

*A Posy of
Folk Songs*

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To the Rev. Canon Whiting
with the author's kind regards.

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A POSY OF FOLK SONGS

BY

R. L. GALES

AUTHOR OF "STUDIES IN ARCADY"

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TO
ANDREW AND BABY

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FOLKLORE

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courtesy of the editors of the
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In the Garden

(An Old French Song)

In a gay garden filled with flowers
All days and hours,
God formèd man in His likeness,
And gave him here
Of love, wherewith his days to bless,
A pledge most dear.

Adam lay down in the sweet shade
A lime tree made,
Alone he lay on the green grass
In quiet deep,
When suddenly it came to pass
He fell on sleep.

There while he slept that Sovereign King
The Angels sing,
Took a rib gently with all care,
From out his side,
And formed a flower, a woman fair,
To be his bride.

Adam awoke in pride and joy,
Without alloy,
“Behold her there, bone of my bone,
O God above,
Give her to me, no more alone,
She whom I love.”

Our Lady's Cradle Song

(From the German. Würzburg, 1630)

Sleep, sleep, Jesu fair,
The manger is bare,
But, Child, it must be
The cradle for Thee.

Sleep, lovely Baby, Baby blest,
And give us the everlasting rest !

Sleep, Baby-boy sweet,
Lie still, Hands and Feet,
Shut to, little Eyes,
So happy and wise.

Sleep, etc.

The Seraphim sing,
The Cherubs' harps ring,
The Angels sing all
"Lul-lay" in the Stall.

Sleep, etc.

See, see, Jesu dear,
Saint Joseph is here,
All peacefully lie,
I also am by.

Sleep, etc.

Sleep, sleep, Jesu bright
Naught shall Thee affright,
The ox, ass, and sheep
Are all fast asleep.

Sleep, lovely Baby, Baby blest,
And give us the everlasting rest !

The Holy Night

(From the German)

Still is the night, the holy night ;
While all things sleep, their lone watch keep
Holy Joseph and Mary fair ;
Dear little Boy with the curly silk hair,
Sleep Thou to-night !

Still is the night, the holy night ;
Then shepherds hear the message clear,
And angels singing in the skies ;
Dear little Boy with the sunny blue eyes,
Sleep Thou to-night !

Still is the night, the holy night ;
The longed-for Birth is seen on earth,
Now is striking the world's great hour ;
Dear little Boy with the face like a flower,
Sleep Thou to-night !

An Andalusian Folk Song

If my eyes might see Thee,
Flower of all delight,
Worth a thousand gardens
Were to me the sight.

White pinks and red roses
They who will may see ;
The wide world containeth
But one flower for me.

White pinks and red roses
Bloom in trellised bowers ;
In a ruined stable
Blooms the Flower of flowers.

If my eyes might see Thee
They might then grow dim,
Baby white and rosy,
Flower of seraphim.

Bethlehem

(From a seventeenth century Rhineland Volkslied)

In Bethlehem, now, see, Christian, see
How poor thy God becomes for thee !
O God my Love, O God my Love,
So poor, so lowly, O God my Love !

He comes from heaven, and for His birth
Brings neither goods nor gold to earth.
O God my Love, etc.

No room for Him in house or hall,
His shelter is an ox's stall.
O God my Love, etc.

The stall stands open, it has no door,
'Tis full of holes from thatch to floor.
O God my Love, etc.

A manger where the beasts are fed,
This is His cradle and His bed.
O God my Love, etc.

Hear in the night the Infant cry,
'Tis on wet straw that He must lie.
O God my Love, etc.

An ox and ass, (O man, behold !)
Warm with their breath the Child so cold.
O God my Love, etc.

Christian, be thy heart's door undone,
Take in and warm the Little One !
O God my Love, O God my Love,
So poor, so lowly, O God my Love !

The Children and the Christ-Child

(A Rhineland Volkslied)

“O Child so sweet, Thy children here
Would fain speak with Thee, Jesus dear.”

“Speak on, for love alone.”

“Why art Thou here, this winter wild,
Upon this earth a little child?”

“For love, for love alone.”

“Why art Thou, God so great, at rest,
So tiny on Thy mother’s breast?”

“For love, for love alone.”

“Why dost Thou lodge, Who rulest all,
So meanly in the ox’s stall?”

“For love, for love alone.”

