

Folk & Traditional Song Lyrics

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The Devil and the Bailiff

The Devil and the Bailiff
(Cathal MacGarvey)

One fine pleasant evening last summer
I was strolling through Carhirciveen
When a pair of quare playboys collogin'
Before me I happened to see.
Now to know what these boyo's were up to
In a trifle I hastened me walk
And begor I soon learned their profession
When I got within line of their talk.

Well on of these lads was the divil
The other was bailiff McGlynn
And the one was as nice as the other
For both were as ugly as sin.
Says the ould lad,
"Ye know I'm the divil and you are a bailiff I see"
"It's the divil himself" says the bailiff
"Oh well that bates the divil" says he.

Then a young lad ran out of a cottage
And off with him over the fields.
"May the divil take you" says his mother
As she rattled a stone off his heels.
"Arrah why don't you take the young rascal,
"Your Highness," the Bailiff he cried.
"Ah! twas not from her heart the wish it came,"
The divil he smiling replied.

Close by a small plot of potatoes
A bonham was striving to dig
When the owner ran out and she shouted,
"May the divil take you for a pig."
Say the bailiff, "Now there's a fine offer,
Why not take the bonham?" says he.
Sez the divil, "Her lips only said it,
And that's not sufficient for me."

As they jogged on a young man espied them
And into his mother he fled
Shouting, "Oh, mother dear here's the bailiff,"
Well she clasped her two hands and she said,
"MAY THE DIVIL TAKE THAT UGLY BAILIFF."

Says the divil, "Begob that I'll do.
It was straight from her heart the wish it came,
So Bailiff McGlynn I'LL TAKE YOU."

The bailiff was one of the most feared and reviled people in Ireland in the nineteenth century. In this song he gets his. (paraphrased from liner notes on Brendan Nolan's CD "Across the Great Divide")

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