



FONTENOT.

rice, at the huts of Fontenoy, the English column failed,
And twice the lines of St Antoine the Dutch in vain assailed;
For town and slopes were guarded with fort and artillery,
As vainly, through De Barri's wood the British soldiers burst—
The French artillery drove them back diminished and dispersed.
The bloody Duke of Cumberland beheld with anxious eye,
And ordered up his last reserve, his latest chance to try.

Fontenoy, on Fontenoy, how fast his gen'ral's ride,
And mustering come his chosen troops; like clouds at eventide.

Six thousand English veterans in stately column tread

Their cannon blaze in front at the flank, Lord Hay is at their head;

Steady they step a-down the slope—steady they climb the hill;

Steady they load—steady they fire, moving right onward still,

Between the wood and Fontenoy, as through a furnace blast,

Through rampart, trench, palisade, and kept their course.

With ready fire and steadiness—that mocked at hostile force.

Past Fontenoy, past Fontenoy, while thinner grew their ranks—

They break as broke the Zuyder Zee through Holland's ocean banks.

More idly than the summer flies French tirailleurs rush round;

As stubble to the lava tide, French squadrons strew the ground;

Bomb-shell, and grape, and round-shot tore still on they marched and fired,

Fast as each volley grenadier and voltiguer retired.

"Push on my household cavalry," King Louis madly cried;

To death they rush, but rude their shock—not unavenged they died.

On through the camp the column trod—King Louis turns his rein:

Not yet, my liege," Saxe interposed, "the Irish troops remain!"

And Fontenoy, famed Fontenoy, had been a Waterloo.

There were those exiles ready then fresh, vehement and true.

"Lord Clare," he says "you have our wish there are your Saxon foes!"

The Marshall almost miles, to see, so furiously he goes,

How fierce the look those exiles wear who're wont to be so gay,

The treasured wrongs of fifty years are in their hearts to-day,

The treaty broken, ere the ink wherewith 'twas writ could dry,

Their plundered homes, their ruined shrines their Women's parting cry,

Their priesthood hunted down like wolves, their country overthrown—

Each looks as if revenge for all rested on him alone

On Fontenoy, on Fontenoy, n'er ever yet elsewhere.

Rushed on to fight a nobler band than these proud exiles were,

O'Brien's voice is hoarse with joy, as halting, he commands,

"Fix bayonets" "charge," Like mountain storm rush on those fiery bands.

Thin is the English column now, and faint their volleys grow,

Yet mustering all the strength they have they make a gallant show.

They dress their ranks upon the hill to face the battle-wind,

Their bayonets the breakers' foam: like racks, the men behind.

One volley crashes from their line, when, through the surging smoke,

With empty guns clutched in their hands, the headlong Irish broke.

On Fontenoy, on Fontenoy, hark to that fierce huzzah,

"Revenge! remember Limerick! dash down the Sassana!"

Like lions leaping on a fold, when mad with hunger pang.

Right up against the English line the Irish exiles eprang,

Bright was their steel, 'tis bloody now, their guns are filled with gore;

Through shattered ranks, and severed files, and trampled flags they tore.

The English strove with desperate strength, paused, ran to straggard, fled—

The green hill side is matted close with dying and with dead,

Across the plain, and away passed on that hideous wrack,

While cavalier and fantassin dash in upon their track.

On Fontenoy, on Fontenoy, like eagles in the sun with bloody plumes the Irish stand—the battle fought and won.

