

**THE IRISH POEMS OF  
ALFRED PERCEVAL GRAVES:  
COUNTRYSIDE SONGS;  
SONGS AND BALLADS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649491063

The Irish Poems of Alfred Perceval Graves: Countryside Songs; Songs and Ballads by Alfred Perceval Graves

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COUNTRYSIDE SONGS  
SONGS AND BALLADS

DUBLIN : MAUNSEL & COMPANY, LIMITED  
NEW YORK : THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1908



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## PREFACE

THOMAS MOORE'S best work was written under the influence of Irish airs which he brought over with him to England, or which followed him there when his *Melodies* had taken all hearts by storm. But Moore wrote professedly for the upper classes, and but once only in Anglo-Irish dialect. And small wonder. The vulgarities of Stage Irish Songs doubtless determined him to set his face against any form of lyric that could suggest them. But Samuel Lover, who followed him, boldly accepted Lady Morgan's challenge to find worthy substitutes for the execrable travesties of native humour contained in the Irish Popular Songs of their day with the results now so wellknown.

Yet though Lover, like Moore, was largely inspired by Irish Music and an adapter and singer of Irish airs as well, like Moore also, he let the great body of Gaelic Folk Song quite alone.

If, as suggested by Dr. Hyde in his friendly introduction to my first volume, I have entered into this newly-opened lyrical field with success, it has been because I have not only had an Irish Countryside up-bringing and the advantage, therefore, of constantly having in my ears that translation into English of Irish idioms which renders the speech of the



*Kerry peasant so peculiarly poignant and picturesque, but because, in such works as Dr. Hyde's own delightful "Love Songs of Connacht," and Edward Walsh's, Sir Samuel Ferguson's, Mangan's, and Sigerson's translations and adaptations from the Irish, I have also had before me the best published examples of the Poetry of the Western Gael to ponder and to profit by. Moreover, since Moore's time there have been great gatherings of Irish Folk Songs by Petrie, Joyce, and others of a kind so illustrative of the inner life of the Countryside as to give the greatest assistance to an Irish lyrical writer.*

*For if, as I have said before, my songs, from "Father O'Flynn" down to "The Exiles," have found favour, it is because they owe their prime impulse to the music of the old Irish airs. That music I danced and sang to as a boy; it has haunted me through life, and I look to its inexhaustible freshness as one of the dearest solaces of age.*

*I have had not a few heart searchings as to the spelling of my poems in Hiberno-English, and the introduction into them of unusual words without explanation.*

*My friends of the Gaelic League may, perhaps, find fault with me on the former score; my non-Irish acquaintances may grumble with me on the latter.*

*But by those who will take the trouble to examine into these matters it will be found that my spelling has been carefully adapted to suit the exigencies suggested by rustic or romantic themes, and that, after all, a glossary would not*

*be a more appropriate close to a book of Irish Poems than to a Scotch Novel. I have endeavoured as far as possible to indicate the meaning of strange words by their place in the context. Where I have not succeeded in this, will my readers oblige me by asking their Irish friends for necessary explanations?*

*I desire, finally, to thank Messrs. Boosey and Novello for the use of many of the songs in this collection, and in case that there should be a desire to possess any of them in musical form I have to call attention to the lyrics marked in the Contents, with particulars of the musical publications in which they appear.*

ALFRED PERCEVAL GRAVES.

RED BRANCH HOUSE,  
LAURISTON ROAD, WIMBLEDON,  
July 22nd, 1908.

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