

## *The Praises of Kanturk*[\[i\]](#)

*Words: John C. Deady*

*Air: The Kanturk Jig – See accompanying CD*

*Men of Duhallow from Greenane to Mallow  
In whose bosoms hollow no mean thoughts lurk  
Come join in my ditty, which is true and witty  
And I'll sing you the praises of sweet Kanturk  
For my heart there wonders and fondly ponders  
On the many wonders there to be seen  
From the mansion stately that rises so neatly  
Up Kathleen's Lane till it meets the Brogeen*

*There's a castle hoary of ancient glory  
That soars so proudly o'er Dallua's tide  
Where in days of yore one **McDonagh Mór**  
With lime and gore built that court of pride  
But, when, alas they brought home the glass  
To glaze the windows sublime I ween  
The carmen had too much to drink at Nadd  
So the glass went smash into the Brogeen*

*You see that mansion of great expansion  
That soars so proudly o'er the National School  
With its Grecian windows and tower so splendid  
There lives the Town Clock serene and cool  
But when the clock sir goes on the batter  
Its wild vagaries would raise your gall  
For at 12 p.m. it would oft strike ten  
And if far gone in liquor it won't strike at all*

*There are three streets meeting like fond friends greeting  
In that part of town that they call the square  
But whoever boasted that queer cognomen  
Was a red-nosed toper or right jolly queer  
It's there the drapers hang out their gaiters  
And show off their linen without shame or fear  
While the grocer's windows are stuffed with onions  
Fine red herrings and lots of beer*

*In the Market Square are beams and scales  
To weigh the potatoes by weight or pound  
Hard by milk barrels some fair one quarrels  
And heads of cabbage are ranged around  
In that same row are the cast off clothes  
"Airgead, Airgead" the owner cries  
With bags of sea grass and fishes various  
Laid out to tempt those that there pass by*

*In those barrels there if there be a fair  
Old spouters all shout forth with might  
And Florence Riordan our club's brave chairman  
For the rights of labour stands up to fight  
There are two fine rivers that shine and quiver  
Till their waters mingle like Avoca's Vale  
There, the maidens with clothes tubs laden  
Will talk of soldier's weak tea and cream*

*Do you see those waters they are often sought after  
By each publicans daughter to mix galore  
With fine Cork whisky both strong and frisky  
And to make it weaker they put one to four  
There are two fine bridges, which span these rivers  
Where you can read poetry as you go along*

*About Bluepool's Groves and Old Erin's woes  
As the river flows with it's murmuring song*

*Two bridges there are no man saw fairer  
That span sweet Allua's and Dallua's tide  
There the trout and colly doth sport so jolly  
And cut their capers in those waters wide  
Its there each loafer will often go for  
To sit down idly on its battlements  
While youthful Arabs in tattered garments  
Shout "Daily Herald" with all their strength*

*From Donovan's Hill if the day be still  
You can see the Mill where they grind the meal  
And there beyond in the Workhouse Grand  
Where the poor God help them are thin and pale  
It's there the Guardians you'd oft hear arguing  
And deliberating on state affairs  
While below a pauper awaits an order  
From a Poor Law Guardian till he comes downstairs*

*Now take my arm and we'll stray from harm  
Neath the poplars fronting fair Egmont Row  
God bless **Lord Darell** sure he was a darling  
That made those walks there long long ago  
But his present Lordship tis for him a hardship  
He is forgetting his loyal town  
Those public walks he has shut with locks  
And those mud-walled cabins he has tumbled down*

*Now for style and grace look at Egmont Place  
Or as Johnson called it "Mutton Chop Row"  
'Tis there the quality reside in jollity  
And frown most grandly on the poor below  
Its there the ladies the darling creatures  
Imbibe wine and spirits for lunch  
While the brave bold gentlemen by way of stimulant  
Will drink mulled porter or whisky punch*

*A few more verses this muse rehearses  
To paint more fully our noble town  
Come sing them proudly from your heart loudly  
They will bring you halfpence and me renown  
Now no man wants money don't fear my honey  
For all can get plenty sure now tis true  
Since St. Patrick dear sent a loan bank here  
You can get a draw on an I.O.U.*

*By the bridge called wooden we now return  
Of stone and iron are all its joints  
See that holy pile with its lofty spire  
And silent finger to heaven points  
There our loved Archdeacon you'd oft hear preaching  
Upon the sins of the present age  
While Father Coleman that good and bold man  
Would drive off Satan to his fiery cage*

*There's Thomas Nunan that good and true man  
Duhallow's soul he is called right well  
While P.F. Johnson fought hard to ransom  
Our martyred brothers from their prison cell  
So now good neighbours I won' detain you  
For to tell you the truth I am getting dry  
A copper each will never break you  
So don't refuse the poor Minstrel boy*

*May the light of freedom soon us illumine  
And our Home Rule banners triumphantly  
When the people glorious will join victorious  
Kanturk forever and old Ireland free*

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[i] This poem was probably written c.1870's, by John Christmas Deady, born at Market Square, Kanturk, and who was known as the Poet of Duhallow (*O'Donoghue's Dictionary of Irish Poets*). He died in Banteer in 1884 and is buried in Clonmeen. The *Kerryman (Corkman)* Journalist Pat Lynch, writer of many very fine articles and stories, in his *Lords of Duhallow*, mentions that Deady "hurriedly put together some doggerel lines at the urgent entreaty of *Tadhg a Slios*, the ballad singer, in *The Market Square of Kanturk on a fair-day*". It is thought that the poem may have been sung to the air of the well known *Phreab san Ól*. The version given here was taken from a souvenir programme published by *Kanturk Drama Group* in conjunction with their production of *The Righteous are Bold*, *Spring Tour 1977*. (A note at the end of the poem states it was sent by Mrs. Sara O'Connor). The melody used for the song on the accompanying recording to this book is an adaptation of *The Kanturk Jig* composed by the internationally celebrated accordion player *Jackie Daly*, who recorded the jig on the album *No.2 Patrick Street (Green Linnet CSF 1088, 1988)*. The kind permission for use of Jackie's tune is gratefully acknowledged.