

THE BLACKWATER SIDE

Performed by: Caroline Brennan

Ye lads of this nation of low and high station,
I pray pay attention and listen to me:
It's of a young couple I overheard talking,
As I went a-walking my friends for to see.
It happened to be on a fine summer's morning,
Viewing the streams as they gently did glide:
The fields were bright Venice,¹ the hills were adorning,
Surrounding the banks on the Blackwater side.

Oh he said, 'My fond lover, the truth to discover,
We're both fit for marriage, I solemnly vow;
And if you're inclined in wedlock we'll join,
In yes, aye, or no you must answer me now.
Have no hesitating but come without waiting,
I'm ready and willing to make you my bride;
You know I adore you, I choose none before you,
You lovely fair maid on the Blackwater side.'

Oh she said, 'My fond lover, the truth to discover,
I'd rather be single a while longer yet.
My fortune is low as you very well know,
And to be your fond bride I don't think I am fit.
My friends went away to Amerikay,
And with my dear mother I mean to abide;
I'll ne'er change my lot from that neat little cot,
On the lovely sweet banks on the Blackwater side.'

He said, 'If you do, so sure you will rue,
I've another in view that won't me deny;
Her age is eighteen, she's both handsome and clean,
And I don't go on coaxing as you may rely.
I gave you the first offer accept of it quickly,
In the sweet bands of wedlock we both will be tied;
And the truth I'll be telling you'll find yourself dwelling,
On the lovely sweet bank on the Blackwater side.'

This maiden arose, to her mother she goes,
And told her the story so plain you may see.
She gave her consent, to the church they both went,
And joined hands in wedlock and sweet unity.
May their pleasures increase and their troubles grow less,
In the sweet bands of wedlock they now have been tied.
And the truth I'll be telling, you'll find they are dwelling,
On the lovely sweet bank on the Blackwater side.

¹ *Editor's note: In his transcription of Caroline Brennan's singing of 'The Blackwater side,' Graham Wells (n.d.) suggests that this line may be 'The fields like bright Venus ...' Virginia Preston Ryan also transcribed Caroline Brennan's version of 'The Blackwater side' in her thesis 'The old ways are goin'—they're goin' fast' (1977). She suggests that this line is 'The fields were bright then as the usual adorning' (p. 81).*