“Why hast Thou to this world so cold
Brought with Thee neither goods nor gold?”

“For love, for love alone.”

“What for such love as this we see
Can we poor children give to Thee?”

“Your love, your love alone.”

A Burgundian Noël

All in tune to Guillaume's flute
Now is Robin's tabor,
Dance to-night and sing high praise
As they did in other days,
Every kindly neighbour.
All in tune, all in tune,
Are the flute and tambourine,
All in tune, all in tune,
Heaven and earth to-night are seen.

God and man are in accord,
More than flute ~~or~~ tabor,
Dance for joy and sing with awe,
For the child upon the straw
Is our God and neighbour.
God and man, God and man,
Are like flute and tambourine,
God and man, God and man,
As true neighbours here are seen.

The Bright Midnight

(*A Gascon Noël*)

The shepherd Michant
His watch doth keep,
Hard by the village
He guards his sheep.
Lo ! in a moment
The sky grows bright,
The night is aflame
With radiant light ;
Brighter burns the Angel choir
Than red glow of lamp or fire.

As o'er the hillside
The song they hear,
To simple Michant
His mates draw near,
They go together
That night like morn,
To find the Mother
And Child new-born ;
Brighter gleams the Mother far
Than the moon or morning star.

Mary is seated
By the hard bed,
There in a manger
Where beasts are fed ;
Joseph a-praying
Leans on his stick,
The stable is bright
Without candle or wick ;
Brighter shines the Little One,
Sevenfold brighter than the sun.

A Carol of Béarn

Why is all to-night so strange?
O'er the world comes some great change;
See how near is Charles's Wain,
It seems twice as large again.

'Tis the stroke of twelve o'clock,
Why so sudden crows the cock?
The star-light and lantern-light
Shows the thorn-tree flowering white.

Here are shepherds at the door,
Every one a troubadour,
Never sure in tune so true
Were bombarde and biniou.

What are these sweet strains and wild,
Telling of a little child?
Hark! the clarion and the fife
Have a sound of endless life.

Waken, little Pierrot,
With the shepherds thou must go,
Put a feather in thy cap,
Sure to-night is some good hap.

Jean-Marie, take thy guitar ;
Antoine, blow a loud fanfare ;
Christophe, take thy violin,
Help to swell the joyful din.

Good dog, with the paper frill,
Gui-gui, go and dance with skill,
Like the ox and the grey ass,
Thou shalt see what comes to pass.

Haste we all and go with them
Singing unto Bethlehem.
All seems glad and fair and well,
As the shepherds sing Noël.

An Old French Noël

Hark ! on all Judæa's hills
The carillon they ring,
For joy that in Bethlehem
To-night is born the King ;
A Virgin pure without alloy
Is Mother of the Baby-boy.
He saves the world from death most drear
 (Benoni, so dear to me)
Who at this midnight hour is here.

Haste we to the stable now,
And leave our flocks and fold ;
See ! the Infant on the straw
Lies naked in the cold ;
She has no clothes for His employ,
The Mother of the Baby-boy.
The little One to warm and cheer
 (Benoni, so dear to me)
Only the ox and ass are here.

The wife of young Nicolas,
Georgette and Madeleine,
Have brought linen swaddling clothes,
The softest e'er were seen ;

But she has no soothing toy,
The Mother of the Baby-boy.
Perrette brings one, do not fear,
 (Benoni, so dear to me)
He shall sleep full soundly here.

See! while He lies fast asleep
Margot the good soup makes ;
Here are curds and clotted cream
To feed Him when He wakes.
She lulls Him, Who will death destroy,
The Mother of the Baby-boy.
From everything it doth appear
 (Benoni, so dear to me)
How well He will be cared for here.

Lord, Who hast come down from heaven,
We thank Thee for this grace,
That we first of all mankind
Are called to see Thy Face.
We come devoutly, with great joy,
O Mother of the Baby-boy !
May Joseph, thy own spouse most dear,
 (Benoni, so dear to me)
Be our support and succour here.

The Shepherds' Gifts

(A Noël from the German)

[Two Shepherds, Halton and Damon, talk of the gifts they will give the Holy Child.]

Halton.

I will bring for the Christ-Child's delight
A lamb all snowy, silver white,
So white is none in the flock beside,
With a blood-red spot at his right side.

Damon.

I will bring a calf so small and sweet
With ribbons of red on neck and feet,
As he plays and gambols and frisks with glee,
The Child will laugh and cry "Mother, see!"

