The Girl I Left Behind Me

(a.k.a. "Brighton Camp" or "Brighten Camp")

Words & Music: Traditional

It is believed that this song originated in Dublin and "crossed the pond" to America as early as 1650. It was popular among soldiers on both sides during America's Civil War and further migrated west in 1880s. Each of the three verses in this song reflect those three eras of the song.

Irish Lyrics:

The dames of France are fond and free, and Flemish lips are willing,

A

D

E

A

And soft the maids of Italy and Spanish eyes are thrilling.

A

E

Still, though I bask beneath their smile, their charms fail to bind me.

A

D

E

A

And my heart falls back to Erin's Isle, to the girl I left behind me.

American Lyrics:

I'm lonesome since I crossed the hill And o'er the moor and valley Such heavy thoughts my heart do fill since parting with my Sally I seek no more the fine and gay For each does but remind How swift the hours did pass away with the girl I've left behind me.

Bob Wills' 1940's-era lyrics:

If ever I get off of the trail and the Indians, they don't find me I'll make my way straight back again, to the girl I left behind me. Oh, that girl, that purdy little girl, the girl I left behind me With rosy cheeks and curly hair, the girl I left behind me.

English version:

I'm lonesome since I crossed the hill and o'er the moorland sedgy. Such heavy thoughts my heart do fill, since parting with my Betsey. I seek for one as fair and gay, but find none to remind me. How sweet the hours I passed away with the girl I left behind me.

O ne'er shall I forget the night, the stars were bright above me And gently lent their silv'ry light when first she vowed to love me But now I'm bound to Brighton camp kind heaven then pray guide me And send me safely back again, to the girl I left behind me

Her golden hair in ringlets fair, her eyes like diamonds shining Her slender waist, her heavenly face, that leaves my heart still pining Ye gods above oh hear my prayer to my beauteous fair to find me And send me safely back again, to the girl I left behind me

The bee shall honey taste no more, the dove become a ranger The falling waters cease to roar, ere I shall seek to change her The vows we made to heav'n above shall ever cheer and bind me In constancy to her I love, the girl I left behind me.

"Songs Of The Seventh Cavalry" version:

The hours sad I left a maid, alingering farewell taking Whose sighs and tears my steps delayed, I thought her heart was breaking In hurried words her name I blest I breathed the vows that bind me And to my heart in anguish pressed the girl I left behind me

Then to the east we bore away to win a name in story
And there where dawns the sun of day there dawned our sun of glory
The place in my sight when in the host assigned me
I shared the glory of that fight sweet girl I left behind me

Though many a name our banner bore of former deeds of daring But they were of the day of yore in which we had no sharing But now our laurels freshly won with the old one shall entwine me Singing worthy of our size each son sweet girl I left behind me

The hope of final victory within my bosom burning Is mingling with sweet thoughts of thee and of my fond returning But should I n'eer return again still with thy love i'll bind me Dishonors breath shall never stain the name I leave behind me