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2

New Edition

of a

# General Collection

of the

# ANCIENT IRISH MUSIC,

*Containing a variety of*

## Admired Airs

never before Published, and also

*The Compositions of*

*CONOLAN and CAROLAN;*

*Collected from the Harpers &c in the different*

Provinces of

# IRELAND,

*and adapted for the*

## Piano-Forte,

*with a Prefatory Introduction*

*Vol. I.* *Price 10-6*

By

*EDWARD BUNTING.*

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RIA

# Index to

# BUNTINGS IRISH MELODIES


A

Abigail Judge – – – – – – – – – – 25
An Irish Melody – – – – – – – – – 28

B

Brown Thorn – – – – – – – – – – 2
Beardless Boy – – – – – – – – – – 5
Banks of the Shannon – – – – – – – 17
Brown Maid – – – – – – – – – – – 18
Blossom of the Raspberry – – – – – 28
Bob Jordan – – – – (Carolan) – 32

C

Charmer with the fair locks – – – 10
Castle O'Neil – – – – – – – – – 15
Carolan's Concerto – – – – – – – 23

D

Dennis don't be threatning – – – 11
Dermot O'Dowd – – – – – – – – 20
Dear black Maid – – – – – – – – 22

F

Foxes sleep – – – – – – – – – – 1
Fairy Queen – – (Carolan) – – – – 3
Fair haird child – – – – – – – – 7
Fair Woman – – – – – – – – – 12
Forlorn Queen – – – – – – – – 19

G

Girls have you seen George – – – 4
Grace Nugent – – – – – – – – – 36

H

Harvest morn – – – – – – – – 16
Have you seen my Valentine – – – 31

I

If to a foreign clime you go – – – 1
Joices Tune – – – – – – – – – 2
John Heir of the glen – – – – – – 17
Jigg – – – – – – – – – – – – 14
Jigg – – – – – – – – – – – – 18
Jointure – – – (Canalon) – – – – 18
I would rather than Ireland – – – 27
John O'Reily the active – – – – 27
Isabella Burk – – – – – – – – 30
If the Cat had gold – – – – – 33

K

Kitty Tyrrell – – – – – – – – 5
Kitty the Cuckoo – – – – – – – 16
Kitty O'Brien – – (Carolan) – – – 21

L

Love in secret – – – – – – – – 8
Little Harvest Rose – – – – – – 24
Lamentation of Owen O'Neil – – – 28
Little and great mountain – – – – 35

M

Molly St. George – – (Carolan) – – 7
Madame Cole – – – Do. – – – 9
Madge Malone – – – Do. – – – 20
Mary do you fancy me – – – – 22
Molly Mc. Alpin – – – – – – 24
Maid of the valley – – – – – 26

N

Nancy Mc. Dermotroe – (Carolan) – – 29

O

Old Truagh – – – – – – – – – 7
Open the door softly – – – – – 8
O my dear stay with me – – – – 21

P

Planxty Drury – – – – – – – – 6
Planxty Kelly – – – – – – – – 11
Planxty Riely – – – (Carolan) – 25
Planxty Johnson – – – Do. – – 31
Planxty Mc. Guire – – – Do. – – – 35
Planxty Dillon – – – – – – – – 36
Pleasant Rocks – – – – – – – – 12
Parting of friends – – – – – – 14
Pretty girl milking her cow – – 29

R

Rose Dillon – – – – – – – – – 13

S

Summer is coming – – – – – – – 4
Snowy breasted pearl – – – – – 19

T

Twisting of the rope – – – – – 10
Thomas O'Burk – – (Carolan) – – 34

U

Ugly Tailor – – – – – – – – – 15

W

We brought the summer with us – – 33

Y

Young mans dream – – – – – – – 10
Young Terence Mc. Donough – – – 30


New Edition — Arranged for the Piano Forte, Harp, Flute or Violin —
Price Half a Guinea.

# PREFACE.

IT is an extraordinary fact, that although Ireland has, from a remote antiquity, been celebrated for its cultivation of Music, and admitted to be one of the parent countries of that delightful art, the present is the first general collection of its national airs. Most of them are of such ancient origin, that the names of their authors, and the era in which they were composed, are alike unknown.

The works of some of its latest composers, as Connollan and Carolan, have before been selected; but even of these it remained to this day to give accurate copies; while the superior productions of their masters, on whom they had formed their stile, and of whose excellence they have fallen short, are now only partially known in the very Country where they once flourish.