Halton.

I will bring a kid to leap and prance,
To climb and caper and spring and dance,
Around his neck is a golden bell,
Its tinkle will please the Christ-Child well.

Damon.

I will give the Babe a fawn so tame
That thro' the greenwood to me came,
By the Child's crib it will come and stand,
He will fondle and feed it from His Hand.

Halton.

I also have brought from the greenwood wild
A squirrel to give the Holy Child ;
As he cracks the nuts and spits the shells
It will be music like silver bells.

Damon.

And I will give to the Baby fair
A gentle, timid, snow-white hare,
Bold he will to the cradle come,
And frisk and frolic and dance and drum.

Halton.

And I will bring a doggie small
That will please the Christ-Child best of all,
He dances well on his hind legs,
Fetches and carries and finds and begs.

Damon.

I will bring a cock with plumage bright,
With crest and spurs like an armoured knight,
Half wild with joy the Child will go
To see him flap his wings and crow.

Halton.

I will bring the Child so kind and good
Small singing birds and things of the wood,
And many and many a lovely thing
For His delight and pleasuring.

Damon.

Well, let us now to Bethlehem fare,
When He has seen the gifts we bear,
Tired out with pleasure the Child will rest,
Hiding His face in His Mother's breast.

The Birds' Nowell

To Bethlehem's stable feast
The birds came, most and least,
Gold, black, brown, green and grey,
From near and far away.

Her house the sparrow found
Upon the holy ground,
The swallow's nest was hung
In the rafters for her young.

Here did the dove remain
In shelter from the rain,
And knew that end of grief
Told by the olive leaf.

The wren beneath her wings
Had her small feathered things ;
Each tiny cock and hen
Sang praise with Jenny Wren.

The stork from over-sea
Dwelt where she fain would be ;
The woodpecker bored his hole
In the tree of Jesse's bole.

Kingfisher and goldfinch
Heeded not winter's pinch ;
Thro' the night chill and raw
Came magpie and jackdaw.

The linnets brushed away
Cobwebs and wisps of hay ;
The mellow pipe was heard
Of flute and of blackbird.

Beneath that roof-tree's shade
The dainty wagtails played ;
Robin Brownbreast was there*
With starling and fieldfare.

Above the stable dark
Triumphant soared the lark ;
He sang as if that hour
The bean-fields were in flower.

The peacock spread his tail,
The corncrake cried and the quail,
Long call and fiery note
Poured from the nightingale's throat.

They praised with bill and beak
The Word that could not speak,
And Mother Mary smiled
And thanked them for her Child.

* The robin got his *red* breast on Good Friday.

In a Castle Garden Fair

In a castle garden fair,
Round and round all day they pass,
Jesus, Mary and the ass,
Happy as the day is long,
All day long in the long grass,
In a castle garden fair.

In a castle garden fair,
Old Saint Anne sits by the well ;
She has many tales to tell
Of old wars and the sad things
That in days long gone befell,
In a castle garden fair.

In a castle garden fair,
Little Jesus tired with play,
And the great heat of the day,
Listens to the old Saint Anne
While the ass eats the sweet hay,
In a castle garden fair.

In a castle garden fair,
Her tired voice is weak and low,
Very long her tales and slow,
Little Jesus falls asleep,
On and on her tales still go,
In a castle garden fair.

In a castle garden fair,
There is knocking at the gate,
It is Joseph who comes late ;
He, good man, has toiled all day,
He for supper must not wait
In a castle garden fair.

In a castle garden fair,
Now an ancient serving man
With what slow stiff speed he can,
Spreads for Joseph 'neath the trees,
Jesus, Mary, and Saint Anne,
In a castle garden fair.

Miserere Mei

(*A Rhineland Volkslied, Mainz, 1605*)

There stands a poor sinner
Hard by the door,
He has broken the Ten
Commandments and more.

“ Ah ! sinner, ah ! sinner,
What is thy woe?
When I look on thee
Why weepest thou so ? ”

“ My Lord and my God,
How should I not weep?
I have broke the Commandments
Thou gav’st me to keep. ”

“ Hast thou broke the Commandments?
Then fall on thy knees,
And pray unto God
To give thy soul ease.

“ Hold up thy hands
And beat on thy breast,
And God will give thee
Thy heavenly rest.

