

Classic Poetry Series

Gerald Griffin
- poems -

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Gerald Griffin(12 December 1803 - 12 June 1840)

Gerald Griffin was an Irish novelist, poet and playwright.

He was born in Limerick, Ireland, the son of a brewer. He went to London in 1823 and became a reporter for one of the daily papers, and later turned to writing fiction. One of his most famous works is *The Collegians* written about the murder of the Colleen Bawn in 1820. In 1838 he burned all of his unpublished manuscripts and joined the Catholic religious order "Congregation of Christian Brothers" in Cork, and died from typhus fever at their monastery.

Gerald Griffin has a street named after him in Limerick City and another in Cork City, Ireland. Loughill/Ballyhahill GAA club in west Limerick play under the name of Gerald Griffins.

A Place In Thy Memory

A Place in thy memory, Dearest!
Is all that I claim:
To pause and look back when thou hearest
The sound of my name.
Another may woo thee, nearer;
Another may win and wear;
I care not though he be dearer,
If I am remembered there.

Remember me, not as a lover
Whose hope was cross,
Whose bosom can never recover
The light it hath lost!
As the young bride remembers the mother
She loves, though she never may see,
As a sister remembers a brother,
O Dearest, remember me!

Could I be thy true lover, Dearest!
Couldst thou smile on me,
I would be the fondest and dearest
That ever lovâ thee:
But a cloud on my pathway is glooming
That never must burst upon thine;
And heaven, that made thee all blooming,
Neer made thee to wither on mine.

Remember me then! O remember
My calm light love,
Though bleak as the blasts of November
My life may prove!
That life will, though lonely, be sweet
If its brightest enjoyment should be
A smile and kind word when we meet
And a place in thy memory.

Gerald Griffin

Adare

Oh, sweet Adare! oh, lovely vale!
Oh, soft retreat of sylvan splendour!
Nor summer sun nor morning gale
E'er hail'd a scene more softly tender.
How shall I tell the thousand charms
Within thy verdant bosom dwelling,
Where, lull'd in Nature's fost'ring arms,
Soft peace abides and joy excelling.

Ye morning airs, how sweet at dawn
The slumbering boughs your song awaken,
Or linger o'er the silent lawn,
With odour of the harebell taken.
Thou rising sun, how richly gleams
Thy smile from far Knockfierna's mountain,
O'er waving woods and bounding streams,
And many a grove and glancing fountain.

In sweet Adare, the jocund spring
His notes of odorous joy is breathing;
The wild birds in the woodland sing,
The wild flowers in the vale are wreathing.
There wings the Mague, as silver clear,
Among the elms so sweetly flowing;
There, fragrant in the early year,
Wild roses on the banks are blowing.

The wild-duck seeks the sedgy bank,
Or dives beneath the glistening billow,
Where graceful droop and clustering dank
The osier bright and rustling willow.
The hawthorn scents the leafy dale,
In thicket lone the stag is belling,
And sweet along the echoing vale
The sound of vernal joy is swelling.

Gerald Griffin

Devotion. -- A Vision

Methought I roved on shining walks,
'Mid odorous groves and wreathed bowers.
Where, trembling on their tender stalks,
Fresh op'ning bloom'd the early flowers;
Thick hung the fruit on ev'ry bough,
In ripe profusion clust'ring mellow,
While o'er the peak'd horizon's brow,
The evening ray fell slant and yellow.

Slow pacing through the fragrant shade,
With calm majestic mien advancing,
O'erawed I saw a queenly maid,
With piercing eyes divinely glancing;
Deep wonder chain'd my rev'rent tongue,
My frame was bent with greeting lowly,
While silence o'er the garden hung,
As if the ground she trod was holy.

'And who art thou,' with eager tone,
I cried aloud, 'whose presence thrilling,
Though lately seen, and yet unknown,
Can reach the inmost springs of feeling?
And oh! what sweet secluded scene,
Here shines in rural beauty splendid;
Where summer bloom and vernal green
With ripe autumnal wealth are blended!'

With smiles that broke as sunshine bright,
Their lustre to my soul imparting,
And tones that sent a pure delight,
Delicious through my bosom darting:
'Devotion is my name,' she said,
'And thine are those delicious bowers,
From purest fountains ever fed,
And bright with undecaying flowers.

'In this sweet haunt, thy blissful life
Shall glide, like meadow streamlet flowing,
Unreach'd by sounds of demon strife,

Unknown to passion and unknowing;
For thee the fragrant airs shall rise,
For thee shall bloom those op'ning roses;
Till far beyond yon trembling skies,
Thy heart in endless peace reposes.

'Yes - thine shall be this calm retreat,
Of summer bloom and peaceful beauty;
If thou observe with prudence meet,
And watchful care, one easy duty:
'Tis but to tend yon golden lamp,
With faithful hand and spirit heeding,
From wasting airs and vapours damp,
Its pointed flame attentive feeding.

'While heav'nward thus attending bright,
In holy lustre still increasing;
Thou keep'st that pure unearthly light,
With vestal heed and care unceasing;
Sweet peace of heart shall haunt thy bower,
And safety watch unceasing near thee;
And, happy, in thy parting hour,
Celestial truth shall stoop to cheer thee.