To rescue them from oblivion, and to open a new source of musical delight, the Public are now presented with the first volume of such a Collection, as has for a long time been eagerly desired.

A brief account of the circumstances which led to this Collection, will naturally be expected.

The rapid decrease of the number of itinerant performers on the Irish Harp, with the consequent decline of that tender and expressive instrument, gave the first idea of assembling the remaining harpers dispersed over the different provinces of Ireland. A meeting of them was accordingly procured, at a considerable expence, by the Gentlemen of Belfast on the 12th. July 1792 and liberal premiums were distributed amongst them, according to their respective merits.

The compiler of this volume was appointed to attend on that occasion, to take down the various airs played by the different harpers, and was particularly cautioned against adding a single note to the old melodies, which would seem, from inferences that will afterwards be drawn, to have been preserved pure, and handed down unalloyed, thro' a long succession of ages.

A principal motive to convene this assemblage of the remnant of the Irish Bards, was to procure, while yet attainable, the most approved copies of tunes already in the hands of practitioners, as well as to revive and perpetuate a variety of others extremely ancient, of which there were no copies extant, and which were therefore likely soon to become extinct.

This end was, in a great degree, secured by the meeting alluded to; and it has since been perfected by the editor of the present work, who made a tour through a principal portion of the kingdom, for the purpose of comparing the music already procured, with that in the possession of harpers in other parts, and of making such additions as would render the work complete.

The work is now before that tribunal, which is the natural judge of its merits. It may however, without presumption, be alleged, that while public taste shall remain sufficiently pure & unadulterated, to be capable of admiring strains which lead directly to the heart, the ancient music of Ireland will be studied with increasing delight. The performer will recollect, that the music of a country & its language are analagous. There are idioms and characteristical delicacies in both, to enter into the spirit of which, some time and practice are requisite: And this is peculiarly the case with those compositions, which are the productions of a very distant period.

We may be permitted to mention a few of the reasons which lead us to believe, that some portions of the following Music are of high antiquity.

Most

# PREFACE.

Most of the performers convened at the meeting above-mentioned, were men advanced in life, and they all concurred in one opinion respecting the reputed antiquity of those airs which they called **ancient**. They smiled on being interrogated concerning the era of such compositions, saying, "They were more ancient than any to which our popular traditions extended."

It would appear, that the old musicians in transmitting this Music to us through so many centuries, treated it with the utmost reverence, as they seem never to have ventured to make the slightest innovation in it during its descent. This inference we naturally deduce from our finding that harpers collected from parts far distant from one another, & taught by different masters, always played the same tune on the same key, with the same kind of expression, and without a single variation in any essential passage, or even in any note. The beauty and regularity, with which the tunes are constructed, appear surprising. This circumstance seemed the more extraordinary, when it was discovered that the **most** ancient tunes were, in this respect, the most perfect, admitting of the addition of a Bass with more facility than such as were less ancient. Hence we may conclude, that their authors must necessarily have been excellent performers, versed in the scientific part of their profession, & that they had originally a view to the addition of **harmony** in the composition of their pieces. It is remarkable that the performers all tuned their instruments on the same principle, totally ignorant of the principle itself, and without being able to assign any reason either for their mode of tuning, or of their playing the Bass.

On an impartial review of all these circumstances, we are inclined to believe that those specimens which have survived and **been** transmitted to us, are only the wreck of better times, the history of which is either lost, or incorrectly recognised, in a confused series of traditions.

Giraldus Cambrensis, who came over to Ireland in the reign of Henry the 2.d gives us a striking account of the state in which he found the Music of this country. This enlightened prelate, a native of Britain, and probably not entirely free from the prejudices that were then entertained against the Irish; a man well acquainted with the fine arts in general, & with Music in particular, as cultivated at that period by the most refined nations of Europe; published an Itinerary, which contains this remarkable passage: "The attention of this people to musical Instruments I find worthy of commendation; in which their skill is, beyond all comparison superior to that of any nation I have seen: For in these the modulation is not slow & solemn, as in the instruments of Britain, to which we are accustomed; but the sounds are rapid and precipitate, yet at the same time sweet and pleasing. It is wonderful how in such precipitate rapidity of the fingers the musical proportions are preserved; and by their art faultless throughout, in the midst of their complicated modulations and most intricate arrangement of notes, by a rapidity so sweet, a regularity so irregular, a concord so discordant, the melody is rendered harmonious and perfect; whether the chords of the Diatesseron or Diapente, are struck together, yet they always begin in a soft mood, and end in the same, that all may be perfected in the sweetness of delicious sounds. They enter on, and again leave their modulations with so much subtilty, & the tinglings of the small strings sport with so much freedom under the deep notes of the Bass delight with so much delicasy, and sooth so softly, that the excellence of their art seems to lie in concealing it."*