“ For these thy tears
Will give thee a crown
In the joy and mirth
Of the heavenly town.”

Holy Week

(A Rhineland Volkslied)

The Holy Week was not begun
When Mary parted from her Son,
Her heart was filled with heaviness
And thus she spake in her distress.

“O Jesu, Son so dear to me,
What wilt Thou on holy Sunday be?”

“On Sunday, a King in royal state,
I shall enter in at Jerusalem gate.”

“O Jesu, Son so dear to me,
What wilt Thou on holy Monday be?”

“On Monday I shall as a wanderer find
Nowhere shelter or comfort kind.”

“O Jesu, Son so dear to me,
What wilt Thou on holy Tuesday be?”

“On Tuesday a Prophet I stand and say
How heaven and earth shall pass away.”

“O Jesu, Son so dear to me,
What wilt Thou on holy Wednesday be?”

“On Wednesday I am worth little gold
For thirty silver pieces sold.”

“O Jesu, Son so dear to me,
What wilt Thou on holy Thursday be?”
“I shall be in Thursday’s evening gloom
The Easter Lamb in the Upper Room.”

“O Jesu, Son so dear to me,
What wilt Thou on holy Friday be?”
“O, Mother! O, Mother! look not so,
Mother, ask not of Friday’s woe.

“On Friday I drink the bitter cup,
On the Cross I am lifted up;
The three nails go thro’ Hands and Feet,
Yet faint not, Mother, the end is sweet.”

“O Jesu, Son so dear to me,
What wilt Thou on holy Saturday be?”
“On Saturday I am the wheaten grain
That dies in the earth to live again.

“And on Sunday rejoice, O Mother dear,
New Risen to thee I shall first appear,
Holding the Cross with the flag in My Hand,
I shall before Thee in Glory stand.

Good Friday

(*A South German Volkslied, 1590*)

As our Lord into the Garden went
The olive trees before Him bent,
The green leaves shivered, for they knew well
To-morrow's Sorrow, ere it befell.

The false Jews into the Garden came,
Judas the traitor had showed them the same,
Our Lord they took, His Head they crowned,
His Body they scourged, His Hands they
bound.

From pillar to post they led Him about,
From Pilate to Herod, within, without,
They hung Him then on a tall, tall tree
While His dear Mother stood there to see.

They took her Son, and she was left,
Of more than Life was she bereft ;
But when she heard the hammer stroke,
'Twas then the heart of Mary broke.

“ O My belovèd Apostle John,
To My dear Mother be thou a son,
Take thou her home, let her not see
What things to-day are done to Me.”

“ Yea, Lord, that will I gladly do,
No son so kind, no son so true,
Did ever on mother pity take
As I will do for Thy sweet sake.”

“ My Child, that I bore on my breast,
My Child has neither ease nor rest,
Bow down, O tree, each branch and bough,
Upon my Child have pity now.”

The high, high trees they bowed and bent,
The hard, hard rocks were riven and rent,
The sun grêw black in the mid-sky,
The wild birds ceased to flutter and cry.

The reeling earth began to quake,
In mortal pain to shiver and shake,
The dead rose, each from his narrow bed,
The city streets were full of the dead.

God, grant that we in prayer and song
Think on Good Friday our whole life long,
And let thy bitter Passion's pain
For no poor soul be suffered in vain.

The Complaint of the Wandering Jew

(An Old French Ballad)

There never was on earth
So sorrowful a thing
As the sad history
Which I to you will sing,
The tale so strange and true
Of the undying Jew.

At Brussels in Brabant,
As he passed thro' the street,
The good folk of the town
Amazèd him did greet ;
With such a beard, I ween,
A man was never seen.

His clothes were worn and old,
Of strange outlandish air,
And from his waist hung down
The apron cobblers wear ;
With figure bowed and bent,
Unresting, on he went.

“ Enter this tavern door,
Old venerable man,
We will regale thee here
In the best way we can,
Take lest thy strength should fail
With us a pot of ale.”

“ I must not sit nor stay,
Alas ! I tell you true—
But gladly will I drink
A pot of ale with you.
Right sore it grieves my mind
To part from folks so kind.”

“ Art thou perchance that man
Of whom the Scriptures speak,
Isaac, who walks the earth
Since the first Holy Week?
Say, of thy courtesy,
If thou indeed art he? ”

“ Isáac Laquedem
Is in good sooth my name,
Born in Jerusalem,
A town of royal fame,
Good friends, I tell you true
You see the deathless Jew.

