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The Boyne Water

The Boyne Water
(Lieutenant Colonel William Blacker)

July the First in Ouldbridge Town there was a grievous battle
Where many a man lay on the ground by cannons that did rattle;
Kin James he pitched his tents between the lines for to retire,
But King William threw his bombballs in and set them all on fire.

Whereat they vowed revenge upon King William s forces
And oft did vehemently cry that they would stop their courses;
A bullet from the Irish cam an grazed King William s arm,
They thought His Majesty was slain, yet it did him little harm.

Duke Schomberg then, in friendly care, his King would often caution
To shun the spot where bullets hot retained their rapid motion;
But William said, He don t deserve the name of Faith s Defender,
Who would not venture life and limb to make a foe surrender.

When we the Boyne began to cross,the enemy descended,
But few of our brave men were lost, so stoutly we defended;
The Horse it was that first marched o er, the Foot soon followed after,
But brave Duke Schomberg was no more by venturing o er the water.

When valiant Schomberg he was slain, King William he accosted
His warlike men for to march on and he would be foremost;
Brave boys he cried be not dismayed for the loss of one commander,
For God shall be our kin this day and I ll be general under.

Then stoutly we the Boyne did cross to give the enemies battle;
Our cannon to our foes great cost, like thundering claps did rattle;
In majestic mien our Prince rode o er his men soon followed after,
With blow and shout put our foe to the rout, the day we crossed the water.

The Protestants of Drogheda have reason to be thankful
That they were not to bondage brought, they being but a handful;
First to the Those they were brought and tried at Millmount after,
But brave King William set them free by venturing o er the water.

The cunning French near to Duleek had taken up their quarters,
And found themselves on every side still w
But in the dead time of the night they set the fields on fire
And long before the morning s light to Dublin did retire.

Then said King William to his men after the French departed
I m glad, said he that non of ye seem to be faint-hearted;
So sheath your swords and rest awhile , in time we ll follow after ,
These words he uttered with a smile the day he crossed the water.

Come let us all with heart and voice applaud our live's defender
Who at the Boyne his valor showed and mad his for surrender
To God above, the praise we ll give now and ever after,
And bless the glorious memory of King William that crossed the water.

pp.171-2Faolain,Turlough,Blood on the Harp,Whitston,Troy,1983.
[from P. W. Joyce's Old Irish Folk Music and Songs. I've seen
other copies, and maybe one is in vol 2 of J Hogg's Jacobite
Relics of Scotland.]

Tune:

"Playing among the rashes" in Wm. Graham Flute MS, 1694.

Crude version without title, Pills to Purge Melancholy, V, p.
112, 1719.

"The Rashes" Oswald's Caledonian Pocket Companion, Book 5, p. 26
(c 1753) This has more slurs and grace notes, plus an
additional strain of 8 measures compared to the following.

"When the King comes over the water", Oswald's Caledonian Pocket
Companion, Book 11, p. 23 (c 1760).

"When the King came over the water" Bremner's edition of
McGibbon's Scots Tunes, II, p. 12 (1762). (Bremner's addition,
not in McGibbon's original 3 books)

Thereafter the tune becomes common. It is "The Cavalcade of
the Boyne" in Bunting's A General Collection of the Ancient Music
of Ireland, p. 40, 1809. The tune is that for "The Dowie dens of
Yarrow" (Child 214) in Kidson's Traditional Tunes, p. 21, 1891.

For other traditional songs to variants of the tune see S.

Bayard, Dance to the Fiddle, March to the Fife, no. 317, 1982.

Bayard takes several other tunes as derived from this, such as:

Such a parcel of Rogues in a Nation, Wee, wee German Lairdie, Wha
WBO

CB