But such was the celebrity of Irish Music a century preceding the arrival of Cambrensis, that the Welsh Bards, so celebrated for their knowledge in this art, condescended to seek for & receive instructions from those of Ireland, of which this passage of Powell, their own historian,

* Translation from Topog. Hib. Distinct 3. C. 11.

in

in the sixteenth century, is evidence: —"Gruffydh ap Conan," says Powell, "brought over with "him from Ireland divers cunning musicians into Wales, who (he boldly asserts) devised in a "manner all the instrumental Music, that is now there used: as appeareth, as well by the books "written of the same, as also by the names of the tunes and measures used among them to this "date." † This assertion of Powell receives support from the learned Selden: "Their Musique" (says he, speaking of the Welsh) for the most part came out of Ireland with Gruffydh ap Conan, "Prince of North Wales, about King Stephen's time." ‡

Cardoc, a Welshman also, in the twelfth century, without any of that illiberal partiality so common with national writers, assures us that the Irish devised all the instruments, tunes and measures, in use among the Welsh.

The Bards, according to the testimony of Strabo, Diodorus and Ammianus Marcellinus, existed among the ruder branches of the Celtic tribes, before the time of Augustus. We find them under the same name in Ireland from the earliest period of our history down to the year 1738, when Carolan died – who seems to have been born to render the termination of his order memorable and brilliant. If we reflect upon the disadvantages under which he laboured; born blind – with slender opportunities of acquiring ideas, the inhabitant of a country recently desolated by a civil war, the flames of which had scarcely subsided, and add to this, his own propensity to idleness and dissipation, we cannot but be astonished at the powers of his mind. He has occasionally tried almost every stile in Music; the elegiac, the festive, the amorous, and sacred; and has so much excelled in each, that we scarcely know to which of them his genius was best adapted. His first composition was amorous and plaintive, called "Bridget Cruise," addressed to a Lady, to whom he was tenderly attached, without the hope of success. He is said to have dedicated fifteen different pieces to her, none of which are contained in this collection. The first was either originally imperfect, or the copy procured of it so corrupt, that a Bass could not be adopted to it. His last tune was inscribed to his physician, Doctor Stafford. He composed the fairy Queen, Rose Dillon, and others of his serious pieces, early in life; but after having established a reputation, and addicted himself too much to festive company and the bottle, he dedicated his time to the composition of his Planxties, which required no labour or assiduity. We may form some idea of the fertility of his genius from this circumstance, that one harper who attended the Belfast Meeting, and who had never seen him, or was not taught directly by any person, that had had an opportunity of copying from him, had acquired upwards of an hundred of his tunes, which he said, constituted but a very inconsiderable part of the real number.

As Carolan never taught any itinerant pupils, except his own son, (who had no musical genius) and as we have never heard that any of his pieces were committed to writing until several years after his death, when young Carolan, under the patronage of Dr. Delany, edited a small Volume, we need not wonder if nine tenths of the whole be irreparably lost.

In Carolan's Concerto (Nº 42) and in his Madam Cole (No. 16) the practitioners will perceive evident imitations of Correlli, in which the exuberant fancy of that admired composer is happily copied. In the ancient air Gradh gan fios, or Love in Secret, (Nº 14) he will be charmed with one of the most pleasing strains that any country has produced; it is accordingly so old, that no trace could be discovered of the century it which it was produced.

† History of Camb. p. 191. Edit. 1584. ‡ Notes on DRAYT. Polyolb. Song.

The

# PREFACE.

The words of **Coolin** were extant in the reign of Henry VIII. a very modern period when compared with that in which the air was composed. **Scarfuint na Gompanach,** or the **Parting of Friends,** (N°. 25) is considered as very ancient. It is often played by harpers when the audience are about to seperate, and it is a popular opinion that it was composed while the Irish groaned under the oppression of the Danes, and were forced to conceal themselves in caverns and sequestered places.

