

Common Expressions and Slang in James Joyce's *Dubliners*

an a.p. (slang) an appointment.

about town a euphemism for unemployed.

across the water (Irish slang) in England.

Adam and Eve's a nickname for the Church of the Immaculate Conception, in southwest-central Dublin.

advanced Nationalist a supporter of the Irish Parliamentary Party, which sought independence for the country.

air a song or tune.

And everything . . . ? apparently the boy's aunt seeks to establish that last rites were bestowed upon Father Flynn by a priest before death; only a profoundly disgraced priest would be refused last rites, so the fact that she has to ask implies much about Father Flynn's misbehavior.

The Arab's Farewell to His Steed a poem by Irish poet Caroline Norton (1808–77).

the area of a house a space providing light and air to the basement of a house.

areas spaces providing light and air to the basements of houses.

"Arrayed for the Bridal" a song from *I Puritani*, an opera by Vincenzo Bellini.

astrakhan a wool fabric with a pile cut and curled to look like a loosely curled fur made from the pelt of very young lambs originally bred near Astrakhan, a city and port in southwest Russia.

Atalanta a beautiful, swift-footed maiden who offers to marry any man able to defeat her in a race: Hippomenes wins by dropping three golden apples, which she stops to pick up, along the way. The motif of Greek mythology (including the image of the golden apple) will reappear in Gabriel Conroy's speech in "The Dead."

back answers back-talk; insolence.

Balfe Michael William Balfe; composer of *The Bohemian Girl*.

Ballast Office the location of the Dublin Port and Docks Board; in "The Dead," Gabriel Conroy's father is said to have worked there.

Ballast Offices the location of the Dublin Port and Docks Board, where the father of Gabriel Conroy (protagonist of "The Dead") is said to have worked.

Ballsbridge a suburb southeast of Dublin.

the Bank the Bank of Ireland; originally the Irish Parliament Building.

barmbracks cakes, traditionally served in Ireland on Halloween, in which symbolic objects (a ring, for example) have been baked.

barracks buildings on Shelbourne Road for housing British soldiers.

beannacht libh (Irish) goodbye.

Bewley's a chain of coffeehouses.

big rate-payer a property owner.

Bile Beans a popular patent medicine in Ireland during Joyce's day.

bitter bitter, strongly hopped ale.

blackthorn stick a cane or stick made from the stem of the blackthorn, a thorny, white-flowered prunus shrub with purple or black plumlike fruit.

Blackwhite apparently a renowned Irish salesman.

blancmange a sweet, molded, jellylike dessert made with starch or gelatin, milk, flavoring, and other ingredients.

Blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque (1647–90) a French nun beatified in 1864 and canonized in 1920.

blind a dead-end; A dead-end features prominently in "Two Gallants," as well.

The Bohemian Girl a popular nineteenth-century light opera composed by Dublin musician Michael William Balfe. Characters throughout *Dubliners* refer to songs from this opera.

bona-fide travelers inns and pubs were allowed to serve alcohol to travelers before or after hours during which it was generally legal to do so; thus, Mr. Harford and his friends "travel" to the suburbs so as to be allowed to drink legally on Sundays.

bostoons (Irish) rogues.

bowsy (slang) rogue.

breviary a book containing the Psalms, readings, prayers, and so on of the Divine Office.

Brown Thomas's a Dublin fabric shop.

the buff Mail the Dublin Evening Mail, which was printed on buff (brownish-yellow) paper.

"Cadet Roussel" (French) a song from the 1790s.

the canal Dublin's Royal Canal.

caraway a white-flowered biennial herb of the umbel family, with spicy, strong-smelling seeds. The seeds, when chewed, were thought to hide the smell of alcohol, and thus were offered to customers by turn-of-the-century Dublin bars.

Castle hacks informers. The British ruled Ireland from Dublin *Castle*, in central Dublin just south of the River Liffey.

catacombs any of a series of vaults or galleries in an underground burial place. During the first and second century, persecuted Christians hid in the catacombs beneath Rome.

