

Irish Song Lyrics

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Kerry Recruit

At the age of nineteen, I was ploughin' the land
With me brogues on me feet and me spade in me hand.
Says I to meself, "What a pity to see
Such a fine Kerry lad diggin' spuds in Tralee."

cho: To me Kerry-I-Ah, fa lal deral lay,
Kerry-I-Ah, fa lal deral lay.

So I buttered me brogues and shook hands with me spade
And went off to the fair like a dashing young blade.
A sergeant come up and said "Would ye enlist?"
"Sure, sergeant," says I, "Slip the bob in me fist".

Then up came a captain, a man of great fame,
Who straightways enquires me country and name;
Well, I told him before as I'd tell him again
That me father and mother were two Kerry men.
Well the first thing they gave me it was a red coat
With a lump of black leather to tie 'round me throat.
The next thing they gave me --- I said "What is that?"
"Sure, man, a cockade for to stick in yer hat!"

The next thing they gave me they called it a horse
With a saddle and bridle, me two legs across.
Well, I gave 'er the whip and I gave 'er the steel
And, Oh Holy Mother! She went like an eel.

The next thing they gave me, they called it a gun,
So under the trigger I settled me thumb.
The gun it belched fire, and vomited smoke
And gave me poor shoulder the Devil's own stroke.

The next place they took us was down to the sea,
Aboard a great ship, bound for the Crimee,
With three sticks in the middle, all covered with sheet
She walked on the water without any feet.

We reached Balaclava all safe and all sound,
And tired and weary we lay on the ground.
Next morning at daybreak a bugle did call,
And served us a breakfast of powder and ball.

We whipped them at Alma and at Inkerman
But the Rooshians they foiled us at the Redan.
While scaling a rampart meself lost an eye
And a great Russian bullet ran away with me thigh.

All dyin' and bleedin' I lay on the ground,
With me arms, legs and feet all scattered around.
Says I to meself, "If me father was nigh
He would bury me, sure, just for fear I might die."

But a surgeon come up and he soon stops the blood,
And he made me an iligant leg made of wood;
And they made me a pension of tenpence a day
And contented on shiela I live on half-pay.
(Last verse by Richard Dyer-Bennett)

Now that was the story my grandfather told,
As he sat by the fire all withered and old.
"Remember," said he, "that the Irish fight well,
But the Russian artillery's hotter than Hell."

Recorded by Dyer-Bennett