'But if the faithless thirst of change,
Or slow consuming sloth should move thee,
Then dread those countless foes that range,
Terrific in the air above thee.
They cannot pierce this radiant sphere,
While faithful hands that flame shall cherish,
But woe to thee, if slumb'ring here,
Thou leave its saving light to perish.'

Upward I look'd with shudd'ring awe,
And in the growing gloom that bound us,
Full many a dismal shape I saw,
Slow winging in the air around us:
Grim-visaged Death, and fierce Despair,
Hard Unbelief, with aspect sneering;
And Ruin, with affrighted stare,
Disastrous through the mist appearing.

Heart-stricken at the direful sight,
Awhile I stood appall'd in spirit,
But cheer'd by that celestial light,
I took my lonely station near it:
Dissolving in the fragrant air,
No more I saw that form before me,
But by the sweetness breathing there,
I felt her influence still was o'er me.

Awhile I slept, with watchful heed,
My task of duty and of pleasure;
Exact, at noon and eve, to feed
That holy flame with ample measure;
Those smiling walks, and various flowers,
Each day I hail'd with bosom fonder,
Nor e'er beyond those happy bowers,
Indulged the idle thought to wander.

Gerald Griffin

Nocturne

Sleep that like the couched dove
Broods o'er the weary eye,
Dreams that with soft heavings move
The heart of memory,
Labor's guerdon, golden rest,
Wrap thee in its downy vest, -
Fall like comfort on thy brain
And sing the hush song to thy pain!

Far from thee be startling fears,
And dreams the guilty dream;
No banshee scare thy drowsy ears
With her ill-omen'd scream;
But tones of fairy minstrelsy
Float like the ghosts of sound o'er thee,
Soft as the chapel's distant bell,
And lull thee to a sweet farewell.

Ye for whom the ashy hearth
The fearful housewife clears,
Ye whose tiny sounds of mirth
The nighted carman hears,
Ye whose pygmy hammers make
The wonderers of the cottage wake,
Noiseless be your airy flight,
Silent as the still moonlight.

Silent go, and harmless come,
Fairies of the stream:
Ye, who love the winter gloom
Or the gay moonbeam,
Hither bring your drowsy store
Gather'd from the bright lusmore;
Shake o'er temples, soft and deep,
The comfort of the poor man, sleep.

Gerald Griffin

Recollections Of Our Native Valley

Know ye not that lovely river?
Know ye not that smiling river?
Whose gentle flood,
By cliff and wood,
With wildering sound goes winding ever.
Oh! often yet with feeling strong,
On that dear stream my mem'ry ponders,
And still I prize its murm'ring song,
For by my childhood's home it wanders.
Know ye not that lovely river?
Know ye not that smiling river?
Whose gentle flood,
By cliff and wood,
There's music in each wind that blows
Within our native valley breathing;
There's beauty in each flower that grows
Around our native woodlands wreathing.
The memory of our brightest joys
Is dearer than the richest toys,
The present vainly shed around us.
Know ye not that lovely river?
Know ye not that smiling river?
Whose gentle flood,
By cliff and wood,
Oh, sister! when 'mid doubts and fears,
That haunt life's onward journey ever,
I turn to those departed years,
And that beloved and lovely river;
With sinking mind and bosom riven,
And heart with lonely anguish aching,
It needs my long-taught hope in heaven,
To keep that weary heart from breaking.
Know ye not that lovely river?
Know ye not that smiling river?
Whose gentle flood,
By cliff and wood.

Gerald Griffin

To A Sea-Gull

White bird of the tempest! O beautiful thing,
With the bosom of snow, and the motionless wing,
Now sweeping the billow, now floating on high,
Now bathing thy plumes in the light of the sky;
Now posing o'er ocean thy delicate form,
Now breasting the surge with thy bosom so warm;
Now darting aloft, with a heavenly scorn,
Now shooting along like a ray of the morn;
Now lost in the folds of the cloud-curtain'd dome,
Now floating abroad like a flake of the foam;
Now silently poised o'er the war of the main,
Like the spirit of Charity brooding o'er pain;
Now gilding with pinion all silently furl'd,
Like an angel descending to comfort the world!
Thou seem'st to my spirit, as upward I gaze,
And see thee, now cloth'd in mellowest rays,
Now lost in the storm-driven vapours, that fly
Like hosts that are routed across the broad sky,
Like a pure spirit, true to its virtue and faith,
'Mid the tempests of nature, of passion, and death!

Rise! beautiful emblem of purity, rise!
On the sweet winds of heaven, to thine own brilliant skies;
Still higher! still higher! till lost to our sight,
Thou hidest thy wings in a mantle of light;
And I think how a pure spirit gazing on thee,
Must long for that moment - the joyous and free,
When the soul disembodied from nature, shall spring
Unfettered, at once to her Maker and King;
When the bright day of service and suffering past,
Shapes, fairer than thine, shall shine round her at last,
While, the standard of battle triumphantly furl'd,
She smiles like a victor, serene on the world!

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