Catechism a handbook of questions and answers for teaching the principles of a religion.

catholic all-inclusive.

a certain fame a bad reputation.

chaffed teased good naturedly.

the chains chains that used to separate paths around Stephen's Green from the streets beyond.

charmeuse a smooth fabric of silk; like satin in appearance but softer and having less body.

cheval-glass a full-length mirror mounted on swivels in a frame.

the Chief a nickname for Parnell.

Christy Minstrels a popular nineteenth-century American theatrical troupe featuring white performers made up to look like stereotypical black characters.

the club the Kildare Street Club, a Protestant and Anglo-Irish gentleman's club.

cocks him up (slang) encourages an inflated self-image.

cocottes (French) literally, hens. Probably used by Galaher to mean prostitutes.

collected used stamps for some pious purpose selling used postage stamps to collectors to raise money for charity.

combing-jacket a bathrobe.

Conservatives the party in favor of maintaining union with England.

considering cap an Irish term equivalent to the American term "thinking cap."

convent a convent school.

coping the top layer of a masonry wall, usually sloped to carry off water.

corn-factor's an agent for the sale of corn.

Credo! (Latin) I believe!

cretonne a heavy, unglazed, printed cotton or linen cloth; used for curtains, slipcovers, and so on.

cricket a game associated by the Irish with the English conquest of their country.

a crow to pluck (slang) a bone to pick.

a crusade in search of valises and portmanteaus to enable Mrs. M'Coy to fulfil imaginary engagements in the country apparently M'Coy borrows luggage under false pretenses so as to pawn or sell it.

Crux upon Crux obviously a misquotation, as even if the Pope had a motto, it wouldn't include English words.

curate a clergyman who assists a vicar or rector.

curates (slang) barmen.

the dart the solution.

the dear knows lord knows.

a decent skin (Irish slang) a good person underneath it all.

delicate suffering from tuberculosis.

deoc an doruis (Irish) literally door drink; last round.

Derevaun Seraun! Derevaun Seraun! probably gibberish.

deuced extremely; very.

Did the cow calve? (slang) Is there a reason to celebrate?

Donnybrook the site, south of Dublin, of a yearly fair during which there was much brawling and rowdiness.

Drapery a shop selling cloth.

the Dublin By Lamplight laundry a Protestant-run business, the mission of which was to rescue prostitutes and drunken women; Maria merely works there, in the kitchen.

E.C. east central.

Earlsfort Terrace the location of the Dublin International Exhibition Building, a concert venue at the time this story takes place.

the eclogues short pastoral poems, often in the form of a dialogue between two shepherds; the most famous are by the Latin poet Virgil.

Edmund Dwyer Gray the son of Sir John Gray.

Eire Abu (Irish) Ireland to Victory.

embrasure an opening (for a door, window, and so on), especially one with the sides slanted so that it is wider on the inside than on the outside.

ex cathedra (Latin) with the authority that comes from one's rank or office; often specifically with respect to papal pronouncements on matters of faith or morals that have authoritative finality.

faint the crude, impure spirits given off in the first and last stages the distillation of liquor.

the famous Mrs. Cassidy, who is reported to have said "Now, Mary Grimes, if I don't take it, make me take it, for I feel I want it." apparently the punch line to a popular joke of the day.

Father Tom Burke an internationally popular Irish preacher of the nineteenth century.

favourites and outsiders likely and less-likely winners in a horse race.

Feis Ceoil a yearly festival of traditional Irish music.

fenian a member of a secret revolutionary movement formed in New York and Ireland to free Ireland from English rule. The movement was mostly active in the 1860s and continued until World War I.

Fifteen Acres a lawn or field in Dublin's Phoenix Park.

Fogarty's a Dublin grocer.

fol-the-diddle-I-do a nonsense phrase.

the Freeman man a reporter for the daily newspaper *The Freeman's Journal*.