“ I traverse all the seas,
The rivers and the rills,
The deserts and the woods,
The forests and the hills ;
O'er mountain and o'er plain
I go in sun and rain.

“ I ask of you no alms,
No alms can lift my curse,
I carry all my days
Five farthings in my purse ;
At any time or place
This sum grows never less.”

“ What was that crime so great
That the good God could deem
Its fitting recompense
Such punishment extreme ?
Good Father Isaac, tell
How such a thing befell ? ”

“ As up the steep hillside
Jesus His burden bore
The heavy Cross of wood,
He passed before my door,
And said in accents mild,
' Here will I rest, my child. '

“ I rebel heart and hard,
Cried out in God's despite,
With raised arm and clenched fist,
' Get, caitiff, from my sight. '
With many a cruel word
I spurned away our Lord.

“ Jesus looked on me then,
His eyes were full of tears ;
‘ Thou on this earth must walk
More than a thousand years.
Thou may’st not stop nor stay
Until the Judgment Day.’

“ I fared forth from that door
Soon as the words were said,
Upon the weary way
I still am doomed to tread.
I know by day or night,
No rest and no respite.

“ Good sirs, the time has come
To leave your company ;
My humble thanks are due
For your great courtesy ;
Each moment more I stay
With torment I must pay.”

“*Jésus s’habille en Pauvre*”

(*An Old French Song*)

Jesus, hid in garments poor,
Asked for alms from door to door.

“Rich man at your table fine,
Give me of your meat and wine.”

“There is naught that I can give,
I have work enough to live.

“What is left of my good meat
I will give my dog to eat.

“He brings hares and quails to me,
What have I to gain from thee?”

“Widow at the window pane,
Give me shelter from the rain.”

“Come in, poor man, welcome be,
Thou shalt share my crust with me.”

In six years the rich man died,
Straight to Paradise he hied.

“Go down, Peter, to the gate,
See who knocks at night so late.”

“ A rich man from earth just sped,
Asks in heaven to make his bed.”

“ Bar the door and bolt it well,
He to-night must sleep in hell.”

The poor widow died likewise,
She, too, knocked at Paradise.

“ Go down, Peter, do not stay,
See who knocks before 'tis day.”

“ A poor widow worn and old
Seeks for shelter from the cold.”

“ Give her food and give her fire,
Give her all her heart's desire.

“ Wide the doorway open fling,
She in Paradise shall sing.”

The Doleful History of the Baker's Daughter

The owl was a baker's daughter,
No harder heart could be,
She drove the poor man from her door
And chided bitterly.
To give a crust, if needs she must,
It vexed her grievously.

Our Lord was out a-walking
With His Apostles three,
All day long they had journeyed
From distant Galilee ;
As they came down into that town
They spied the bakery.

“ Good Baker, Master Baker,
We fain would eat with thee,
A-weary with our travel,
And hungered sore are we ;
Bake now a cake for My sweet sake,
And give it unto Me.”

The baker took a lump of dough,
And kneaded lustily ;
He put it on the fire and blew
The bellows joyfully.
That he should bake so fair a cake
His daughter ached to see.

“Heugh, heugh,” cried the baker’s daughter,
And hooted angrily,
But as she ran the cake to snatch
A feathered owl was she !
Now at midnight in doleful plight,
She screeches dismally.

Our Lady's Wine-Glass

A carrier had jogged on all day
With his wine cart thro' the forest way.

To Aix-la-Chapelle his steps were bent,
To the Emperor's court and parliament.

The cart was heavy and loaded well
With wines of the Rhine and the Moselle.

But or ever the mid-day hour was past
In a deep, deep rut the cart stuck fast.

The carrier toiled long hours in vain,
He could not move it for all his pain.

He paused in his fruitless task, and there
Stood the Mother of God so white and fair.

Marvellous was she to look upon,
It seemed that thro' her the sunbeams shone.

Faint and weak was her voice so sweet
From her journey thro' the noontide heat.

“Carrier, toil on, but pour me first
A glass of the white wine for my thirst.”

“Fain would I, lady, but here, alas !
In the wood is neither cup nor glass.”

By the way, like glasses from which to drink
Twined the white bell-flowers streaked with
pink.

