

# The BEND of the RIVER

O'Neill collection

*mm = 60*

*mp*

The first staff of music is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 6/8 time signature. It begins with a melodic line of eighth notes, followed by a repeat sign. The accompaniment consists of chords and single notes in the lower register.

3

The second staff continues the melody and accompaniment from the first staff, starting at measure 3. The melodic line continues with eighth notes, and the accompaniment provides harmonic support.

6

The third staff continues the piece, starting at measure 6. The melodic line features a mix of eighth and quarter notes, while the accompaniment remains consistent.

9

The fourth staff continues the piece, starting at measure 9. The melodic line has a slight upward inflection, and the accompaniment includes some chordal textures.

11

The fifth staff continues the piece, starting at measure 11. The melodic line is mostly eighth notes, and the accompaniment features some block chords.

13

The sixth staff continues the piece, starting at measure 13. The melodic line continues with eighth notes, and the accompaniment provides a steady harmonic background.

15 *slower = 40*

The seventh and final staff of music is marked 'slower = 40'. It begins with a melodic line of eighth notes, followed by a final cadence consisting of two whole notes with fermatas.

From *Music of Ireland* (1903), the first tune collection assembled by Capt. Francis O'Neill (1849 - 1936). Since "the Chief" provides no further information on its source, we can only guess that it might have originally been a harp piece.

However, in his introduction to the reprint of O'Neill's *Irish Minstrels and Musicians*, the eminent tune collector and expert on traditional music Breandan Breathnach proposes a theory that at least some of the more obscure pieces contained in *Music of Ireland* were new compositions and not "traditional" at all. There may be a hint of this when the Chief (on page 398 of *IMM*) alludes to his assistant Sergeant James O'Neill's being "endowed with a faculty for composing original airs to a degree unsuspected by any but his most intimate friends".

While he finds no problem (from a musical standpoint) with their inclusion, Breathnach does fault O'Neill for not advising his readers of the fact. One is left to wonder if this is the situation concerning "Bend of the River", which remains a lovely tune regardless of its pedigree (or lack thereof).

