

# The Cow that ate the Piper

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In the year ninety-eight, when our troubles were great,  
It was treason to be a Milesian (Militian?).  
I can never forget the big black whiskered set,  
That history tells us were Hessians.  
In them heart breaking times we had all sorts of crimes,  
As murdering never was rifer.  
On the hill of Glencree, not an acre from me,  
Lived bould Denny Byrne, the piper.

Neither wedding nor wake was worth an old shake,  
If Denny was not first invited,  
For at emptying legs or squeezing the bags,  
He astonished as well as delighted.  
In such times poor Denny could not ear a penny,  
Martial law had a sting like a viper –  
It kept Denny within till his bones and his skin  
Were a-grin through the rags of the piper.

'Twas one heavenly night, with the moon shining bright,  
Coming home from the fair of Rathangan.  
He happened to see, from the branch of a tree,  
The corpse of a Hessian there hanging;  
Says Denny, "These rogues have fine boots, I've no brogues,"  
He laid on the heels such a griper,  
They were so gallus tight, and he pulled with such might,  
Legs and boots came away with the piper.

So he tucked up the legs and he took to his pegs,  
Till he came to Tim Kavanagh's cabin,  
"By the powers," says Tim, "I can't let you in,  
You'll be shot if you stop out there rappin'."  
He went round to the shed, where the cow was in bed,  
With a wisp he began for to wipe her –  
They lay down together on the seven foot feather,  
And the cow fell a-hugging the piper.

The daylight soon dawned, Denny got up and yawned,  
Then he dragged on the boots of the Hessian:  
The legs, by the law! he threw them on the straw,  
And he gave them leg-bail on his mission.  
When Tim's breakfast was done he sent out his son  
To make Denny lep like a lamp-lighter –  
When two legs there he saw, he roared like a daw  
"Oh! daddy, de cow eat de piper."

"Sweet bad luck to the baste, she'd a musical taste,"  
Says Tim, "to go eat such a chanter,  
Here Padraic, avic, take this lump of a stick,  
Drive her up to Glenealy, I'll cant her."  
Mrs Kavanagh bawled – the neighbours were called,  
They began for to humbug and jibe her,  
To the churchyard she walks with the legs in a box,  
Crying out, "We'll be hanged for the piper."

The cow then was drove just a mile or two off,  
To a fair by the side of Glenealy,  
And the crathur was sold for four guineas in gold  
To the clerk of the parish, Tim Daly.  
They went into a tent, and the luck-penny spent,  
(For the clerk was a woeful old swiper),  
Who the divil was there, playing the Rakes of Kildare,  
But their friend, Denny Byrne, the piper.

Then Tim gave a bolt like a half-broken colt,  
At the piper he gazed like a gommach;  
Says he, "By the powers, I thought these eight hours,  
You were playing in Dhrimindhu's stomach."  
But Denny observed how the Hessian was served,  
So they all wished Nick's cure to the viper,  
And for gra that they met, their whistles they wet,  
And like devils they danced round the piper.