory of the sun's uprising,
Are not for folk with wintered eyes—
“ Breasts to the Golden sun,” you sing,
O ye who rose on Eagle's wing.

TO THOMAS MACDONAGH

You who had garnered all that old song could
give you,

And rarer music in places where the bittern
cries,

What new strange symphonies, what new music
thrills you

Flashing in light-loud magic beneath wildering
skies?

Singer of dawn songs, you who drink now at
the fountains,

Cry out as your own poet of the bittern cried,
Flood that new song deep-drunken, rapturous
about us,

So shall these parched sad hearts drink deep,
satisfied.

TO SEAN MACDERMOT

Your pale dead face with sure insistent claim
Shall haunt my soul as long as thought endures,
Waking remembrance of your wasted frame
Afire with that all-conquering soul of yours—

As last I saw you, captive in the net,
And heard you in **Kilmainham's** prison cell
Review the patient years with no regret
And say in sight of death that all was well.

I know you walked (O sad, lame steps!) to die
With high disdain of all who hold life dear
And sacrifice their honour like a pawn;

No 'dimness born of agony and fear
Was in those spirit eyes when carelessly
They faced the rifles at the grey of dawn.

IN MEMORIAM

SEAN MacDERMOT.

They have slain you, Seán MacDermot, never
more these eyes will greet
The eyes beloved by women and the smile that
true men loved.
Never more I'll hear the stick-tap and the gay
and limping feet.
They have slain you, Seán the gentle, Seán the
valiant, Seán the proved.

Have you scorn for us who linger here behind
you, Seán the wise?
As you look about and greet your comrades in
the strange new dawn.
So one says, but saying wrongs you, for doubt
never dimmed your eyes,
And not death itself could make those lips of
yours grow bitter, Seán.

As your stick goes tapping down the heavenly
pavement, Seán, my friend,
That is not your way of thinking, generous,
tender, wise and brave;

We who knew and loved and trusted you are
trusted to the end,
Even now your hand grips mine as though there
never were a grave.

CASEMENT IN BERLIN

(Er lachte niemals—"Berliner Tageblatt.")

He never laughed—his soul within
Burned with a silent fire,
Wasted with thought that strove to spin
The web of his desire.

No giddy pleasures ever lured
His soul from her high road;
In a dumb vigil he endured
The spirit's secret goad.

He, wont to pale at Beauty's glance
That history half withheld,
Now on the later scrolls of chance
A sterner message spelled.

While guests their glasses raised to drain
In many a fervent toast,
He started like the thought-worn Dane
Before his father's ghost,

As though outside a window square
He heard a scaffold groan,
And saw fixed in a icy stare
The pallid face of Tone—

Assured that in Time's book the date
Was marked when he should seize
That chalice from the hands of fate
And drain it to the lees.

The vision passed and life again
Resumed its wonted ways;
Along his rugged path of pain
He went, nor turned his gaze.

Hourly he seemed to droop and fade
By fantasies possessed
Of some dim heaven, an exiled shade
Whose doom allowed no rest.

And when he vanished as he came
Like some migrating bird,
They who knew well the inward flame
Divined that he had heard

The voices calling from the graves,
Dead martyrs of his race,
And rising went out on the waves
To meet death face to face.

PIPER DENIS DELANY*

Play up the martial air
For all Mountbellew fair,
Enchantment is your trade
Your heart is unafraid;
You do your soul no wrong
To pipe a rebel song.

The message from your keys
Now loose upon the breeze,
Ah, soon the old desire
Will set men's hearts afire—
You do their souls no wrong
To pipe a rebel song.

Lift up that noble face!
Let all who care there trace
The passion that you woo
From olden days for new—
You do that face no wrong
To pipe a rebel song.

Warm now the magic flood
Of your piping Gaelic blood—
Wake mem'ries of our dead

And the tyrant's lure is fled!
You do his cause much wrong
To pipe a rebel song.

O man with blinded eyes
Piping under Irish skies,
The brightness of your art
Lights Eire's darkened heart—
You do her soul no wrong
To pipe a rebel song.

Play up the martial air
For all Mountbellew fair,
Enchantment is your trade,
Your heart is unafraid,
You do your soul no wrong,
To pipe a rebel song.

* Denis Delany, the famous Ballinasloe piper, the winner of so many prizes at Feiseanna, was arrested under the Defence of the Realm Act for playing "The Memory of the Dead" at Mountbellew Agricultural Show shortly after the Insurrection of 1916. Delany is blind and over eighty years of age.—Daily papers.

THE LEADERS

Where loud-voiced leaders vaunt a claim
They have no place, they have no name,
The tenders of the Phœnix Flame;
Without a word, without a sign,
They move upon that old divine
High mission at the inmost shrine.

Yet have they more enduring place,
The men of Ireland's hero race,
And they have names that still can stir
The deep unconquered heart of her.

THE DEAD WHO LIVE FOR IRELAND

Because they were her best-loved sons—
In beauty, wisdom, valorous unrest,
She sent them forward on her ancient quest
With stainless courage and pure orisons.
In splendid youth and hope, her darling ones
Left friendship, praise, love, children—being's
best,
Lest she of ultimate right be dispossessed . . .
It was her victory when callous guns
Made such dear dignity bow down to death;
Stamped on our hearts the gesture of their fall!
They are more dear to us than living friends,
Whose sacrifice re-fired our love and faith,
Lime has consumed their bodies; but the call
Of their inviolate souls all speech transcends.