The Mother of God took one of them
With its twining stalk for a wine-glass stem.

As she held the fairy goblet fine
The carrier filled it with soft white wine.

From the pink and white convolvulus cup
The Mother of God drank the white wine up.

She smiled her thanks as her draught was done
And straight from its rut the cart moved on.

Still, for the wonder that there did pass
Men call the bell-flower "Our Lady's glass."

The Legend of St. Nicholas
(*An Old French Chanson*)

Three children, fairer ne'er were seen,
Went to the fields the ears to glean.

To the butcher's door at eve they went,
For there to rest was their intent.

"Come in, come in, young children three,
You will find rest and sleep with me."

The butcher took a knife, good sooth,
And slew them without fear or ruth.

He cut them into morsels fine,
And laid them in the pickling brine.

It chanced that after seven years' space,
Saint Nicholas came into that place.

The good saint, when the day was o'er,
Knocked likewise at the butcher's door.

"Come in, come in, Saint Nicholas blest,
And I will give you of the best."

The butcher brought forth plate and cup,
And prayed Saint Nicholas to sup.

"If you to sup disposèd feel,
I have good ham and tender veal."

“ Butcher, I do not like thy meat,
Thy ham or veal I will not eat.

“ But I will taste this bacon here,
Which lies in brine this seven year.”

No sooner had the words been said
Than from the door the butcher fled.

“ O butcher, butcher, do not flee,
Repent, and God will pardon thee.”

Saint Nicholas by the brine tub sat,
And gazed full earnestly thereat.

“ Rise up, rise up, my children dear,
The great Saint Nicholas is here.”

Saint Nicholas lifted fingers three,
Those children rose up instantly.

The first said, “ I have slept full well,”
The second, “ Better than words can tell,”

The third, “ Since first I closed my eyes
Meseems I have been in Paradise.”

The Temptation of Saint Anthony

(Adapted from an Old French Chanson)

Goblins came, on mischief bent,
To Saint Anthony in Lent.

“Come, ye goblins, small and big,
We will kill the hermit’s pig.

“While the good monk minds his book
We the hams will cure and cook.

“While he goes down on his knees
We will fry the sausages.

“While he on his breast doth beat
We will grill the tender feet.

“While he David’s Psalms doth sing
We will all to table bring.”

On his knees went Anthony
To those imps of Barbary.

“Good, kind goblins, spare his life,
He to me is child and wife.

“He indeed is good and mild
As ’twere any chrisom child.

“ He is my felicity,
Spare, oh spare my pig to me ! ”

But the pig they did not spare,
Did not heed the hermit's prayer.

They the hams did cure and cook,
Still the good saint read his book.

When they fried the sausages
Still he rose not from his knees.

When they grilled the tender feet
He ceased not his breast to beat.

They did all to table bring,
He for grace the Psalms did sing.

.

All at once the morning broke,
From his dream the monk awoke.

There in the kind light of day
Was the little pig at play.

The Death of Jean Renaud

(Old French)

Jean Renaud comes home to rest
With the death-wound in his breast.

His mother watching from afar
Sees her son come from the war.

“Jean Renaud, rejoice and sing,
Thy wife has borne to thee a king.”

“Mother, all my joy is done
In my wife and in my son.

“Thou must make the bed for me
That my bed of death must be.

“Mother, make the bed so low
That my wife may nothing know.”

At midnight the bell they toll
For the passing of a soul.

“Mother, I am filled with fear
At the hammer-strokes I hear.”

“’Tis the workmen fitting oak
To the staircase that is broke.”

“Mother, I am filled with fear
At the chanting that I hear.”

“The procession on its way
Passes by the house to-day.”

“Mother, I am filled with fear
At the weeping that I hear.”

“’Tis the neighbour grieving sore
For the babe she’ll see no more.”

“Mother dear, I fain would know
Why thou also weapest so?”

“I no more the truth can keep,
Jean Renaud sleeps his last sleep.”

“Mother, of the sexton crave
That he dig a double grave ;

“In that deep wide pit must be
Room for two and room for three.

“In the cleft earth rent in twain
I shall find my love again.”

Once again the bell they toll
For the passing of a soul.

The Gallant Drummer

(Old French)

The King's daughter from her window
Looked and saw from far,
A young drummer coming drumming
Gaily from the war.

“Gay young drummer, gallant drummer,
Give thy rose to me.”

