

Brennan on the Moor

The musical score consists of four staves of music in 2/4 time, treble clef, with lyrics underneath each staff. The first staff: "The ped - lar found his money gone, like - - wise his watch and chain". The second staff: "He a - - cu - ses Will - iam Brenn - an and he robbed him back a - - gain." The third staff, labeled "Chorus": "For Brenn - an on the moor, for Brenn - an on the moor". The fourth staff: "Oh bold - ly and un - - daun - ted stood young Brenn - an on the moor." The music features various note values including eighth and sixteenth notes, with rests and bar lines.

Complete text:

There was a true born Irishman whose story I will tell,
His name was Willie Brennan and in Ireland he did dwell
'Twas on the Limerick mountain he commenced his wild career,
And many the wealthy gentleman before him shook with fear.

With his brace of loaded pistols he carried both night and day,
He never robbed a poor man upon the King's highway;
But what he took was from the rich like Turpin and Black Bess,
He always did divide it with the widows in distress.

Young Willie met a packman his name was Pill O'Brown,
They jogged along together, me boy, till daylight did return
When the pedlar found his money gone likewise his watch and chain,
He at once encountered Brandon and robbed him back again.

When Willie found the packman as good as man as he,
He took him along the highway his comrade for to be;
The pedlar threw his pack away without any more delay,
Proving Willie's faithful comrade until his dying day.

Young Willie he sat down one day upon the King's highway,
He met the mayor of Cashel about a mile and a half from town;
The mayor he knowed his features and he said, "Young man," to he,
"If your name is Willie Brennan you must go along with me."

Willie's wife had been to town provisions for to buy,
When she saw Willie taken she began to weep and cry;
"You hand to me a tenpenny," no sooner Willie spoke,
She handed him a blunderbuss from underneath her cloak.

With this loaded blunderbuss the truth I shan't deny,
He made the mayor to tremble and robbed him of his gold;
Five hundred pounds was offered for his apprehension there,
But Willie and his horse to the mountains did repair.

They hid among the furze one day that was thick upon the hill,
And Willie he received nine wounds before that he would yield;
He lost his foremost finger, it was shot off by a ball,
And Willie and his comrade was taken after all.

"Farewell unto my wife and to my children three,
Likewise my aged father he may shed his tears for me;
And to my loving mother who tore her lock and cried"
Saying, "I wish Willie Brennan, in your cradle you had died."

Source: William Ballinger, 1957, collected by Brian Ballinger

Notes: Mr Ballinger only sang one verse and the chorus of this song. The rest has been adapted from a version sung by Gloucestershire gypsy Danny Brazil.

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