



# **The boys of Wexford**

IRISH FOLKSONG

**William Rhys-Herbert**  
**(1868-1921)**

**William Rhys-Herbert** (1868–1921) was born in Ffwrnas, South Wales. As a youth, he showed much musical talent and, saving his money, he bought a harmonium. He became the first organist at Jerusalem Chapel and studied with T. J. Davies of Swansea. He graduated from the London College of Music and went to Canada where he studied at Trinity University, Toronto. He emigrated to the U.S. and was appointed organist at Hennepin Avenue Methodist Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and then was organist and choir director at the Church of the Redeemer, Minneapolis. He directed the Elks Glee Club and was principal accompanist to the Apollo Club. He composed numerous operettas for school performance, cantatas, songs, and part-songs. He also wrote choral music and piano sheet music under the pseudonym “W. H. Rees.” He died in Chicago after a brief illness at age 53.

In comes the captain's daughter,  
The captain of the Yeos,  
Saying “Brave United Irishmen,  
We'll ne'er again be foes.  
A thousand pounds I'll bring  
And fly from home with thee,  
And dress myself in man's attire  
And fight for liberty.”

*CHORUS*

*We are the boys of Wexford,  
Who fought with heart and hand  
To burst in twain the galling chain  
And free our native land.*

I want no gold, my maiden fair,  
To fly from home with thee.  
Your shining eyes will be my prize,  
More dear than gold to me.  
I want no gold to nerve my arm  
To do a true man's part—  
To free my land I'd gladly give  
The red drops of my heart.

*CHORUS*

And when we left our cabins, boys,  
We left with right good will  
To see our friends and neighbours  
That were at Vinegar Hill!  
A young man from our Irish ranks  
A cannon he let go;  
He slapped it into Lord Mountjoy  
A tyrant he laid low!

*CHORUS*

We bravely fought and conquered  
At Ross and Wexford town;  
And if we failed to keep them,  
'Twas drink that brought us down.  
We had no drink beside us  
On Tubberneering's day,  
Depending on the long, bright pike,  
And well it worked that way.

*CHORUS*

They came into our country,  
Our blood and waste to spill,  
But let them weep for Wexford  
And think of Oulart Hill;  
'Twas drink that still betrayed us  
Of them we had no fear,  
For everyman could do his part  
Like Forth and Shelmalier.

*CHORUS*

My curse upon all drinking,  
It made our hearts full sore,  
For bravery won each battle,  
But drink lost evermore;  
And if for want of leaders  
We lost at Vinegar Hill,  
We're ready for another fight  
And love our Country still!

*CHORUS*

Robert Dwyer Joyce (1830–1883)

“The Boys of Wexford” (also known as *The Flight of the Earls*) commemorates the Irish Rebellion of 1798, specifically, the Wexford Rebellion against English control of Irish affairs, resulting in the 1801 Act of Union. The county Wexford is ancestral home to the Kennedy family, and the folk song was performed many times for JFK during his visit to Ireland. It was arranged for the United States Marine Band by Samuel L. Nestico at President Kennedy's request, and an arrangement by Nelson Riddle was the opening and closing theme of the 1964 television series *Profiles in Courage*, based on Kennedy's book. The song also was used in the political rallies of Senator Ted Kennedy.

