DONEGORE HILL

By James Orr

From The Literary Remains of the United Irishmen by R.R. Madden.

The dew draps wat the fiels o' braird.
That soon the war-horse thartured;
An' falds were oped by monie a herd
Wha lang ere night lay tortured;
Whan chiels wha grudged to be sae taxed,
An' tythed by rack-rent blauthry,
Turned out *en masse* as soon as axed
And unco throuither squathry,
Were we that day.

While close leagued crappies raised the hoards
O' pikes, pike shafts, forks, fire-locks,
Some melted lead – some sawed deal boards,
Some hade, like hens, in byre neuks;
Wives baked bannocks for their men,
Wi’ tears instead of water;
And lasses made cockades of green
For lads wha used to flatter
Their pride ilk day.

A brave man firmly leaving hame
I aye was proud to think on;
The wife obeying son of shame
Wi' kindlin' e'e I blink on;
“Peace, peace be wi' you! ah, return!
Ere lang, and lea the daft anes” -
“Please Gude (quo' he) before the morn
In spite of a our chieftains
An’ guards this day.”
But when the pokes of provender
Were slung on ilka shoulder,
Hags wha to henpeck did’na spare
Loot out the yells the louder -
Had they, whan blood about their heart
Cauld fear make cake and cruddle,
Ta’en twa rash gills frae Herdman’s quart,
‘Twad rouse the calm, slow pudding
I’ their veins that day.

Now leaders laith to lea the rigs
Whase leash they feared was broken,
An’ privates cursin’ purse-proud prigs
Wha brought ‘em balls to slacken.
Repentant Painties at their prayers,
An’ dastards crouselly craikin’,
Move on, heroic to the wars
They mean na to partake in
By night or day.

Some fastin’, yet now strave to eat
The piece that butter yellowed;
An’ some in flocks, drank out cream crocks
That wive but little valued.
Some lettin’ on their burn to mak
The rearguard, goadin’, hastened;
Some hunkrin’ at a lee dyke back
Boost haughel on, ere fastened
Their breeks that day.

The truly brave as journeyin’ on
They pass by weans an’ mithers,
Think on red fiels whare soon may groan
The husbands an’ the fathers;
They think how soon the bonnie things
May lose the youths they’re true to;
And see the rabble (strife aye brings)
Ravage their homes, while new to
Sic scenes that day.

When to the top of Donegore
Braid-islan’s corps cam postin’,
The red-wud, warpin, wild uproar
Was like a bee scap castin’;
For --- took ragweed farms
(Fears e’e has still the jaundice),
For Nugent’s red coats, bright in arms,
An’ rush! the pale-faced randies
Took leg that day.

The camp’s brak up, ower braes and bogs,
The patriots seek their sections;
Arms, ammunition, bread bags, brogues
Lie strewed in a’ directions.
And some, alas, wha feared to face
Auld fogies, or e’en women,
They swore in pride, tho’ yet untried
They yet wad trounce the yeomen
Some other day.

Come back ye dastards? – can ye ought
Expect at your returnin’
But wives and weans stript, cattle houghed,
An’ cots an’ claughins burnin’,
Na, haste ye hame! ye ken ye’ll scape,
That martial law ye’re clear O;
The nine-tailed cat or choakin’ rape
Is mostly for the hero
On sic a day.

Saint Paul, I ween, doth counsel weel,
An’ somewhere Pope the same in,
That “first of a’, folk should themsel
Impartially examine;”
If that’s na done, whate’er the loon
May swear to, never swithrin’,
In every pinch, he’ll basely flinch,
“Guid bye to ye my brethren”
He’ll cry that day.

The ill-starred wights wha stayed behind
Were moved by mony a passion;
By dread to stay, by shame to rin,
By scorn and consternation.
Wi’ spite they curse, wi’ grief they pray,
Now start, now pause – more pity,
“Tis mad to go, ‘tis death to stay” -
An unco doleful ditty
On sic a day.

What joy at home our entrance gave,
“Guid God! is’t you? fair fa’ ye!
‘Twas right, tho’ fools may say not brave
To rin before they saw ye!”
“Aye wife, ‘tis true without dispute,
But lest sunts fail in Zion,
I’ll have to swear they forced me out;
Better they swing than I on
Some hangin’ day.

My song is done, an’ to be free,
Full sair I ween they smarted,
Wha wad hae bell’d the cat awee
Had they no’ been deserted;
They lacked the drill, and in my min’;
Where it came not before mon,
In trying’ times, maist folk, you’ll fin’
Will act like Donegore men,
On any day.