

## Mìle Marbhaisg air an t-Siùcar

*Sgioba Luaidh Inbhirchluidh were commissioned to make a new waulking song as part of Absent Voices, a project aiming to “explore and preserve in words, pictures, song and sound, the legacy of Greenock’s once mighty sugar industry”.*

Frances M Dunlop

Hi ri ri hoi-reann o Hi ri ri 's na hu ra bho Hoi-reann o hu ra bho

Mi - le marbh - aiscg air an t-siuc - ar

Hì ri rì hoireann ó

**Hì ri rì 's na hù ra bhó**

**Hoireann ó hù ra bhó**

Mìle marbhaisg air an t-siùcar  
Dh'fhàg an t-Eireannach gun sùilean  
Tha gach fear 's a' Bhennel tùrsach  
Mnathan gu deurach air an glùinean  
Iad a'caoineadh is ag ùrnaigh  
Iseabail\* gu cràiteach ciùrte  
Mun a' ghille spòrsail sunndach  
Seumas òg bha ceòlmhor cliùiteach  
Nis gun fhradharc gun las 'na shùilean  
Tha mi 'n seo am measg nam bùithtean  
Measg nan Eireannach 's nan Dùbh-ghall  
B' annsa leam bhith 'n gleannan cùbhraidh  
Far an robh mi òg gun chùram  
Fad o smùid is suith is ùpraid  
Fad o Ghrianaig mhór an t-siùcair

*A thousand curses on sugar  
which robbed the Irishman of his eyes.  
Every man in the Vennel is saddened;  
the women are tearful, on their knees,  
lamenting and praying.  
Isabella\* is devastated, heartbroken  
about the musical, well-known lad:  
young James, who was merry and cheerful –  
now sightless, with no spark in his eyes.  
I am here among the shops,  
among the Irish and the Lowlanders.  
I wish I was in the fragrant little glen  
where I was young and carefree,  
far from the smoke and soot and noise,  
far from Greenock, the great sugar town.*

\**Màthair Sheumais*

\*His mother

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*My great-grand-uncle, James Donnelly, was born in Co. Armagh around 1844. The family moved to Greenock when he was a toddler, at the height of the Irish famine. Some time between the ages of six and sixteen he lost his sight, and later earned his living by playing the fiddle in the streets of the town. I shall probably never be able to find out how he became blind, but I conjecture that he may have had an accident while working in one of the sugar refineries. Two of his brothers were sugar-house apprentices from the age of twelve, working alongside their father, so it is possible that James did the same. In those days it was an unpleasant and dangerous occupation, with frequent accidents. The Donnelly family lived in the Greenock Vennel, as did many Irish and Highland immigrants. In this song I imagine a lament by a neighbour for the tragic blinding of the young boy.*

*FMD*

# Mile Marbhaig air an t-Siucar

Frances M Dunlop

*Seist*



Hi ri ri hoi-reann o Hi ri ri 's na hu ra bho Hoi-reann o hu ra bho

*Rann 1*



Mi - le marbh - aig air an t-siuc - ar

*Rann 2*



Dh'fhag an t-Eir - eann - ach gun suil - ean

*Rann 6*



Is - eab - ail gu crait - each ciurr - te

*Rann 7*



Mun a' ghill - e spors - ail sunnd - ach

*Rann 8*



Seu - mas og bha ceol - mhor cliu - teach

*Rann 9*



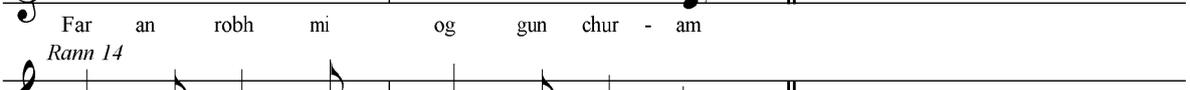
Nis gun fhradh'rc gun las 'na shuil - ean

*Rann 11*



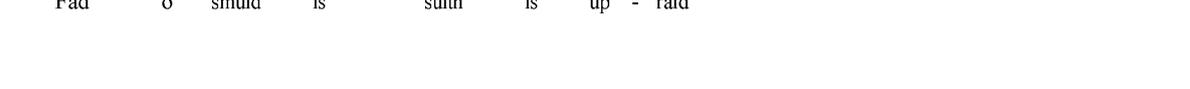
Measg nan Eir - eann - ach 's nan Dubh - ghall

*Rann 13*



Far an robh mi og gun chur - am

*Rann 14*



Fad o smuid is suith is up - raid