# The boys of Wexford

arr. W. Rhys-Herbert

With spirit

S In comes the cap - tain's daugh - ter, The cap - tain of the Yeos,

A In comes the cap - tain's daugh - ter, The cap - tain of the Yeos,

T In comes the cap - tain's daugh - ter, The cap - tain of the Yeos,

B In comes the cap - tain's daugh - ter, The cap - tain of the Yeos,

5  
S Say - ing "Brave U - nit - ed I - rish-men, We'll ne'er a - gain be foes. A

A Say - ing "Brave U - nit - ed I - rish-men, We'll ne'er a - gain be foes. A

T Say - ing "Brave U - nit - ed I - rish-men, We'll ne'er a - gain be foes. A

B Say - ing "Brave U - nit - ed I - rish-men, We'll ne'er a - gain be foes. A



## The boys of Wexford

9

S thou - sand pounds I'll bring — you, And fly from home with thee, And

A thou - sand pounds I'll bring — you, And fly from home with thee, And

T thou - sand pounds I'll bring you, And fly from home with thee, — And

B thou - sand pounds I'll bring — you, And fly from home with thee, — And

13

S dress my - self — in — man's at - tire And fight for lib - er - ty." We

A dress my - self — in — man's at - tire And fight for lib - er - ty." We

T dress my - self — in — man's at - tire And fight for lib - er - ty." We

B dress my - self — in — man's at - tire And fight for lib - er - ty." We

17

S are the boys of Wex - ford, Who fought with heart and hand To

A are the boys of Wex - ford, Who fought with heart and hand To

T are the boys of Wex - ford, Who fought with heart and hand To

B are the boys of Wex - ford, Who fought with heart and hand — To

# The boys of Wexford

21

S  
burst in twain the gall - ing chain And free our na - tive land. *rall.*

A  
burst in twain the gall - ing chain And free our na - tive land. *rall.*

T  
burst in twain the gall - ing chain And free our na - tive land. *rall.*

B  
burst in twain the gall - ing chain And free our na - tive land. *rall.*

**a tempo**

S  
I want no gold, my maid - en fair, To fly from home with thee. Your

A  
I want no gold, my maid - en fair, To fly from home with thee. Your

T  
I want no gold, my maid - en fair, To fly from home with thee. Your

B  
I want no gold, my maid - en fair, To fly from home with thee. Your

29

S  
shin - ing eyes will be my prize, More dear than gold to me. I

A  
shin - ing eyes will be my prize, More dear than gold to me. I

T  
shin - ing eyes will be my prize, More dear than gold to me. I

B  
shin - ing eyes will be my prize, More dear than gold to me. I

## The boys of Wexford

33

S want no gold to nerve my arm To do a true man's part— To

A want no gold to nerve my arm To do a true man's part— To

T want no gold to nerve my arm To do a true man's part— To

B want no gold to nerve my arm To do a true man's part— To

37

S free my land\_ I'd\_ glad - ly give The red drops of my\_ heart. We

A free my land\_ I'd\_ glad - ly give The red drops of my heart. We

T free my land\_ I'd\_ glad - ly give The red drops of my\_ heart. We

B free my land\_ I'd\_ glad - ly give The red drops of my heart. We

41

S are the boys of Wex - ford, Who fought with heart and hand To

A are the boys of Wex - ford, Who fought with heart and hand To

T are the boys of Wex - ford, Who fought with heart and hand To

B are the boys of Wex - ford, Who fought with heart and hand To

# The boys of Wexford

45

S  
burst in twain the gall - ing chain And free our na - tive land. *rall.*

A  
burst in twain the gall - ing chain And free our na - tive land. *rall.*

T  
burst in twain the gall - ing chain And free our na - tive land. *rall.*

B  
burst in twain the gall - ing chain And free our na - tive land. *rall.*

49 **a tempo**

S  
And when we left our cab - ins, boys, We left with right good will To

A  
And when we left our cab - ins, boys, We left with right good will To

T  
And when we left our cab - ins, boys, We left with right good will To

B  
And when we left our cab - ins, boys, We left with right good will To

54

S  
see our friends and neigh - bours That were at Vin - e - gar Hill! A

A  
see our friends and neigh - bours That were at Vin - e - gar Hill! A

T  
see our friends and neigh - bours That were at Vin - e - gar Hill! A

B  
see our friends and neigh - bours That were at Vin - e - gar Hill! A

## The boys of Wexford

58

S young man from our I - rish ranks A can - non he let go; He

A young man from our I - rish ranks A can - non he let go; He

T young man from our I - rish ranks A can - non he let go; He

B young man from our I - rish ranks A can - non he let go; He

62

S slapp'd it in - to Lord Mount-joy A ty - rant he laid low! We

A slapp'd it in - to Lord Mount-joy A ty - rant he laid low! We

T slapp'd it in - to Lord Mount-joy A ty - rant he laid low! We

B slapp'd it in - to Lord Mount-joy A ty - rant he laid low! We

66

S are the boys of Wex - ford, Who fought with heart and hand To

A are the boys of Wex - ford, Who fought with heart and hand To

T are the boys of Wex - ford, Who fought with heart and hand To

B are the boys of Wex - ford, Who fought with heart and hand To



# The boys of Wexford

70

S  
burst in twain the gall - ing chain And free our na - tive land.

A  
burst in twain the gall - ing chain And free our na - tive land.

T  
burst in twain the gall - ing chain And free our na - tive land.

B  
burst in twain the gall - ing chain And free our na - tive land.