“My lord King, give me thy daughter,
Hers my rose shall be.”

“Gay young drummer, gallant drummer,
Thy looks please me well,
But that looks are all thy riches
I can surely tell.”

“My lord King, I sail for England,
Three ships for me wait,
To the Queen, my royal mother,
To bring me in state.

“Hung with pearls and decked with rubies,
They at anchor ride,
For the people say in England
I bring home my bride.”

“ Gay young drummer, gallant drummer,
Take my daughter dear.”

“ My lord King, there are in England
Fairer maids than here.”

The Silver Rose Tree

(Adapted from a Folk Song of Lorraine)

Where is my true love to-day?
He, alas! is far away.
Once a rose bloomed in my bower,
All with silver buds a-flower;
Withered is the silver tree,
My true love is far from me.

He is making silver rings
For the troth of queens and kings,
In fair Paris or Orleans,
Making rings for kings and queens;
First bud of the silver tree,
His first ring was made for me.

See! the silver ring is here,
That I wore for seven year,
After seven years it broke,
On my heart too fell the stroke,
Then no more my silver tree
Bloomed with rings and chains for me.

Now the ring is joined again,
He will come thro' sun and rain,
From gay Paris he will ride,
Or from Orleans to my side;
Once again my silver tree
Will be all in flower for me.

The Goblin of the Mill

(An Alsatian Chanson)

I was a baby still
When first I knew the mill ;

The mill so fair and fine
That stands beside the Rhine.

They told me to beware,
There dwelt a goblin there.

But was I sore or sick
To the mill I hasted quick.

Time ran : I went away
A-soldiering one fine day.

All service ends at last,
Again that way I passed.

I saw the mill once more,
The goblin at the door.

Her eyes they were so bright,
I kissed her with delight.

Now with that fair goblin
I dwell the mill within.

The White Rose

(Adapted from an Old French Chanson)

As I pluck the fair white rose,
Leaf by leaf beside my bed,
Every leaf that I pluck off
Whispers "It is time to wed."
Why such haste to marry me,
Rose, white rose of the rose tree?

I must wait my father's will,
I must for my mother care,
'Twould be grief to all my kin,
Save my cousin, Jean-Pierre.
He is more than all to me,
Rose, white rose of the rose tree.

A Song of Wooden Shoes

(Old French)

As I passed thro' fair Lorraine
With my wooden shoes,
Three knights met me on the plain,
With my wooden shoes,
They looked on me with disdain
With my wooden shoes.

But to see me one was fain,
With my wooden shoes,
For the young Prince of Lorraine,
With my wooden shoes,
Threw me a spray of vervain,
With my wooden shoes.

He looked once and looked again,
With my wooden shoes ;
If he weds me I shall reign,
With my wooden shoes,
As the Queen of fair Lorraine,
With my wooden shoes.

Lost Latin

(Adapted from an Old French Song)

As I gathered branches three
Of the scented rosemary
The nightingale, a-singing near,
Said in Latin in my ear
“Men are worthless,” and again
“Lads are worth still less than men.”

They say, rosemary wet with dew,
That all Latin words are true ;
But to-morrow I shall stand,
With my true love hand in hand,
In my robe of bridal satin ;
The wise bird has lost his Latin !

The Message

(Adapted from an Old French Song)

“ On a journey far
Who for me will go?
If I tell the lark
All the world will know.

“ Little nightingale
In the deep green wood,
You will go for me,
For your heart is good.”

Straight the small brown bird
To the castle flew,
Found the door was shut,
Went the window thro’.

“ Good day and good day
To the princess here,
I have brought a word
From your true love dear.

“ He has sent likewise
A wild violet ;
All his fear is lest
You his love forget.”

“ Many and many a one
Hath said so to me ;
Who comes not himself
Soon forgot will be.”

At the Door

(An adaptation of an Old French Song)

My heart it is aching
For lost delight ;
I come to your door
In the deep dark night.

My fire it is ashes,
My candle is dead,
I shiver with cold
While you lie a-bed.

Thro' the deep darkness
I come once more,
For the dear God's sake
Open the door.

“Si le Roy m’avait donné”

(An Old French Song)

If the great King, Henri Quatre,
Were to say to me,
“Thou must part from thy true love,
Thou must leave Marie ;
Paris, my great town so fine
I have given to thee” ;

I would say to Henri Quatre,
Boldly, without fear,
“Keep your Paris, your great town,
All my heart is here ;
More than to be King of France
Is to kiss my dear.”

