

Traditional & Folk Songs with lyrics & midi music

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Old Orange Flute

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In the county Tyrone, in the town of Dungannon
Where many a ruckus meself had a hand in
Bob Williamson lived there, a weaver by trade
And all of us thought him a stout-hearted blade.

On the twelfth of July as it yearly did come
Bob played on the flute to the sound of the drum
You can talk of your fiddles, your harp or your lute
But there's nothing could sound like the Old Orange Flute.

But the treacherous scoundrel, he took us all in
For he married a Papish named Bridget McGinn
Turned Papish himself and forsook the Old Cause
That gave us our freedom, religion and laws.

And the boys in the county made such a stir on it
They forced Bob to flee to the province of Connaught;
Took with him his wife and his fixins, to boot,
And along with the rest went the Old Orange Flute.

Each Sunday at mass, to atone for past deeds,
Bob said Paters and Aves and counted his beads
Till one Sunday morn, at the priest's own require
Bob went for to play with the flutes in the choir.

He went for to play with the flutes in the mass
But the instrument quivered and cried."O Alas!"
And blow as he would, though he made a great noise,
The flute would play only "The Protestant Boys".

Bob jumped up and huffed, and was all in a flutter.
He pitched the old flute in the best holy water;
He thought that this charm would bring some other sound,
When he tried it again, it played "Croppies Lie Down!"

And for all he would finger and twiddle and blow
For to play Papish music, the flute would not go;
"Kick the Pope" to "Boyne Water" was all it would sound
Not one Papish bleat in it could e'er be found.

At a council of priests that was held the next day

They decided to banish the Old Flute away;
They couldn't knock heresy out of its head
So they bought Bob another to play in its stead.

And the Old Flute was doomed, and its fate was pathetic
'Twas fastened and burnt at the stake as heretic.
As the flames rose around it, you could hear a strange noise
'Twas the Old Flute still a-whistlin' "The Protestant Boys".

Note: the tune Protestant Boys is also known as Lilliburlero RG

Recorded by Patric Galvin, Clancys