*rall.*

74 **a tempo**

S  
We brave - ly fought and con - quer'd At Ross and Wex - ford town; And

A  
We brave - ly fought and con - quer'd At Ross and Wex - ford town; And

T  
We brave - ly fought and con - quer'd At Ross and Wex - ford town; And

B  
We brave - ly fought and con - quer'd At Ross and Wex - ford town; And

79

S  
if we fail'd to keep them, 'Twas drink that brought us down. We

A  
if we fail'd to keep them, 'Twas drink that brought us down. We

T  
if we fail'd to keep them, 'Twas drink that brought us down. We

B  
if we fail'd to keep them, 'Twas drink that brought us down. We

## The boys of Wexford

83

S had no drink be - side us On Tub - ber - neer - ing's day, De -

A had no drink be - side us On Tub - ber - neer - ing's day, De -

T had no drink be - side us On Tub - ber - neer - ing's day, De -

B had no drink be - side us On Tub - ber - neer - ing's day, De -

87

S pend - ing on the long, bright pike, And well it work'd that way. We

A pend - ing on the long, bright pike, And well it work'd that way. We

T pend - ing on the long, bright pike, And well it work'd that way. We

B pend - ing on the long, bright pike, And well it work'd that way. We

91

S are the boys of Wex - ford, Who fought with heart and hand To

A are the boys of Wex - ford, Who fought with heart and hand To

T are the boys of Wex - ford, Who fought with heart and hand To

B are the boys of Wex - ford, Who fought with heart and hand To

# The boys of Wexford

95

S  
burst in twain the gall - ing chain And free our na - tive land. *rall.*

A  
burst in twain the gall - ing chain And free our na - tive land. *rall.*

T  
burst in twain the gall - ing chain And free our na - tive land. *rall.*

B  
burst in twain the gall - ing chain And free our na - tive land. *rall.*

99 **a tempo**

S  
They came in - to our coun - try, Our blood and waste to spill, But

A  
They came in - to our coun - try, Our blood and waste to spill, But

T  
They came in - to our coun - try, Our blood and waste to spill, But

B  
They came in - to our coun - try, Our blood and waste to spill, But

104

S  
let them weep for Wex - ford And think of Ou - lart Hill; 'Twas

A  
let them weep for Wex - ford And think of Ou - lart Hill; 'Twas

T  
let them weep for Wex - ford And think of Ou - lart Hill; 'Twas

B  
let them weep for Wex - ford And think of Ou - lart Hill; 'Twas

## The boys of Wexford

108

S drink that still be - tray'd us Of them we had no fear, For

A drink that still be - tray'd us Of them we had no fear, For

T drink that still be - tray'd us Of them we had no fear, For

B drink that still be - tray'd us Of them we had no fear, For

112

S ev - 'ry - man could do his part Like Forth and Shel - ma - lier. We

A ev - 'ry - man could do his part Like Forth and Shel - ma - lier. We

T ev - 'ry - man could do his part Like Forth and Shel - ma - lier. We

B ev - 'ry - man could do his part Like Forth and Shel - ma - lier. We

116

S are the boys of Wex - ford, Who fought with heart and hand To

A are the boys of Wex - ford, Who fought with heart and hand To

T are the boys of Wex - ford, Who fought with heart and hand To

B are the boys of Wex - ford, Who fought with heart and hand To

# The boys of Wexford

120

S  
burst in twain the gall - ing chain And free our na - tive land. *rall.*

A  
burst in twain the gall - ing chain And free our na - tive land. *rall.*

T  
burst in twain the gall - ing chain And free our na - tive land. *rall.*

B  
burst in twain the gall - ing chain And free our na - tive land. *rall.*

**a tempo**

124

S  
My curse up - on all drink - ing, It made our hearts full sore, For

A  
My curse up - on all drink - ing, It made our hearts full sore, For

T  
My curse up - on all drink - ing, It made our hearts full sore, For

B  
My curse up - on all drink - ing, It made our hearts full sore, For

129

S  
brav - 'ry won each bat - tle, But drink lost ev - er - more; And

A  
brav - 'ry won each bat - tle, But drink lost ev - er - more; And

T  
brav - 'ry won each bat - tle, But drink lost ev - er - more; And

B  
brav - 'ry won each bat - tle, But drink lost ev - er - more; And

## The boys of Wexford

133

S if for want of lead - ers We lost at Vin - e - gar Hill, We're

A if for want of lead - ers We lost at Vin - e - gar Hill, We're

T if for want of lead - ers We lost at Vin - e - gar Hill, We're

B if for want of lead - ers We lost at Vin - e - gar Hill, We're

137

S read - y for a - noth - er fight And love our Coun - try still! We

A read - y for a - noth - er fight And love our Coun - try still! We

T read - y for a - noth - er fight And love our Coun - try still! We

B read - y for a - noth - er fight And love our Coun - try still! We

141

S are the boys of Wex - ford, Who fought with heart and hand To

A are the boys of Wex - ford, Who fought with heart and hand To

T are the boys of Wex - ford, Who fought with heart and hand To

B are the boys of Wex - ford, Who fought with heart and hand To

# The boys of Wexford

145

S  
burst in twain the gall - ing chain And free our na - tive land.

A  
burst in twain the gall - ing chain And free our na - tive land.

T  
burst in twain the gall - ing chain And free our na - tive land.

B  
burst in twain the gall - ing chain And free our na - tive land.

J. Fischer & Bro.  
(1909)

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