

BEFORE ALMANZA.

(April 25, 1707.)

(At the battle of Almanza, in the War of the Spanish Succession, the English, Portuguese and Dutch forces, led by the Earl of Galway, were routed by the French and Spanish under the Duke of Berwick. An Irish cavalry corps in the Spanish service, the dragoon regiment of Count O'Mahony, distinguished itself in the encounter.)

'Tis the wane of night and the flush of dawn!
Ho, comrades, hand in hand,
Now, pledge me, ere break of the battle-hour,
A toast to the dear old land!
A thought and a sigh for the hearts we love!
A hope for a day to be
When the clans come home from the foreign war
To muster, where Irish hillsides are,
In the fight for Libertie!

A bitter black curse on the spoilers' heads
That drove us o'er the main!
Our keen sword-edges to mow them down
In the fray when we close again!
Our hearts' best blood for the Irish land!
A prayer to the God on high
That the right may win and the marching years
See her crowned a nation amid her peers,
And the Sunburst in the sky!

For the battle-hour, for the vengeance-hour
Are our souls and hearts aglow!
Drain a last bright health to Innisfail
And confusion to the foe!
And woe to the Saxon clan today,
As we crash through their platoons,
When the red revenge of the Gael they feel
In the steeds and the men and the cleaving steel
Of O'Mahony's dragoons!

HUBERT O'MEARA.