The tune called **Thugamar fein a Sambra lin,** (N° 61) is probably extremely ancient. It was sung by the band of virgins that went out of Dublin to welcome the Duke of Ormond, when he landed in Ireland. The ancient air **Ta an samradh teacht,** or the **Summer is coming,** (N°. 7) is used upon the opening of summer in different parts of the kingdom. Strange as it may appear, this proves to be the same song in essence, both as to poetry and Music, which Dr. Burney has published and written so voluminous a critique on, as the first piece of Music ever set in score in Great Britain. The extreme improbability of its being **borrowed** by the ancient Irish, from a country that has no national Music of its own (the Welsh excepted) is sufficiently evident. The devoted attachment to their own Music, and the praises it received from other countries; their ignorance of the English language, and their rooted aversion to their invaders, were effectual bars to any such plagiarism or adoption.

The air of **Ad ccoigreac ma bin tu,** or **If to a foreign clime you go,** (N°. 1) procured in the county of Mayo, we have reason to believe the oldest extant. It was sung by only one person who was of great age, and altho' numbers were present, few knew it even by name, but they all appeared greatly delighted with the composition.

To enumerate all those airs, that address themselves to the heart, and harmonize with the finest feelings of our nature, would extend the bounds of this preface to an unwarrantable length. It is to be remarked, however, that several of the airs in the following Collection were not taken from the Irish harp, but from songsters; and therefore as they now stand, are not always adapted to that Instrument.

We cannot conclude without seriously urging gentlemen in the southern parts of Ireland, to follow the example of the Belfast Society, by promoting similar meetings of the harpers in their respective provinces. It is a debt every man owes to his country, to search for and perpetuate the records of other days, to oppose, as far as he can, the destructive ravages of time, and to render permanent the fleeting productions of every species of genius; productions of an era so remote in the present case, as to baffle our attempts to ascertain their exact station on the scale of events. The veneration in which the Music of Ireland, with every vestige of Irish antiquity, has been held by our ancestors, and the respect it has received for so many centuries from foreign nations, seem well calculated to excite corresponding feelings in their descendants. Shall we suffer them to perish in our hands at the close of perhaps the last century in which a single new ray of light can be struck out amidst the gloom, with which time envelops the earliest and often the most interesting of its works. In paying them all due attention, we do not merely gratify the natural feeling of national pride; we are tracing the progress of the human mind, and endeavouring to restore a page in the history of man.

No.1

If to a Foreign Clime you go

ADAGTO

dim

dim:

No.2

Moderato

The Foxes Sleep

Cres

Cres

## No. 3

Ysee Yeaizar

Joice's Tune

Allecretto

rf rf

ff p

rf rf p f p

rf f rf p

## No. 4

Syiozuan Són

The Brown Thorn

Largo

rf rf

rf

Cres

dim:

pp

## N° 5

Besy juz us vibisch

Fairy Queen — CAROLAN

ALLEGRETTO

## N.6 [illegible] Girls have you seen George

LARGO

## N.7 [illegible] The Summer is coming

LARGO

## N.8 Arioso Mode.

Cathy Thail

Kitty Tyrrel

Cres:

## N.9

Azilla na Gsurbanaptas

The Beardless Boy

VIVACE

N°10

Planxty Drury— Carolan

ALEGRO

dim:

## N°11 Aréan Truagh

Old Truagh

VERY SLOW

sf sf sf sf p

Cres. f sf

## N°12 Mailigh le Leonsé

Molly St. George — Conalan

ANDANTE

f

Cres. dim: dim: pp

## N°13 Párún fionn

The fair-haired Child

SLOW

sf f

N°14

MODERATO

Love in Secret

N°15

SPIRITO

Open the Door Softly

## N°16 Mazlin Ipsen Cole

Madam Cole—Carolan

**No.17** Unfean an oigfean — **The Young Man's Dream**

VERY SLOW

**No.18** Mrinin nó gruaige báne — **The Charmer with the Fair Locks**

MAESTOSO

**No.19** Casadh an tsúgáin mé — **The Twisting of the Rope**

SLOW

N°20 V Sonsch ns bi vozspisch

Dennis don't be Threat'ning

ALLEGRO

N°21 Mnzvtiž Cesllssh

Planxty Kelly — Carolan

VIVACE

N.22 Coppie an Loibmy

The Pleasant Rocks

VERY SLOW

N.23 ANDANTE Ben bhan

The Fair Woman

## N°24 Row Sillorn

Rose Dillon—Carolan

LARGO

Dim

Dim

Volti

14

Jigg

Dim

f p f p f p

N°25

Yojinnc'ccompsnc'

