

THE IRISH VOLUNTEER

By David Kincaid

My name is Tim McDonald, I'm a native of the Isle,
I was born among old Erin's bogs when I was but a child
My father fought in "Ninety-eight," for liberty so dear,
He fell upon old Vinegar Hill, like an Irish volunteer.
Then raise the harp of Erin, boys, the flag we all revere—
We'll fight and fall beneath its folds, like Irish volunteers!
Chorus—Then raise the harp, etc.

When I was driven from my home by an oppressor's hand,
I cut my sticks and greased my brogues, and came o'er to this land,
I found a home and many friends, and some that I love dear:
Be jabsers! I'll stick to them like bricks and an Irish volunteer.
Then fill your glasses up, my boys, and drink a hearty cheer
To the land of our adoption, and the Irish volunteer!
Then fill your glasses, etc.

Now when the traitors in the South commenced a warlike raid
I quickly then laid down my hod, to the devil went my spade!
To a recruiting office then I went, that happened to be near,
And joined the good old "Sixty-ninth," like an Irish volunteer.
Then fill the ranks and march away!—no traitors do we fear;
We'll drive them all to blazes, says the Irish volunteer.
Then fill the ranks, etc.

When the Prince of Wales came over here, and made a hubbadoo,
Oh, everybody turned out, you know, in gold and tinsel too:
But then the good old Sixty-ninth didn't like these lords or peers—
They wouldn't give a d—n for kings, the Irish volunteers!
We love the land of Liberty, its laws we will revere,
"But the devil take nobility!" says the Irish volunteer.
We love the land, etc.

Now if the traitors in the South should ever cross our roads,
We'll drive them to the devil as St. Patrick did the toads;
We'll give them all short nooses that come just below the ears,
Made strong and good from Irish hemp, by Irish volunteers.
Then here's to brave McClellan, whom the army now revere—
He'll lead us on to victory, the Irish volunteers.
Then here's to brave, etc.

Now fill your glasses up, my boys, a toast come drink with me,
May Erin's Harp and Starry Flag united ever be;
May traitors quake, and rebels shake, and tremble in their fears,
When next they meet the Yankee boys and Irish volunteers!
God bless the name of WASHINGTON! that name this land revere;
Success to Meagher and Nugent, and their Irish volunteers!
God bless the name, etc.

CIVIL WAR SONG
of NY SV 69th-Irish Brigade

On first hearing "The Irish Volunteer," many will recognize the melody of "The Bonnie Blue Flag," a rousing Rebel anthem written in 1861 by Harry McCarthy to the tune of "The Irish Jannin' Car." Adding new words to old music was a common 19th century practice, and New York music hall performer and songwriter Joe English recaptured the melody for the Union and the Irish Brigade.

Like many Irish songs of the war, "The Irish Volunteer," probably written in early 1862, celebrates Irish resistance to Britain as well as the cause of the Union, and Tim McDonald proudly recalls the 1798 battle of Vinegar Hill, near Enniscorthy, Ireland, and Colonel Michael Corcoran's defiance of an order to parade his 69th Militia for the Prince of Wales in October, 1860. McDonald also celebrates his commanders, General Meagher and Colonel Robert Nugent of the 69th New York Volunteers, whose battle flags, "Erin's [Ireland's] Harp and the Starry Flag," would lead the way in many a desperate struggle.



Colonel Michael Corcoran