

GEM OF THE HIGHLANDS (1)

Slower

COME LASSES AND LADS;
LET'S TUNE THE LAY.

Bernard FONLON

*Tis the scene of my Homeland
So charming in May;
O wild was thy beauty,
When young was my day;
How pranced the gay streamlet
O'er upland and fen!
How thrilling this blending!
Of mountain and glen.*

*May the fierce deadly lein
Wipe out his domain;
Bind us once again;
Let the ashes of discord
Be buried in urn;
May thy clansman as yestreen
Rave free o'er bank and burn.*

*Gone, the wild toapes of yestreen,
Gone the once roaring lein!
With tillage ever spreading
The streamlet is thin,
Where the clansman was ready
To die for the Fen,
A new hattering har
Puts Peace on the run.*

*Thy bonnie heath, Homeland,
So charming in May,
How wild was your beauty,
When young I was gay;
Meandered your streamlets
Past Upland and fen;
How thrilling this blending
Of Mountain and glen!*

(1) Reference to the Nao Highlands, North West Province, Cameroon written to the tune of "Tis the Last Rose of Summer," by Thomas Moore. Reevoy, Wednesday, 1st Dec., 1976. Bernard FONLON.

DARKIE IN ERIN (1)

Slowly

Her eyes they shine like the diamonds,
They call her the Queen of the Land,
And her hair hangs over her shoulders
Tied up with a black velvet band.

I love a cosy young collen (2)
Shapely as a god could command
And her hair streams over her shoulders
Bound deft with a black velvet band.

Snow Breasted Pearl of Erin, (3)
Her spell the fiends fell magic wand :
And her waves of hair over her shoulders
Bewitch with that black velvet band.

Her tyrant spell grips my helpless heart ;
Black Pride cannot stoop for her hand,
Still those tresses eider soft and sweet
Unman like a bewitching wand.

Her ogle liquid and languid
Can melt the hard hermits stand ;
And my heart so thirsty like touchwood fine
Flares into a wild blazing brand.

O Christian people of Erin,
So large to far folk of my land !
And yet Erin frowns on Maureen,
Spite of your sweet kindness so bland.

As tarn aloft up the mountain,
I shun your green legendary strand,
And that girl whose charms so weird and rare
Makes me still love your loveless land.

Farewell ! Farewell ! thou Em'rald Gem (4)
Peerless in the whole Western World ;
And farewell, fair Rose of Tralee, (5)
Farewell ye cresses daintly curled.

With speaking look like the crystal
My Queen she remains to the last,
Preserve, Lord, that youth, that rose empearled,
From Time's ruthless withering blast.

Her eyes they shine like the diamonds
I call her the Queen of the Land,
And her hair hangs over her shoulders
Bound deft with black velvet band.

Her eyes they shine like the diamonds
To me she's the Queen of this Land,
O those tresses so softly enticing
Bedecked with a black velvet band !

Beware ! Take care ! dark fellow,
Unmoved let your manly feet stand,
Lest those charms womanly, disarming,
Grip you like a vice-foot and hand.

For though your heart is so pure and true,
Remember your far dusky land,
Leave that girl alone for your peace and weal,
Naive folks will not this understand.

- (1) Erin, Ireland; This poem is an imitation of a folk song, The Black Velvet Band recorded in a bar in Dunganannon, County Tyrone, Northern Ireland, by Dr. Loreto Todd of the School of English, University of Leeds, England.
- (2) Colleen - a youthful beautiful (Irish) girl.
- (3) The snow-Breasted Pearl - Title of an Irish song.

- (4) The Emerald Gem of the Western World means Ireland, so named for her perennial peerless greenery : From the Irish song : When you Honour in Song and in Story . . .
- (5) The Rose of Tralee - Title of a famous Irish song. Thursday, Kibboeey, December 2nd 1976.

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