

## ARABELLA

A carriage rumbled slowly  
    To the front of Butler's Hall  
A footman helped old Butler down  
    In case he took a fall

A woman through the portal ran  
    And clutched him by the coat  
"Where is she man?" the woman cried -  
    The words stuck in her throat

"She's gone" he said "to New South Wales"  
    When he at last could speak  
"She's run away with wild O'Shea -  
    They sailed from Cork last week!"

"O'Shea who swam the Shannon  
    And who beat those Sassenach  
It's all here in her letter, dear -  
    The pilot brought it back."

"It's O'Shea the troops are hunting,  
    In this place he has no hope.  
He'd rather die at the end of the earth  
    Than the end of a British rope."

"She begs our sweet forgiveness  
    And says she'll always pray  
That Ireland wins her freedom  
    Then they'll come home one day."

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In a miner's tent in a savage land  
    She raised her colonial brood  
From a miners pit in the Jordan fields  
    He earned their daily food

When the lamp was lit and the kids were down  
    He often used to say  
"When I find me pot o' gold my girl  
    We'll all go home one day."

But the miner's kids were running  
Through the town and ever fooling,  
So she hired a hut and bought a board  
And organised their schooling.

And so the seeds of knowledge  
And of nation so to speak  
Germinated through this woman  
On the banks of Stringer's Creek.

But the busy round of toiling  
And of caring and of duty  
Sapped the energy and health  
Of this well known Irish beauty.

O'Shea set up the buggy  
And he took her down to Sale  
As she bid farewell forever  
To Walhalla's lofty vale.

In the hospital the doctor  
Diagnosed her plight as cancer.  
O'Shea's heart sank within him  
For he knew there was no answer.

But her Irish faith was with her  
She knew 'twould see her through  
The hardest part to leave the kids -  
And 'Bell was only two.

He kept a lonely vigil  
By her bed he knelt to pray  
With Arabella's hand in his -  
She journeyed home that day.

I know the Angels led her  
To a home far sweeter still  
Than the green of County Kerry  
And the castle on the hill.

A hundred years her bones have lain  
In a grave unmarked by stone  
Since O'Shea, humped in his buggy,  
Went back to the kids alone.

Her children's' children's' children now  
Throughout the land have spread  
And mostly kept the Faith  
And been the leaven in the bread.

So Ireland's loss is Aussie's gain  
She tells us from the clay  
That we must watch the way we live -  
We all go home one day.

Daryl Simon Donahoe

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