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Father Tom O'Neill

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FATHER TOM O'NEILL.



Patriotic Irish Ballad, Entitled—

The Boys of Wexford

In comes the captain's daughter,
The captain of the Yeos,
Saying, "Brave United men,
We'll ne'er again be foes.
A thousand pounds I'll give you,
And fly from home with thee,
And dress myself in man's attire,
And fight for liberty!"

CHORUS—

We are the boys of Wexford,
Who fought with heart and hand
To burst in twain the galling chain,
And free our native land!

And when we left our cabins, boys,
We left with right good will,
To see our friends and neighbours
That were at Vinegar Hill!
A young man from our ranks,
A cannon he let go;
He slapt it into Lord Mountjoy—
A tyrant he laid low! Chorus

We bravely fought and conquered
At Ross, and Wexford town;
And, if we failed to keep them,
'Twas drink that brought us down.
We had no drink beside us
On Tubberneering's day,
Depending on the long bright pike.
And well it worked its way! Chorus

They came into the country
Our blood to waste and spill;
But let them weep for Wexford,
And think of Oulart Hill!
'Twas drink that still betrayed us—
Of them we had no fear;
For every man could do his part
Like Forth and Sheinmaher! Chorus

My curse upon all drinking!
It made our hearts full sore;
For bravery won each battle,
But drink lost evermore;
And if, for want of leaders,
We lost at Vinegar Hill,
We're ready for another fight,
And love our country still! Chorus

There was a widow in this place, and she reared three darling sons,
Their father died and left them when they were very young;
A long time she endeavoured to maintain her darling sons,
Till the youngest one became a man at the age of twenty-one.
One night he discoursed with his mother, and these words to her did say,
I think it must fall on one of us go away
Your land is too small to serve us all, and if you'll agree
I am fully bent and well content, a clergyman to be.

His mother being glad to hear such thoughts come into his head,
She says, I will do all I can, I'll help you my darling child;
She speaks unto his brothers, and they did soon agree,
And they sent him off to college a clergyman to be.
He was not long at college, when the Rev. Bishop Brown,
Came to examine these collegians, and view'd them all around,
He espied our clever young hero's head, marked him above them all,
He was the first that he discovered, and upon him he did call.

He says young man, where are you from, come tell me your name,
I'm from the county of Armagh, they call me Thomas O'Neal
My mother she is a widow, and of a low degree,
She has done her whole endeavour to make a clergyman of me.
Since Thomas O'Neal is your name, the Bishop he did say,
Study hard both night and day, I'll soon have you ordained,
To help your dear old mother, who has done so well for thee,
We'll send you home a credit for your country boys to see.

When the young man came home ordained, the neighbours were glad to see,
And it was for to welcome him, they ran by two and three,
Particularly his own dear friends, to welcome him they ran,
You never saw such welcome as was for the widow's son.
There was a rich man in this place, rich as duke or knight,
He had an only daughter, and she was a beauty bright,
She says unto her father, I'll go this young man to see,
For before he went to college, he was a school boy along with me.

He was brought into the parlour, and they drank both ale and wine,
She says you are a clever young man, I would have you to resign;
What made you be a clergyman, you know you are astray,
A clergyman must rise by night, and travel in the day.
Take some noble lady that her fortune may be grand,
And you'll have your man to wait on you, and be a gentleman,
Take myself just as I stand, you know my fortune's great,
I have a thousand pound a year at death a whole estate.

Reverend lady, you need not explain your mind,
For had you ten times more, I never would resign;
For in this holy station I mean to lead my life,
So my dearest dear, say no more, I ne'er will wed a wife,
So when he did deny her, the villain she went home,
And in eight weeks after, her secrets they were known,
She swore before the magistrates that he did her beguile,
And for four weeks before that, to him she was with child.

The morning of his trial it grieved our hearts full sore
To think of his poor old mother it grieved her ten times more
To say she had a son a clergyman, his age just twenty-three
That he would be cast down in his prime thro' cursed perjury.
The cruel judge said father Tom, why don't you carry this jade,
I'm sure she is an equal for any night or squire,
What are you but a widow's son, as I believe
You might think it a great honour such a wife to obtain.

Father Tom he then spoke up, I have no witness hear,
But I can call on the Almighty, who can show my cause quite clear;
I never said I'd marry her, ne'er shall ever be my wife,
For I never knew a female from a man in all my life.
Now Tom, since you won't marry her why give you to understand,
For seven long years we will transport you to some foreign land,
It is bad, sir, it might be worse, brave Father did say,
Our Saviour suffered more than that we died upon a tree.

The word was not long spoken, when a horse came with the wind,
And on it was a rider—I was not here in time;
So call his trial on again, I'm here that you reply—
She has two fathers for her child, Father Tom and I.
Tom put on his hat, and then began to smile,
Unto his mother, you and God assist your child.
At one another when they saw her perjury,
The judge found guilty, and his reverence came home free.

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