

## The Wearing of the Green

1. Oh, Paddy dear and did you hear  
The news that's going round?  
The shamrock is by law forbid  
To grow on Irish ground!  
St. Patrick's Day no more we'll keep,  
His color can't be seen,  
For there's a bloomin' law agin'  
The wearing of the green.

**Chorus:**

For the Wearin' o' the Green  
For the Wearin' o' the Green  
They're hanging men and women  
For the Wearin' o' the Green

2. I met with Napper Tandy  
And he took me by the hand,  
And he said, "How's poor old Ireland  
And how does she stand?"  
"She's the most distressful country  
That ever yet was seen;  
They're hanging men and women there  
For wearing of the green."

**Chorus:**

3. Then since the color we must wear  
Is England's cruel red,  
Sure Ireland's songs will ne'er forget  
The blood that they have shed.  
You may take the shamrock from your hat now,  
Cast it on the sod,  
But 'twill take root and flourish still,  
Tho' under foot it's trod.

**Chorus:**

4. When the law can stop the blades of green  
From growing as they grow,  
And when the leaves in summertime  
Their verdure dare not show,  
Then I will change the color that I  
Wear in my canteen;  
But 'till that day, please God, I'll stick  
To wearing of the green.

**Chorus:**

5. My father loved his country  
And sleeps within its breast  
While I that would have died for her  
Must never so be blessed  
Those tears my mother shed for me  
How bitter they've had been  
If I had proved a traitor to  
The Wearin' o' the Green

**Chorus:**

6. But if at last our colours  
Should be torn from Ireland's heart  
Her sons with shame and sorrow  
From the dear old isle will part  
I've heard a whisper of a land  
That lies beyond the sea  
Where rich and poor stand equal  
In the light of Freedom's day

**Chorus:**

7. Oh Ireland must we leave you  
Driven by a tyrants hand  
And seek a Mother's blessing  
From a strange and distant land  
Where the cruel cross of England  
Shall never more be seen  
And in that land we'll live and die  
Still wearing Ireland's green  
**Chorus:**

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"The Wearing of the Green", in Gaelic "*Caitead An Glas*" is an Irish air or march in 4/4 time and G Major.

As a march, the parts are played AB (Sweet) or AAB (O'Neill).

Bayard (1981) notes that (Anne Geddes) Gilchrist and Moffat have identified this air as a descendent of an old Scots air called "The Tulip", a march composed by James Oswald and appearing in his c. 1747 **Airs for the Spring**.

Ernest MacMillan identifies it as "Balance the Straw" from a 1759 instrumental setting. The melody has been the vehicle for numerous songs, including "The Rising of the Moon". The title "Wearing of the Green" first appeared on a political broadside of 1798, the year of the Rebellion and a "Wearing of the Green" song was published in *The Citizen* in 1841. However, the most famous text of the song comes from a play called *Arrah-na-Pogue*, produced in Dublin in 1864 and New York in 1865. The stage version lyrics were rewritten by Dion Boucicault (1820-1890), "to an old melody," at the suggestion of his mother.

The tune itself is printed in Havety's **One Hundred Irish Airs, 2nd series**, (1859).

The 'wearing of the green' refers to the outlawed green cockade worn by the Irish rebels, an adaptation of the French cockade and Tree of Liberty of the 1789 revolution. Redfern Mason wrote in his **Song Lore of Ireland** (1910):

"There is, in true national poetry an accent of sincerity which goes straight to the heart and cannot be imitated...nowhere does it ring with a more pathetic thrill than in "Wearing of the Green". The writer was a lad when he first heard it sung in Boucicault's *Arrah na Pogue* (1865)...Because it was sung in Boucicault's drama, many people have imagined that the clever playwright wrote it. But nobody can claim its authorship. It is an inspired street ballad, born of the sorrow and bitterness of the people."

It was printed in O'Neill's **O' Neill's Irish Music** (1915), O'Neill's **Music of Ireland: 1850 Melodies** (1903), Sweet's **Fifer's Delight** (1965).

John McCormack recorded the Dion Boucicault version in 1912 for Victor Records. It was issued in the United States and England and remained in the company's catalog into the 1950's. In Scotland the melody is used for the song "Sae Will We Yet," an end-of-evening song.