Freeman's General here, the Freeman's Journal and National Press, an Irish newspaper.

Freemason an international secret society having as its principles brotherliness, charity, and mutual aid. Many Dublin Roman Catholics were hostile to Freemasons, who were generally Protestants.

g.p. a glass (half-pint) of porter.

the Gaiety a theater in south-central Dublin.

gaiter a cloth or leather covering for the instep and ankle, and, sometimes, the calf of the leg; a spat or legging.

gasworks a plant where gas for heating and lighting is prepared.

the gaunt spectral mansions in which the old nobility of Dublin had roistered buildings originally constructed to house the wealthy had deteriorated and were occupied by poor people early in the twentieth century.

German monarch Edward VII (1841–1910); the king of Great Britain and Ireland (1901–10), son of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, both of whom were of German descent.

get inside me (slang) take my place.

gnomon a column or pin on a sundial that casts a shadow indicating the time of day.

go visiting perform a particular square dance figure.

goster (Irish-English) gossip.

got on (slang) succeeded.

Grace the unmerited love and favor of God toward mankind.

great with him close to him, though not sexually intimate.

Guttapercha a rubberlike gum produced from the latex of various southeast Asian trees.

had a tricky little black bottle up in a corner (slang) sold liquor illegally.

had the organ in Haddington Road played the organ at St. Mary's Church on Haddington Road, in south-central Dublin.

hairry (slang) cunning.

Half ten 10:30.

Half time (slang) time out.

Hallow Eve games referring here to a game in which players are led blindfolded to a table where saucers have been arranged: One holds a prayerbook, one a ring, one some water, and the fourth some clay. If the blindfolded participant chooses the prayerbook, he or she is supposed to join the priesthood or become a nun within the year. If the ring is chosen, marriage is foretold. Water means a long life, while clay means death.

handy with the mitts (slang) a good fighter.

hard word unpleasant information (that employment might be available for Corley, who doesn't like to work).

harp the symbol of Ireland.

has a drop taken has drunk alcohol.

he aspirated the first letter of his name in the manner of the Florentines he pronounced Corley as "whorely."

hearing the four pages of Roman History supervising a class in Latin translation.

heliotrope reddish-purple.

her mistake Maria has sung the song's first verse twice in a row.

her silver wedding the twenty-fifth anniversary of marriage.

the Herald the Dublin Evening Herald.

Here's this chap comes to the throne after his old mother keeping him out of it till the man was grey Because Queen Victoria ruled England and Ireland for over six decades, her son Edward VII did not inherit the throne until he was sixty years old.

High Toast a brand of snuff.

"Ho! Ho! Hohé, vraiment!" the refrain from "Cadet Rousel."

the holy alls of it (slang) the long and the short of it.

hop-o'-my-thumb a short person.

the house was filled with paper the theater was occupied for the most part by patrons admitted at no charge.

hunker-sliding (slang) shirking.

Hushed are the winds . . . the first stanza of the poem "On the Death of a Young Lady, Cousin of the Author, and Very Dear to Him" (1802) by George Gordon, Lord Byron (1788–1824), an English poet.

"I Dreamt That I Dwelt" a popular aria from the opera *The Bohemian Girl*, which is also mentioned in "Eveline." The song subtly connects this story with that one, perhaps implying that Eveline will likely end up like Maria.

instantly without delay; immediately.

Irish and Apollinaris whiskey and soda.

an Irish device a Celtic emblem.

Irish Revival a movement, begun in the 1880s, that supported Irish culture in general, as well as a revival of Irish Gaelic as the country's national tongue. The Irish Revival will be the subject of a confrontation between Gabriel Conroy and a colleague in "The Dead."

An irregular musketry a sound like many guns being fired, though not simultaneously.

jerry hat a stiff felt hat.

josser (slang) fellow; guy.

