

La belle voyageuse

No 4 of *Neuf mélodies* (later renamed *Irlande*).

Ballade, H.42, 1829

French poem by Thomas Gounet (1801-1869) based on poem by Irishman Thomas Moore (1779-1852).

La belle voyageuse

1. Elle s'en va seulette;
L'or brille à son bandeau.
Au bout de sa baguette
Étincelle un joyau.
Mais sa beauté surpasse
L'éclat de ses rubis,
Et sa blancheur efface
La perle au blanc de lys.

2. Belle, ainsi sans injure
Penses-tu voyager ?
Ta beauté, ta parure
Appellent le danger.
Les mains les plus fidèles
Tressaillent devant l'or,
Et les cœurs près des belles
Tiennent bien moins encor.

3. Chevalier, dans cette île
Mon âme ne craint rien.
L'honneur en cet asile
Est le souverain bien.
Toujours devant nos larmes
On le vit s'arrêter.
Pour mon or ou mes charmes
Que puis-je redouter?

4. Aux regards découverte,
Son souris virginal
Par toute l'île verte
Lui servit de fanal.
Aussi l'as-tu bénie,
Des harpes doux pays,
Celle qui se confie
À l'honneur de tes fils.
La la la lerea la....

The Fair Traveler

1. She wends her way all by herself;
Gold shines in her hair-band.
At the tip of her staff
There sparkles a jewel.
But her beauty surpasses
The brilliance of her rubies,
And her white skin outshines
The lily-white pearl.

2. "Beauteous one, thus free from harm
Do you believe you can travel?
Your beauty, your jewels
Summon up danger.
The most faithful hands
Tremble at the sight of gold,
And hearts, near to beauty,
Hold much less firm still."

3. "My Lord, on this isle
My heart has no fear.
Honor is the reigning good
In this safe haven.
We have always seen it stand down
When confronted by our tears.
For my gold or my charms
What have I to fear?"

4. Uncovered to all eyes,
Her virginal smile
All over the emerald isle
Served to light her way.
And so did you bless her,
Sweet land of the harp,
She who put her trust
In the honor of your sons.
La la la lera la...

– Translation by Jacqueline and David Sices

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Addendum to *Experiencing Berlioz: A Listener's Companion* by Melinda O'Neal
(Rowman & Littlefield, 2018)

Original poem by Thomas Moore in English:

The Fair Traveler
Ballade

1. Rich and rare
 were the gems she wore,
And a bright gold ring
 on her wand she bore;
But oh! her beauty
 was far beyond
Her sparkling gems,
 or snow-white wand.

2. “Lady! dost thou not
 fear to stray,
So lone and lovely,
 Through this bleak way?
Are Erin’s sons
 so good or so cold,
As not to be tempted
 by woman or gold?”

3. “Sir Knight! I feel
 not the least alarm,
No son of Erin
 will offer me harm: —
For though they love
 woman and golden store,
Sir Knight! They love
 honour and virtue more!”

4. On she went,
 and her maiden smile
In safety lighted
 her round the green isle.
And blest for ever
 Is she who relied
Upon Erin’s honor,
 and Erin’s pride!

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