

The Lily of Killarney

[Romantic opera, in three acts; text by Oxenford and Boucicault. First produced at Covent Garden Theatre, London, February 8, 1862.]

PERSONAGES.

Anne Chute, the heiress. Mrs. Cregan, of the hall at Tore Cregan. Father Tom, the priest. Eily O'Connor, the Colleen Bawn. Hardress Cregan, son of Mrs. Cregan. Sheelah. Danny Mann, the boatman. Myles na Coppaleen. Corrigan, "the middle-man."

The scene is laid at Killarney, Ireland; time, last century.

The opera "The Lily of Killarney" is the musical setting of the drama, "The Colleen Bawn." The plot is essentially similar, and the characters are identical. The first act opens with the festivities of Hardress Cregan's friends at the hall at Tore Cregan. During their temporary absence to witness a horse-race, Corrigan, "the middle-man," calls upon Mrs. Cregan and suggests to her the marriage of her son to the heiress, Anne Chute, as the only chance of securing the payment of a mortgage he holds upon the place. Failing in this, he expresses his own willingness to accept Mrs. Cregan's hand, but the hint meets with no favor. At this point Danny Mann, Hardress' boatman, is heard singing, and Corrigan informs Mrs. Cregan he is about to take her son to see Eily, the Colleen Bawn, Anne Chute's peasant rival. Danny and Hardress set off on their errand, leaving Mrs. Cregan disconsolate and Corrigan exultant. In the second scene Corrigan and Myles na Coppaleen, the peasant lover of the Colleen Bawn, have an interview in which Corrigan tells him she is the mistress of Hardress. The next scene introduces us to Eily's cottage, where Father Tom is seeking to induce her to persuade Hardress to make public announcement of his marriage to her. When Hardress appears he asks her to give up the marriage certificate and conceal

their union; but Myles prevents this, and Father Tom makes Eily promise she will never surrender it.

In the second act Hardress is paying court to Anne Chute, but is haunted by remorse over his desertion of Eily. Danny Mann suggests putting her on board a vessel and shipping her to America, but Hardress rejects the scheme. Danny then agrees that Eily shall disappear if he will send his glove, a token secretly understood between them. This also he rejects. Meanwhile Corrigan is pressing his alternative upon Mrs. Cregan, but is interrupted by Hardress, who threatens to kill him if he does not desist. Corrigan retires uttering threats of revenge. Danny Mann then intimates to Mrs. Cregan that if she will induce Hardress to send the glove, he can bring happiness to the family again. She secures the glove and gives it to Danny, who promptly takes it to Eily with the message that her husband has sent for her. Eily, in spite of Myles' warnings, gets into Danny's boat and trusts herself to him. Danny rows out to a water cave, and ordering her to step upon a rock demands the certificate. She refuses to give it up, and Danny pushes her into the water. Myles, who uses the cave for secret purposes, mistakes Danny for another and shoots him, and then, espying Eily, plunges in and saves her.

The dénouement of the story is quickly told in the last act. Hardress is arrested for murder, but Danny, who was fatally wounded, makes a dying confession of his scheme against the life of the Colleen Bawn. Corrigan brings soldiers to the house of Anne Chute at the moment of Hardress' marriage with her, but is thwarted in his revenge when Myles produces Eily Cregan, Hardress' lawful wife. Mrs. Cregan also confesses her part in the plot, and absolves her son from intentional guilt. Everything being cleared up, Eily rushes into Hardress' arms, and the chorus declares

"A cloudless day at last will dawn Upon the hapless Colleen Bawn."

The music is very elaborate for light-opera purposes, and is written broadly and effectively, especially for the orchestra. Many Irish melodies sprinkled through the work relieve its heaviness. The principal numbers are the serenade and duet, "The Moon has raised her Lamp above"; Myles' song, "It is a Charming Girl I love"; Eily's song, "In my Wild Mountain Valley he sought me," and the well-known original Irish melody, "The Cruiskeen Lawn," also sung by Eily; the "Tally-ho" chorus, introducing the second act; Danny Mann's recitative and airs, "The Colleen Bawn" and "Duty? Yes, I'll do my duty"; the dramatic finale to the second act; Myles' serenade in the third act, "Your Slumbers, och! Soft as your Glance may be"; Hardress' beautiful song, "Eily Mavourneen, I see thee before me"; and the fine concerted trio which closes the act.