July 1st the date, in 1690, of the Battle of the Boyne, in which the Protestant forces of William III of England defeated the Roman Catholic Jacobites of James III, resulting in the downfall of Catholic Ireland.

"Killarney" a popular song by Michael William Balfe, composer of the opera *The Bohemian Girl* mentioned in "Eveline" and alluded to in "Clay."

King Billy's statue an equestrian statue of King William III, the Protestant conqueror of Ireland.

knock it out get along financially.

laid on here like the gas made permanently available.

Lambabaun (Irish) lamb child.

Lancers a nineteenth-century quadrille.

Land Commission the Irish Land Commission Court, a British agency.

last end mortality.

lay-brother in this case, an usher in a church.

a league a temperance association; its members would have pledged to avoid alcohol.

Leghorn a seaport in Tuscany, western Italy, on the Ligurian Sea (The Italian name is Livorno.)

Leoville apparently the name of the house in which the Sinicos lived.

Lithia lithia water, a mineral water containing lithium salts.

a little of the ready (slang) with money available.

a loan of influence on.

Lux upon Lux obviously a misquotation, as even if the Pope had a motto, it wouldn't include English words.

Major Sirr Henry Charles Sirr (1764–1841); an Irish-born officer in the British army who put down rebellions in 1798 and 1803.

mall a street on the south side of Dublin's Royal Canal.

Mammon riches regarded as an object of worship and greedy pursuit; wealth or material gain as an evil, more or less deified (from Matthew 6:24).

manikin a little man; dwarf.

man-o'-war suit presumably a child's costume intended to resemble a soldier's outfit.

the Mansion House the official residence of Dublin's Lord Mayor.

Maritana a Irish light opera.

the mask of a capital though Dublin was a provincial capital, it had wielded no actual power over Ireland since the Act of Union was passed in 1801.

a mass morning a Holy Day of Obligation, on which all observant Catholics must attend Mass.

michin (slang) playing hooky.

minerals mineral water.

Moulin Rouge literally "Red Windmill," a Parisian music hall.

moya! (Irish) as it were!

Mrs. Pat Campbell Mrs. Patrick Campbell (1865–1940); a famous actress of the day.

musha (Irish-English) indeed.

my nabs (slang) my friend or acquaintance.

Nationalist the Irish Parliamentary Party, which stood for Irish independence.

night-boat the ferry that departed Dublin every evening for Liverpool, England.

nix (slang) silent.

numbers issues.

Nuns' Island a district within the city of Galway.

O'Donovan Rossa Jeremiah O'Donovan (1831–1915), nicknamed Dynamite Rossa; an Irish revolutionary.

old Irish tonality a pentatonic or five-tone scale.

The old one never went to see these wild Irish Queen Victoria never visited Ireland (not, in fact, the case).

omadhauns (Irish) fools.

on the London Press in the world of British journalism.

on the turf (slang) engaged in prostitution.

Orangeman strictly speaking, a member of a secret Protestant society organized in Northern Ireland (1795); here, the term is used simply to denote a Protestant and/or Unionist.

an order on the cashier official permission for an advance on wages.

the other persuasion Protestant.

Oughterard a village north of Galway.

outsider a horse-drawn carriage with two wheels.

P.L.G. Poor Law Guardian; a welfare official.

the palace of the Four Courts a building in north-central Dublin; the location of Ireland's central courts.

palaver flattery; cajolery.

pale a territory or district enclosed within bounds.

palm prize.

pantomime a drama played in action and gestures to the accompaniment of music or of words sung by a chorus.

Paris in Greek legend, a son of Priam, king of Troy. Of three goddesses (Aphrodite, Athena, and Hera), Paris chose to award the golden apple of Discord to Aphrodite; she, in turn, granted him Helen, wife of Menelaus, thus causing the Trojan War. A reference is made to golden apples in "A Little Cloud."

the park Phoenix Park, prominently featured in "A Painful Case."

