

TRUE LOVERS' CONVERSATION

Performed by: Henry Campbell

One pleasant evening as pinks and daisies,
Closed in their bosom one drop of dew;
The feathered songsters of every species,
Together chanted their notes so true.
As I did stray wrapped in meditation,
It charmed my heart for to hear them sing;
The silence of the night were just arising,
The air in concert did sweetly sing.

With joy transported each sight I courted,
While gazing round with expected eye;
Two youthful lovers in conversation,
Closely engaged I chanced to spy.
This couple spoke with such force of reason,
Their sentiments they expressed so clear;
While just to listen to their conversation,
My inclination was to draw near.

He pressed her hand and he said, 'My darling,
Tell me the reason you have changed your mind;
Or have I loved you to be degraded,
When youth and innocence are in their prime?
For I am slighted and ill-requited,
For all the favours I did bestow;
You'll surely tell me before I leave you,
Why you're inclined for to treat me so.'

With great acuteness she made him answer,
Saying, 'On your favours I will rely,
For you may contrive to blast my glory,
On your marriage day you might hover by.¹
Young men in general are fickle-minded,
And for to trust you I am afraid;
If for your favours they are indebted,
Both stock and interest you shall be paid.'

¹ Editor's note: 'Hover,' in this case, is likely an archaic usage meaning 'to linger.'

'To blast your glory, love, I never intended,
Nor fickle-minded I'll never be;
As for my debts you can never pay them,
But by true love and loyalty.
Remember, darling, our first engagement,
When childish pastimes were all we knew;
Be true and constant, I'm thine forever,
I'll brave all dangers and go with you.'

'Your proffer is good sir, I thank you for it,
But still your offer I can't receive;
By soft persuadings and kind endearments,
The wily serpent beguiled Eve.
There is other reasons might be a sign, love,
The highest tide, love, will ebb and fall;
Another female might suit you better,
Therefore I cannot obey your call.'

'I will admit that the tide and motion,
Is always moving from shore to shore;
But still its substance is never changing,
Nor never will until times are o'er.
I'll sound your praise with all loyal lovers,
And fix your love until mind is pure;
Where no existence can ever change it,
Nor no physician prescribe a cure.'

'Young man,' says she, 'For to tell you plainly,
For to refane² you I am inclined;
That another young man of birth and fortune,
He's gained my heart and has changed my mind.
My future welfare I shall consider,
Nor fickle footing I ne'er would stand;
Besides my parents they'd be offended,
To see you walking at my right hand.'

'What had you, darling, when you were born?
What nature gave you, love, so had I;
Your haughty parents I do distain them,
For ill-got riches I don't deny.
An honest heart, love, is far superior,
Your gold and riches will soon decay;
It was naked you came into this world,
And much the same you will go away.'

² *Editor's note: Possibly 'detain' or 'replace.'*

'You falsify me when you say you love me,
And slight my parents whom that I love dear;
I think it justice for to degrade you,
If that's the course which you mean to steer.
By wealth or features or art of nature,
You're not my equal in any line;
Since I submit to a fair discussion
Your imputation I will obey.'

'It's now too late for to ask that question,
Since you despise me before my friends;
Lebellion's planned³ if you could command them,
Are not sufficient to make amend.
There is not a tree in the Persian forest,
Which changes colour excepting one;
That is the laurel which I do cherish,
I always carried it in my right hand.'

'The blooming laurel, you may admire it,
Because its virtue is always new;
There is another you can't deny it,
Is just so bright in the gardener's view.
It's mildly resting throughout the winter,
It blooms again when the spring draws near;
The pen of Homer has written its praises,
In June and July it does appear.'

'You speak succinctly but not correctly,
With words supported your cause is vain;
Had I the tongue of a siren goddess,
Your exultation I would distain.
It was your love that I did require,
But since you placed it on gold and store,
I'll strike the string and my harp shall murmur,
Farewell my darlin' forevermore.'

She seemed affected with eyes distracted,
With loud explaining she then gave way;
Saying, 'My denial was but a trial;
May God be witness unto what I'll say.
She says, 'My darlin' if you don't forgive me,
And quite forget my incredulity,
A single virgin for your sake I'll wander,
While the green leaf grows on the laurel tree.'

³ Editor's note: In other versions, this line begins 'Lebanon's Plains.'

Come all young men, by me take warning,
Let love and virtue be still your aim;
No worldly treasure will chill the pleasure,
In whom those persons you do disdain.
All loyal lovers will then respect you,
And to your memory will heave a sigh;
The blooming rose and the evergreen laurel,
Will mark the spot where your body lies.

From Ballahaven⁴ 'bout two miles distant,
Where blackbirds whistle and thrushes sing;
Where hills surrounding and valleys bounding
With enchanting prospects all in the spring.
Where female beauty is never wanted,
A lonely stranger do refuge find;
Memory tenpenny if you require it,
You'll find the author of those simple lines.

⁴ Editor's note: The location of Ballahaven is unknown. It may be a corruption of Ballynahinch, located in Co Down.