Alfred Perceval Graves (1846-1931)

2 The Sailor Girl

When the Wild-Geese were flying to Flanders away,
I clung to my Desmond, beseeching him stay,
But the stern trumpet sounded the summons to sea,
And afar the ship bore him, mabouchal machree.

And first he sent letters, and then he sent none,
And three times into prison I dreamt he was thrown;
So I shore my long tresses, and stained my face brown,
And went for a sailor from Limerick town.

Oh! the ropes cut my fingers, but steadfast I strove,
Till I reached the Low Country in search of my love,
There I heard how at Namur his heart was so high,
That they carried him captive, refusing to fly.

With that to King William himself I was brought,
And his mercy for Desmond with tears I besought.
He considered my story, then smiling, said he,
"The young Irish rebel for your sake is free.

"Bring the varlet before us. Now, Desmond O' Hea,
Myself has decided your sentence to-day.
You must marry your sailor with bell, book, and ring,
And here is her dowry," cried William the King!

(From *Father O'Flynn: and Other Irish Lyrics*. London, 1889)