Parkgate the main entrance to Phoenix Park, the large public park in northwest Dublin.

parole d'honneur (French) word of honor.

a pass free admission.

Patagonians inhabitants of Patagonia, a dry, grassy region in south South America, east of the Andes (including the south parts of Argentina and Chile); thought to be nomadic and dangerous.

peloothered (Irish slang) drunk.

pennyboy errand boy.

pier-glass a tall mirror set in the pier, or section, between windows.

the Pillar Nelson's Pillar; a memorial in north-central Dublin to Horatio Viscount Nelson (1758–1805), an English admiral. A comical anecdote told by Stephen Dedalus in *Ulysses* takes place atop the Pillar.

Pim's a Dublin manufacturer and dealer of home furnishings, clothing, and leather goods.

pipeclayed whitened with pipe clay, a white, plastic clay used for making clay tobacco pipes or pottery; possibly a foreshadowing of "Clay," a later Dubliners story.

the pope to turn out the women out of the choirs Pius X, pope at the time this story is set, excluded women from singing in church choirs.

the prayers Secret prayers in the Roman Catholic mass between the Offertory and the Preface, read silently or quietly by the priest.

Press life the life of a journalist.

prima donna the principal woman singer in an opera or concert.

pro-cathedral a temporary substitute for a cathedral.

public-house a pub; a bar or tavern.

puff an advertisement, review, or the like, as of a book, containing undue or exaggerated praise.

pulling the devil by the tail (slang) living on the verge of financial disaster.

put your head in the sack (slang) apparently, get married.

Quadrille a square dance of French origin, consisting of several figures, performed by four couples.

quincunx an arrangement of five objects in a square, with one at each corner and one in the middle.

racing tissues publications covering horse racing.

the real cheese (slang) the real thing.

reefer an overcoat; a short, thick, double-breasted coat in the style of a seaman's jacket.

refractory hard to manage; stubborn; obstinate.

return-room a room, usually small, added to the wall of a house.

Reynold's Newspaper a London newspaper that reported on scandalous events.

rheumatic wheels a malapropism for pneumatic wheels.

right skit (slang) great fun.

Rosicrucian any of a number of persons in the seventeenth or eighteenth century who professed to be members of a secret society said to have various sorts of occult lore and power. The boy's uncle is implying that his relationship with Father Flynn was secret and possibly dangerous.

the Rotunda a group of buildings on Rutland Square, one of which is a concert hall.

rum (informal, chiefly British) odd; queer.

screw (British slang) salary.

screwed (slang) drunk.

secular priests Roman Catholic clergymen with parish duties; as opposed to those priests who live apart from society in a monastery or house.

sent to the devil (slang) told to go to hell.

seven days without the option of a fine a week in jail.

sha (Irish) yes.

Shannon a river in west-central Ireland, flowing southwestward into the Atlantic.

She believed steadily in the Sacred Heart Mrs. Kernan displays an image of the sacred heart of Jesus in her home and takes communion on the first Friday of each month.

sheriff's man a revenue and debt collector.

shoeboy a boot licker or insincere flatterer.

shoneens (Irish) Irish who imitate English customs and behavior.

short twelve noon mass.

Sidney Parade a train station on Sidney Parade Avenue, in the village of Merion, southeast of Dublin.

"Silent O Moyle" an Irish patriotic song.

simoniac a person guilty of simony.

simony the buying or selling of sacred or spiritual things, as sacraments or benefices. Roman Catholic teaching defines simony as an infringement of natural law.

Sir John Gray's statue a statue of a Protestant patriot located in north-central Dublin.

sit (slang) situation.

Skerries . . . Howth . . . Greystones seaside resorts near Dublin. "Eveline" included a reference to Howth.

slavey (British informal) a female domestic servant, especially one who does hard, menial work.

slept in their coffins Trappist monks were mistakenly believed to sleep in their coffins.

smahan a smattering; a smidgin.

small hot specials whiskey mixed with water and sugar.

