

Verses Composed on the

MURDER OF MISS KATE LEEHAN.

BY BYRON DEWOLFE.

There was a lovely Irish girl,
Her heart was full of cheer,
She ne'er forgot her native land
Or friends whom she lov'd dear;
Her voice was sweet and musical
And who would not adore
Sweet Katie Leehan when she sang
Some melody from Moore?

Not oft in rich men's palaces,
Or costly halls you'll see
As pleasant and refined a girl
As Katie used to be
Unselfish, generous, and gay,
Yet prudent and sincere,
She thought of brothers far away!
And wish'd that they were here!

Day after day she labor'd hard
And to herself did say:
My brothers, and my brothers wives,
In Erin, far away,
I'll send for them, to bring them here,
To this land of the free,
For Katie Leehan daily longs
Her brothers brave to see.

I've money I have saved for them,
I've dollars, cents and dimes,
Although to put some in the bank,
I've pinched myself sometimes,
Yet I would quickly take it out
Without a frown or tear,
And give it all, yes every cent,
To have my brothers here.

One day she was so full of cheer,
Her young heart was so gay,
Her mistress said, "how happy, Kate,
You seem to be to-day;
Your voice did never sweeter sound,
It has such melody,
That I'd feel desolate and sad,
If you should go from me."

How gay was Kate at supper time,
Her eyes how very bright,
And she was in her best arrayed,
On that October night;
And Mrs. Brown, Kate's mistress true,
A pleasing daughter had,
Who lov'd Kate Leehan very much,
For Kate was seldom sad.

"O, Annie Brown," Kate Leehan said,
"I'm vain sometimes, 'tis true;
But does my overskirt look well?
Well and becoming too?"
"Kate Leehan, it becomes you well,"
The questioned one replied;
"You look to-night as if you'd be
Somebody's willing bride."

"O, Annie, somehow I to-night,
Although my heart feels gay,
Although I have been singing so,
And laughing all the day;
Although of my heart's happiness
You seem to have no doubt,
Think that I may be with the dead
Before my skirt's worn out!"

For a reply she waited not,
But soon was out of doors,
With Ellen Morris hastened on
To reach the Brookline stores.
They talked of hopes they entertained,
Parts where they loved to roam,
But when they reach'd the store they
sought,
Its keeper had gone home.

But Kate and Ellen both were gay,
Unwilling to repine;
They spent a little while with friends,
Until the clock struck nine;
Then both of them left Curry's house,
And one might well suppose,
They talked as happy girls would do,
Of marriages and beaux.

At Curry's there were three young men,
And one knew Katie well,
Before she left her far-off home,
Where strangers were to dwell;
He knew her when a little girl,
And he was but a boy,
And Irish Katie's winning smile
Gave Pat Mahoney joy.

But neither Pat, nor Dan, nor Jim,
Went with the girls that night,
But Kate and Ellen started off,
And soon were lost to sight;
When at the house where Ellen work'd
The girls sat down to rest,
And there on that October night,
A while their thoughts digress'd.

"Till Ellen said: "It's getting late,
And Kate I must go in,
Or Mr. Hall will wonder much
Where I to-night have been."
"Stay Ellen, stay," the other said,
But only said in vain;
They parted at the door-steps there,
To never meet again!

Next morning at an early hour
Just at the dawn of day,
A milkman's horse took sudden fright
At what he did survey;
And in a field close to the road,
His driver had to scan
A shock that instantaneously
Electrified the man!

For one who'd been a lovely girl,
Was lying cold and dead,
And near her lay the bloody stone
Was hurl'd upon her head;
And near her lay the furnace-wrench
Had left the murd'rous hand,
Ay that was there—but not the wretch
That Justice did demand.

Quick on his team the milkman jumps,
The dreadful news to spread,
How in a field close to a road,
A murdered girl lies dead.
Soon thousands to the fatal spot
Does heart-felt pity lead,
And loud they cry, "where, where's the
fiend
That did this shocking deed.

Whose hand has hurl'd that heavy stone
Against that now cold head;
What hand has used that cruel wrench
To leave that maiden dead?
What loathsome, murd'rous libertine,
What ravager has here
Laid low so beautiful a girl
To whom life was so dear?

Ah, soon the body's recognized,
And bitter tears are shed;
The beautiful, the musical,
The sweet Kate Leehan's dead!
Kill'd by some fiend in human shape,
Who followed her last night,
And struck the blows and did the deeds
Have brought to us this sight.

In vain they ask Pat, Dan, and Jim;
In vain they question Hayes;
In vain examine each of them,
And on their faces gaze.
In vain they offer great rewards;
In vain detectives planned—
In vain they speak about the hair
That was in Katie's hand.

Well Kate had struggled with the fiend
Who strove to do her wrong,
But, ah, alas! the girl was weak;
The ravager was strong.
She died her virtue to defend;
Died in a field obscure;
But Katie Leehan now must be
In sight of Heaven, pure.

Pure as the freshly-fallen snow
Upon the mountain height,
Was she who died in virtue's cause,
Though conquered in the fight;
Pure as the lily's petals white—
The gem by ocean hid;
For where there does exist a crime,
The will to do it did.

O, brothers of that gentle girl,
How sad your hearts must be,
Your sister's sweet and loving face,
On earth no more you'll see:
In a strange land a murderer's hand
Has basely laid her low,
Because she scorned from virtue's paths
To those of vice to go.

Is human life so small a thing
That fiends can murder so,
And through the land from north to south
One day unpunished go?
Oh, watch and wait, and trust and pray,
To sweet hope fondly cling,
Till he whose hands have known her blood
Shall on a gallows swing.

If phantoms rove this world of ours,
As many people say;
O, may they haunt that wand'ring wretch
Till his life's latest day;
And may his dreams be all of her,
And may he think he hears
His victim's curses, loud and long,
Resounding through his ears!

We are but mortals,—we've no hearts
That murderer to forgive,
And roaming free from town to town
Say shall the monster live?
Why parents, e'en your little ones
In danger go abroad,
While that vile fiend is punished not
By either man or God!

O'er gentle Katie Leehan's grave
When grass is growing green,
May fond ones weep—a nobler girl
The earth has seldom seen;
Now in the dark embracing earth
Does sleep poor Katie's form;
But she, the mild and beautiful,
No more can feel the storm.

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Strew flowers over Katie's form,
Which now the earth does cover,
Her spirit's free from every storm—
God is her kindest lover.

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