

William Carleton (1794-1869)

1 *Sir Turlough; or, the Churchyard Bride*

The bride she bound her golden hair,
Killeevy, O Killeevy!
And her step was light as the breezy air
When it bends the morning flowers so fair,
By the bonnie green woods of Killeevy. 5

And oh, but her eyes they danced so bright,
Killeevy, O Killeevy!
As she longed for the dawn of to-morrow's light,
Her bridal vows of love to plight,
By the bonnie green woods of Killeevy. 10

The bridegroom is come with youthful brow,
Killeevy, O Killeevy!
To receive from his Eva her virgin vow;
"Why tarries the bride of my bosom now,
By the bonnie green woods of Killeevy?" 15

A cry! a cry! 'twas her maidens spoke,
Killeevy, O Killeevy!
"Your bride is asleep, she has not awoke,
And the sleep she sleeps will never be broke,"
By the bonnie green woods of Killeevy. 20

Sir Turlough sank down with a heavy moan,
Killeevy, O Killeevy!
And his cheek became like the marble stone:
"Oh, the pulse of my heart is for ever gone!"
By the bonnie green woods of Killeevy. 25

The keen is loud, it comes again,
Killeevy, O Killeevy;
And rises sad from the funeral train,
As in sorrow it winds along the plain,
By the bonnie green woods of Killeevy. 30

And oh, but the plumes of white were fair,
Killeevy, O Killeevy!
When they flutter'd all mournful in the air,
As rose the hymn of the requiem prayer,
By the bonnie green woods of Killeevy. 35

There is a voice that but one can hear,
Killeevy, O Killeevy!
And it softly pours from behind the bier
Its note of death on Sir Turlough's ear,
By the bonnie green woods of Killeevy. 40

The keen is loud, but that voice is low,
Killeevy, O Killeevy!
And it sings its song of sorrow slow,
And names young Turlough's name with woe,
By the bonnie green woods of Killeevy. 45

Now the grave is closed, and the mass is said,
Killeevy, O Killeevy!
And the bride she sleeps in her lonely bed,
The fairest corpse among the dead,
By the bonnie green woods of Killeevy. 50

The wreaths of virgin-white are laid,
Killeevy, O Killeevy!
By virgin hands o'er the spotless maid;
And the flowers are strewn, but they soon will fade,
By the bonnie green woods of Killeevy. 55

"Oh! go not yet — not yet away,"
Killeevy, O Killeevy!
"Let us feel that life is near our clay,"
The long-departed seem to say,
By the bonnie green woods of Killeevy. 60

But the tramp and voices of life are gone,
Killeevy, O Killeevy!
And beneath each cold forgotten stone,
The mouldering dead sleep all alone,

By the bonnie green woods of Killeevy. 65

But who is he who lingereth yet?
Killeevy, O Killeevy!
The fresh green sod with his tears is wet,
And his heart in that bridal grave is set,
By the bonnie green woods of Killeevy. 70

Oh, who but Sir Turlough, the young and brave,
Killeevy, O Killeevy!
Should bend him o'er that bridal grave,
And to his death-bound Eva rave,
By the bonnie green woods of Killeevy. 75

"Weep not — weep not," said a lady fair,
Killeevy, O Killeevy!
"Should youth and valour thus despair,
And pour their vows to the empty air?"
By the bonnie green woods of Killeevy. 80

There's charmèd music upon her tongue,
Killeevy, O Killeevy!
Such beauty — bright and warm and young —
Was never seen the maids among,
By the bonnie green woods of Killeevy. 85

A laughing light, a tender grace,
Killeevy, O Killeevy!
Sparkled in beauty around her face,
That grief from mortal heart might chase,
By the bonnie green woods of Killeevy. 90

"The maid for whom thy salt tears fall,"
Killeevy, O Killeevy!
"Thy grief or love can ne'er recall;
She rests beneath that grassy pall,
By the bonnie green woods of Killeevy. 95

"My heart it strangely cleaves to thee,"
Killeevy, O Killeevy!
"And now that thy plighted love is free,"

Give its unbroken pledge to me,”
By the bonnie green woods of Killeevy. 100

The charm is strong upon Turlough’s eye,
Killeevy, O Killeevy!
His faithless tears are already dry,
And his yielding heart has ceased to sigh,
By the bonnie green woods of Killeevy. 105

“To thee,” the charmèd chief replied,
Killeevy, O Killeevy!
“I pledge that love o’er my buried bride!
Oh, come, and in Turlough’s hall abide,”
By the bonnie green woods of Killeevy. 110

Again the funeral voice came o’er,
Killeevy, O Killeevy!
The passing breeze, as it wailed before,
And streams of mournful music bore,
By the bonnie green woods of Killeevy. 115

“If I to thy youthful heart am dear,”
Killeevy, O Killeevy!
“One month from hence thou wilt meet me here,
Where lay thy bridal Eva’s bier,”
By the bonnie green woods of Killeevy. 120

He pressed her lips as the words were spoken,
Killeevy, O Killeevy!
And his banshee’s wail — now far and broken —
Murmur’d “Death,” as he gave the token,
By the bonnie green woods of Killeevy. 125

“Adieu! adieu!” said this lady bright,
Killeevy, O Killeevy!
And she slowly passed like a thing of light,
Or a morning cloud, from Sir Turlough’s sight,
By the bonnie green woods of Killeevy. 130

Now Sir Turlough has death in every vein,
Killeevy, O Killeevy!

And there's fear and grief o'er his wide domain,
And gold for those who will calm his brain,
By the bonnie green woods of Killeevy. 135

"Come, haste thee, leech, right swiftly ride,
Killeevy, O Killeevy!
Sir Turlough the brave, Green Truagha's pride,
Has pledged his love to the churchyard bride,"
By the bonnie green woods of Killeevy. 140

The leech groaned aloud, "Come, tell me this,"
Killeevy, O Killeevy!
"By all thy hopes of weal and bliss,
Has Sir Turlough given the fatal kiss?"
By the bonnie green woods of Killeevy. 145

"The banshee's cry is loud and long,"
Killeevy, O Killeevy!
"At eve she weeps her funeral song,
And it flights on the twilight breeze along,"
By the bonnie green woods of Killeevy. 150

"Then the fatal kiss is given; the last,"
Killeevy, O Killeevy!
"Of Turlough's name and race is past,
His doom is seal'd, his die is cast,"
By the bonnie green woods of Killeevy. 155

"Leech, say not that thy skill is vain,"
Killeevy, O Killeevy!
"Oh, calm the power of his frenzied brain,
And half his lands thou shalt retain,"
By the bonnie green woods of Killeevy. 160

The leech has failed, and the hoary priest,
Killeevy, O Killeevy!
With pious shrift his soul releas'd,
And the smoke is high of his funeral feast,
By the bonnie green woods of Killeevy. 165

The Shanachies now are assembled all,

Killeevy, O Killeevy!
And the songs of praise in Sir Turlough's hall
To the sorrowing harp's dark music fall,
By the bonnie green woods of Killeevy[.] 170

And there is trophy, banner, and plume,
Killeevy, O Killeevy!
And the pomp of death, with its darkest gloom,
O'er shadows the Irish chieftain's tomb,
By the bonnie green woods of Killeevy. 175

The month is clos'd, and Green Truagha's pride,
Killeevy, O Killeevy!
Is married to death — and side by side
He slumbers now with his churchyard bride
By the bonnie green woods of Killeevy. 180

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