Irish Review (Dublin)

The Downfall of the O'Donnell's

Author(s): Osborn Bergin

Source: *The Irish Review (Dublin)*, Vol. 3, No. 27 (May, 1913), pp. 136-139

Published by: [Irish Review \(Dublin\)](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30063266>

Accessed: 14/06/2014 16:04

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at
<http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Irish Review (Dublin) is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Irish Review (Dublin)*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

THE DOWNFALL OF THE O'DONNELL'S

Fearghal Og Mac an Bhaird cct

- 1 Truagh liom Máire agas Mairgré,
ní beó bláth na n-umhailghég :
do chuir siad a nduilli dhíobh,
dá bhuime iad don imshníomh.
- 2 Fa ríor, fa ríor, nocha nfhuil
braon 'na ccroidhíbh ón chumhaidh :
dá sheisi shuadh fhóid Uladh,
truagh mar táid ar ttíormughadh.
- 3 Ionand toirrsi dhamhsa is dóiph,
Aodh Ruadh céd-damhna ar cciachbhróin,
Rughroidhe Cabha dár ccrádh,
mana turbhuidhe a thérnádh.
- 4 Tréd bhocht gan aodhaire inn.
Cathbharr, cend einigh Eiriond,
fá líg thrá, ga truaighe dál,
atá uainde san Eadáill.
- 5 San Eadáill na n-eas dtana,
ionand is ég Nualadha,
atá géis chnómhoighe Chuinn,
cróluighe dhá héis oruinn.
- 6 Nualaidh dhuaíslíonmhar, dóigh cháigh,
mairfidh go laithe an bhuanbhráith,
tosach garma chrú gCrimhthain,
clú a hanma idir Eiriondchaibh.
- 7 Do beanadh dhínn, dia do chor,
abhus ar tús, tuar cumhadh,
súil mhallghlas dar chreite a ccath,
Maghnas eite na nUlltach.

THE DOWNFALL OF THE O'DONNELLS

- 8 Ar Mhagnas mac I Dhomhnoill,
a ccrích Uisnigh iobhardhuind,
cuire a chomhaoisi nír chinn,
ro-Naoisi fola Feidhlim.
- 9 Ceithre héigheadha ón Bhóinn bhrais,
ceithre mic d'Aodh mac Maghnais,
cuan dreagan nár dháil a rún,
dháibh nír bh'eagal acht iomthnúdh.
- 10 Ní faicfidhear, foirbhthe an béd,
lorg a ccraoitheadh ná a ccroimsdéd
fán Eithne, fán Máigh mallfhuair,
ceithre cráidh an Chonallshluaigh.
- 11 Seabhaic uaisli Inísi Fáil,
ceithre creacha chnuic Chruacháin,
ceithre troimchreacha Teamhra
na doindchleatha doigheardha.
- 12 Iongnadh Máire do mharthain,
'sna haibhne nach ionarthroigh,
as fiodhbhaidh chríon chraoi Uisnigh
do shíor ag caoi an cheathrair-sin.
- 13 Ní filltear fiodhradh abhla
lé hubhlaibh feadh fionn-Bhanbha,
ná fiodhradh chaillghég le cnoibh,
iongnadh Mairgréig do mharthain.
- 14 Ní hí Mairgréig ná Máire
chaoinim, is cúis diombáighe,
acht an cor-sa ar cró na bhFionn,
mó sa mhó osna Eirionn.
- 15 A gceithre dearbhbhraíthre ar ndol,
Máire is Mairgréig mhúir Chruachan,
cosg ag dol do shíor ar shuan,
a ccor fa ríor is rothruagh.

THE IRISH REVIEW

Translation

- 1 I am sad for Mary and Margaret, the flower of the lowly branches lives no more : they have shed their leaves, two nurses of care are they.
- 2 Alas, alas, grief hath left their hearts bloodless : the two companions of the learned of Ulster's land, it is sad that they have run dry.
- 3 Their grief is the same as mine, Hugh Roe was the first cause of our anguish ; Rury of Cabha torments us, his departure is the cause of our ruin.
- 4 We are a poor flock without a shepherd. Caffar, head of Erin's honour, lies beneath a gravestone—what sadder fate?—away in Italy.
- 5 In Italy of shallow waterfalls—it is as though she were dead—is Nuala, the swan of the nut-grown plain of Conn ; her loss to us is agony.
- 6 Nuala the bounteous, the hope of all, first in renown of the blood of Criomhthán, to the day of lasting doom shall live the fame of her name among the men of Ireland.
- 7 There was reft from us (what a loss!) at first in this land—an omen of grief—he of the gentle grey eyes, trusty in battle, Manus, the wing of Ulster.
- 8 Manus, son of O'Donnell, in Uisneach's land of dark yew-trees was unsurpassed by the host of his coevals, the very Naoise of Felim's race.
- 9 Four salmon from the mighty Boyne, four sons of Hugh, son of Manus, brood of champions unswerving in purpose, they had nought to fear but jealousy.
- 10 Never shall we see—the doom is accomplished—the track of their hooves or their bending steeds along the Inny or the stately cool Maigne, four woes of the race of Conall.
- 11 Highborn hawks of Innisfail, four desolations of Cruachan's hill, four mighty ruins of Tara, are the glittering dark spearshafts.

THE DOWNFALL OF THE O'DONNELLS

- 12 'Tis strange that Mary should live, while the rivers no longer
bear ships, and the withered forests of the fold of Uisneach are
ever weeping for those four.
- 13 Throughout fair Banba the apple-trees bend not with apples,
nor the wood of hazelboughs with nuts—strange that Margaret
should live.
- 14 I mourn not for Margaret nor Mary—that is ground for sorrow
—but for this fate that has fallen upon the land of the Fair,
greater and ever greater is the sighing of Ireland.
- 15 Mary and Margaret of Cruachan's wall, that their four brothers
are gone is a perpetual hindrance to slumber, alas! their state
is very pitiful.

NOTE.—The above poem is of some historic interest. It is a lament for the princely house of O'Donnell, which had been brought to utter ruin in the course of a few years. The two sisters are left. Their four brothers are all dead. The gallant Hugh Roe, who had succeeded his father in the chieftancy in 1592, had been poisoned in Spain at the instigation of Carew ten years later. Rury, earl of Tyrconnell, and Caffar, had both died in Rome in 1608. Manus had been killed in a skirmish by his cousin and brother-in-law, Niall Garv O'Donnell. This latter, who had deserted to the English on the understanding that he was to be made chief of the clan, found at the end of the war that he had been merely used as a tool by the authorities, and his final reward was imprisonment for life in the Tower of London. His wife, Nuala, the youngest of the sisters, had left him, and accompanied her brothers and the Earl of Tyrone in their flight to the Continent in 1607. The poem may be compared with the better known one addressed to Nuala, which Mangan had translated. It was written by Fearghal Og Mac an Bhaird, a poet of the O'Donnells. After the death of his patrons he lived for some time in great misery at Louvain. I have used the text of MSS., in the Bibliothèque Royale, Brussels, called *Leabhar inghine í Dhomhnaill*, "the Book of O'Donnell's Daughter."

Osborn Bergin.