

# EPITAPH OF OWEN ROE O'NEILL.

**Original Latin taken from a MSS. belonging to Papal Nuncio Giovanni Battista Rinuccini. The English translation is taken from Fr. Charles Patrick Meehan's 1870 work *The Confederation of Kilkenny*. Date of ballad must have been written between 1649 to 1653.**

## LATIN.

Hic jacet ille ingens patriae defensor O'Neill,  
Nobilis ingenio, sanguine, Marte, fide.  
Qui genus et magni mensuram stemmatis implens,  
Per suos Catholicos arma probavit avos.  
Quem neque vis dubii potuit perfringere belli,  
Nec mutare boni spesve, timorve mali.  
Quem tria conjuncto petierunt agmine regna,  
In caput unius tot coiere manus.  
Celsus in immota mentis sed constitit arce,  
Et captum infracto pectore duxit iter,  
Spem contra humanam, coelum tamen adfuit ausis,  
Cumque suo Christus milite miles erat.  
Impia Catholicum seu strinxit in agmina ferrum,  
Discolor haeretica caede madebat humus.  
Sive fugam simulat, simulando comprimit hostem,  
Nec minus arma viri quam metuenda fuga.  
Hoc tamen, hoc ingens et inexpugnabile Marti  
Pactus humi positum spicula mortis habent.  
Armula nam crebris Parca invidiosa triumphis  
Vincendi et vitae sit tibi finis, ait.  
Fata sed Eugenium nequeunt ita sternere, servant  
Posthuma Romanam quominus arma fidem.  
Hanc lapis et cineres, sed et ipsa cadavera spirant

Et Petrum litui, tela tubaeque sonant.  
Magna viri merces, tot palmas astra coronant,  
Sic praestant meritum, terra polusque decus.

## ENGLISH.

Here rests that high-born Chief, the great O'Neill,  
His country's firm defender and its shield;  
His valour proved on many a famous field,  
His faith attested by his burning zeal.

No blot upon the scutcheon of his race,  
No stain upon the brightness of their name  
Were left by him; ah, no, but added fame  
Shone upon them from him whose name we trace.

No doubtful issue ever stopped his way,  
Nor even the hope of some unrighteous gain,  
Nor dread of ill invisible, though plain,  
From the right path could tempt his steps to stray.

Three mighty kingdoms sought his overthrow  
Three mighty powers 'gainst one would work their will,  
But he upon whose head, as on a hill,  
Virtue her glorious citadel would show.

With heart undaunted struggled to the end,  
And 'gainst all human hope or human fear  
Heaven came to aid him in his great career,  
With Christ his fellow soldier and his friend.

Whether his sword he drew in filial fight  
Against his Faith and Fathers' impious foe,  
Or in retreat a dexterous skill would show,  
Alike they feared him in the field and flight.

But now Death's shafts with their resistless doom  
Have laid this mighty warrior in the dust;  
And the stern Fates that spurn not even the just  
Proclaim his victories o'er; his end hath come.

But not his fame; the Fates themselves in vain  
Assail the mighty memory we record;  
For future generations, with the sword,  
Remembering Owen, will the Faith maintain.

This stone, these ashes will with ardour fill  
The hearts of those who then their Faith defend,  
When clanging arms and martial notes will blend  
With Peter's clarion sounding from the Hill.

Great is the merit of the man now crowned  
With deathless glory 'mid the stars of heaven;  
Let the due honour to his name be given,  
And Fame his worth proclaim the whole world round.