The partingof Friends

f p f p f p f

Cres

Dim

## N°26 Tailor An Gruagach

The Ugly Tailor

VIVACE *f* *p*

*f* *p*

*ff*

## N°27 Caisteal an Neil

Castle O'Neil

MAJESTIC

*f*

*p* *p* *pp*

Cres *ff* dim

## Carish na corach

N.28

ALLEGRETTO

## Mairin Fomar

The Harvest Morn

N.29

ANDANTE

## N°30 Yean mc cine-an Zlanne

John Heir of the Glen

AFFETUOSO

## N°31 Bruach na Seamoinne

The Banks of the Shannon

AMOROSO

Cres

## Nº.32 Calm Són

The Brown Maid

VERY SLOW

## Nº33 Eha saddigh soir morraine rum

The Jointure—Conalon

VERY SLOW

dim

pp

## Jigg

VIVACE

Cres

No 34 Rizm on roizneb° The Forlorn Queen

Affetuoso

No 35 Pearls on bnollaws bam The Snowy Breasted Pearl

Andante

N:o36 Mrs. Mahoney's Welcome Madge Malone—Carolan

ANDANTE

N:o37 Miss Hamilton's Delight Dermot O'Dowd

LARGHETTO

N°38 Catuzh in bhian — Kitty O'Brian – Carolan.

ANIMATO

N°39 A mhin fan agam uaidh go ló — My Dear stay with me

N°40 The dear Black Maid

Andante Affettuoso

*f*

Chorus

N°41 MARY do you Fancy me

VIVACE

*Sf*

*p*

*f*

Second Set

*p*

*ff*

dim:

*pp*

# Concerto Esphhrlon

Carolan's Concerto

N°42

ALLEGRO

*f* *p*

*f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p*

*f*

*ff*

Dim:

*f* *p*

*p* *f*

## N°43 A pon bhez mo mhsi The Little Harvest Rose

AMOROSO

## N°44 Mhlzh m Mᶜslpnn Molly Macalpin

MAESTOSO

## N° 45 Abigail Judge — Carolan

MAJESTIC

## N° 46 Planxty Reilly — Carolan

PRESTO

11304511



## N°47 Moll Arbh Gunzlonne — The Maid of the Valley

MODERATO

## N°48 Bfespl1om noesrpe

I would rather than Ireland

Larghetto

## N°49 Yeomn o Reillzh Yesp3ors5

John O Reilly the Active

PRESTO

N°50 Jr rambo epir &cc An Irish Lullaby

VERY SLOW

N°51 Ozanagh oig The Bloffom of the Raspberry

VERY SLOW

N°52 Marzhagh com n veil The Lamentation of Owen O'Neil (Carolan)

ELEGIAC

N.53 Anna m ciaptmr Sa pirsh

Nanny Mc Dermotroe — Carolan

VIVACE

N°54 Calin Sear Vejin Sash.na mbo

The Pretty Girl Milking the Cows

SLOW

N.55 Coplaz oz mi Sonach — Young Terence Mc Donough (Carolan)

VERY SLOW

N.56 Jriobal Brpeach — Isabella Burk

LARGO

N.57 Have you seen my Valentine

Have you seen my Valentine

Very Slow

58 Planxty Johnston

Planxty Johnston

(Carolan)

VIVACE

11304511

# N°59 Bobsropsan

Bob Jordan—C...

Allegro

*p*

*f*

*p*

*f*

dim:

*pp*

*f* *p* *f* *p*

dim:

N°60 Samhesshrppeszs ccat If the Cat had Gold &c.

Languid and Slow

N°61 Trzamspfemsvamhpslin We brought the Summer with us

SPIRITO

N°62

# Tomar o brpc

Thomas O'Burk (Carolan)

ALLEGRO

N°63 Vz bz7 Vz mor / The Little and Great Mountain

Andante Affetuoso

N°64 Planzrtiz Mc irbhsir Planxty Mc Guire (Carolan)

PRESTO

## N°.65 Jpaine Nrrean

Grace Nugent (Carolan)

8va

## N°.66 Planzrtȝ ap Srlamac

Planxty Dillon (Carolan)