THE SONGS OF IRELAND

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The Songs of Ireland by Michael Joseph Barry

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PREFACE.

So large a portion of what Mr. Duffy has written in his Introduction to "The Ballad Poetry of Ireland," published in the present series, is equally applicable to the Songs of the country, as to limit to a narrow space the observations which, only for its priority of publication, I should be obliged to make.

The same necessities controlled, the same principles guided my selection which coerced or regulated his. Like him I have found myself, in the main, restricted to the last half century for the materials of my collection—the old songs of the country being still a sealed fountain to that large class of Irishmen whose knowledge is confined to foreign tongues—and like him, I have, of course, rejected those songs which were un-Irish in their character or language, and those miserable slang productions, which, representing the Irishman only as a blunderer, a bully, a fortune-hunter, or a drunkard, have done more than any thing else to degrade him in the