Smoothing Iron a bathing place on Dublin Bay's north side.

snug a small private room or booth in a public house.

a sod of turf under his oxter that is, each student was expected to help heat the school by bringing fuel. In Ireland, turf was burned to provide heat; "oxter" is slang for armpit.

sore head and a fur on my tongue hung over.

speck of red light the sanctuary lamp within a Catholic church.

spondulics (slang) money.

the statue a statue of the Irish patriot Daniel O'Connell, known as "The Liberator."

Stephen's Green a large public park in a fashionable south-central Dublin neighborhood.

stirabout porridge.

stock a former type of large, wide, stiff cravat.

stood . . . a half-one bought a half measure of alcohol.

stood to bought for.

Stores the shop where Eveline works.

students' balls dances in Parisian cafes, especially those on the Left Bank, the location of the University of Paris.

a sup taken had a drink of alcohol.

sure to get the ring likely to come upon the ring baked into the barmbrack, signifying that she will marry within a year.

surplice a loose, white, wide-sleeved outer ecclesiastical vestment for some services, ranging from hip length to knee length.

Swaddlers! Swaddlers! Dublin slang for Protestants.

tabinet a poplin-like fabric made of silk and wool.

take the pledge take an oath not to consume alcoholic beverages.

tea-cosy a knitted or padded cover placed over a teapot to keep the contents hot.

their friends, the French the Irish identified with the French, traditionally rivals of the English, if not their enemies.

they don't believe in the Pope and in the mother of God a simplification of the ways in which the beliefs of Protestants differ from those of Roman Catholics.

Three Graces the three sister goddesses who have control over pleasure, charm, and beauty in human life and in nature.

tincture a trace; a smattering.

tinker (Chiefly Irish and Scottish) gypsy.

to have some gas with (slang) to have fun with.

To take a pick itself to have a bite to eat.

to take advantage of her daughter's name Ireland is sometimes personified as a woman named Kathleen ni Houlihan.

toilet-table dressing table.

too Irish (slang) exceedingly generous.

totties (slang) girlfriends.

tracts on the walls religious texts posted for the edification of readers.

trap a light, two-wheeled carriage with springs.

the troubles a euphemism for Irish civil unrest.

True bill a bill of indictment endorsed by a grand jury as supported by evidence sufficient to warrant a trial.

the tube a machine for communicating within a building.

tulle a thin, fine netting of silk used for veils, scarves, and so forth.

the two murdered princes in the Tower the two sons of England's King Edward IV, put to death in the Tower of London by their uncle, most likely, who would become Richard III.

ulster a long, loose, heavy overcoat, especially one with a belt, originally made of Irish frieze.

the University question the issue of Irish higher education. At the time the story is set, the country's main university, Trinity College, was Protestant affiliated, while the vast majority of the population was Roman Catholic.

up here to Dublin from the countryside.

up to the dodge (slang) capable of avoiding pregnancy.

up to the knocker up to snuff; passable.

'usha (Irish-English) the contraction of musha.

usurious practicing usury; the act or practice of lending money at a rate of interest that is excessive or unlawfully high. Usury was forbidden for centuries by the Roman Catholic Church.

venial not causing spiritual death; said of a sin either not serious in itself or, if serious, not adequately recognized as such or not committed with full consent of one's will.

vermin malapropism for ermine.

vestment an ecclesiastical garment worn by a priest, choir member, and so forth during services.

Vitriol Works a north Dublin chemical factory.

wash the pot (slang) to confess one's sins.

Waterhouse's clock the clock outside a jeweller on Dame Street in Dublin.

went to the altar every first Friday took communion on the first Friday of every month.

West Briton a sympathizer with the English in Ireland.

When his hour had struck when the work day had ended.

Whit-Monday the Monday immediately following Whit-Sunday, or Pentecost.

Wisha! (Irish-English) variant of musha.

worm the coil of a still.

yerra (Irish) really.

