

EVENING TWILIGHT ON A TIPPERARY HILLSIDE

BY JOHN LOCKE

The following poem was written to commemorate the death of Miss Annie Kickham. She loved her brother Charles with all the tenderness of her gentle nature, and when she heard of his fate, the shock which it occasioned was too much for her to withstand. The deep and bitter anguish soon put an end to her young existence.

Published by An Chartlann



‘Twas a balmy eve in the sweet Springtime,
 And up on the mountain’s side
Not a murmur rose o’er the holy calm,
 Save the splash of Anner’s tide;
And the lonely wail of a tristful maid,
 Who sat in the evening’s glow,
And poured from the depths of her sorrowing soul,
 One long, lone tale of woe.

‘Now Summer may come with its verdant blooms,
 And the forest’s deep echoes ring
With the blackbird’s note and the cuckoo’s call,
 And the flowers redundant spring;
The apple-tree blossoms may peep from the glade,
 To meet the first kiss of the day;
But the sorrow now camped in my aching breast,
 Shall nevermore pass away.

‘Cold, cold as the snows on an Alpine height,
 And sad as the wild wind’s moan,
And dark as the moon of the coal-black night,
 This weary heart has grown;
I had no hopes in the wide, wide world,
 But all that around him clung;
I joyed to roam round the fairy raths,
 And the hamlets of which he sung.

‘And to think and think through the long dark night
Of the maid of the Anner’s stream—
Of Tipperary’s forests and breezy hills,
Or whate’er was his fancy’s theme.
Ah! now I see naught in my midnight dreams,
But shackles his dungeon round,
And the felon’s cords in one hundred coils
All over his white limbs wound.

‘Ah! my heart I know, ’neath this weight of woe,
Will soon forget to beat;
And my spirit will droop like a faded flower,
In the midst of the Summer’s heat;
This shadowy form, once light and warm,
Shall soon in the church-yard sleep;
And the winds shall rave ’round my early grave,
And the willow trees o’er it weep.

‘And thou, sweet Anner, how canst thou dance
And leap through the winding world,
When he who sang of thy sparkling stream,
Lies bound in the Saxon’s hold?
Ah! how did they banish for long, long years
‘Mid the listener’s tears and cries,
The hope and prop of a sister’s heart,
And the light of a brother’s eyes?

‘The clouds grow dark on the distant hills,
As the evening sunlight fades;
And the darkling shadows of night now fall
Over all the woods and glades;
So my heart grew sad and mine eyes grew dim,
When the sun of my life was ta’en,
And cooped and caged in a felon’s tomb,
And chained with the felon’s chain!

‘Adieu! adieu! and a fond farewell
To all ye woods and streams,
Which Charles sang in the sweeting strains,
And saw in the brightest dreams;
Some wandering minstrel yet may come,
With his harp in the eventide,
And tell of how Charles loved his land,
And how Annie, his sister, died!’