The Prisoner of Nantes

(*A French Song*)

At Nantes in the prison
A prisoner doth moan,
In his cell fast fettered
He is all alone ;
Save the jailer's daughter
Sees he never none.

As his meat she brings him
She begins to sigh ;
“ They say in all the town
To-morrow you must die.”
“ If I die to-morrow
To-day my feet untie.”

The bells strike up ringing,
She burst into tears,
He in the Loire river
Leaps and disappears ;
God bless the maids of Nantes
And all poor prisoners !

Little Julie

(A Picardy Folk Song)

“Monsieur le Curé, will you marry me?”

“First find a husband, little Julie.”

“Monsieur le Curé, no lover comes nigh,
If soon he comes not, sure I shall die.”

“Little Julie, set thy heart at rest,
If thou die we will bury thee with the best.”

“Monsieur le Curé, on my poor bier,
Will you shed for little Julie a tear?”

“Little Julie, at thy burying
I cannot weep, for I must sing.”

“Monsieur le Curé, what is the song
You will sing as I go to my grave along?”

“Little Julie, my song that day
Will be ‘Requiescat in pace.’”

The Pursuit

(A Folk Song of the Bourbonnais)

“ Sweetheart, my dear sweetheart,
Grown so dear to me,
I will come on Sunday,
Thy sweet face to see ;
This our day of friendship
And of love shall be.”

“ If thou come on Sunday,
Me thou wilt not see,
I shall be a rose
On the white rose tree ;
Neither love nor friendship
Shalt thou have of me.”

“ If thou art a rose
On the white rose tree,
I will come for roses,
I will gather thee ;
So in love and friendship
Thou and I will be.”

“ If thou come for roses,
Searching carefully,
I shall be a quail
In the fields so free ;
Neither love nor friendship
Shalt thou have of me.”

“ If thou art a quail
In the fields so free,
I will be a fowler,
Laying nets for thee ;
Then our time for friendship
And for love will be.”

“ If thou art a fowler
Snaring ceaselessly,
In my father's fish pond
I a carp shall be ;
Neither love nor friendship
Shalt thou have of me.”

“ If thou art a carp,
Or river fish, maybe,
I will be a fisher
Casting lines for thee ;
I will catch thy friendship,
Mine thy love shall be.”

“ If thou art a fisher
In river, pond, or sea,
I shall be a nun
In my sanctity ;
Neither love nor friendship
Shalt thou have of me.”

“ If thou art a nun
In thy sanctity,
I will be a preacher,
I will preach to thee ;
Then in love and friendship
Surely we shall be.”

“ If thou art a preacher
Preaching learnedly,
I, in pining sickness
In my bed shall be ;
Neither love nor friendship
Shalt thou have of me.”

“ If thou liest pining
In thy malady,
I will be a watcher
Watching over thee ;
Of my love and friendship
So no doubt shall be.”

“ If thou art a watcher
Watching tenderly,
Nothing shalt thou look on
But my dead body ;
Neither love nor friendship
Shalt thou have of me.”

“ If thy dear fair body
Lying dead I see,
I will be Saint Peter
Opening heaven to thee ;
Of my love and friendship
This the crown shall be.”

“ If thou art Saint Peter
Holding heaven’s key,
I will be a star
In the Galaxy ;
Neither love nor friendship
Shalt thou have of me.”

“ If thou art a star
In the Galaxy,
I will be a cloud,
I will cover thee ;
Of our love and friendship
There no end shall be.”

Rose and Black

(An Old French Song from the Frauche-Comté)

I, this day of April,
Twenty years have seen,
I have loved my dearest
Since I was fifteen.

After the dark midnight
There was moonlight soon,
But I rose this morning
Earlier than the moon.

“My suit of rose satin,
Mother, give me here,
All in white and rose-red
I will meet my dear.”

But a horseman met me,
Spurring on his way,
“Thy dear love is dying,”
He to me did say.

To my dear love's chamber
In hot haste I sped,
And I went to cheer her,
Three times round her bed.

“ Lover, my dear lover,
Why do you not speak? ”
How my heart was heavy;
How her voice was weak!

“ Lover, my dear lover,
A wax-candle light,
At my bed’s head set it,
For I die to-night.”

As the clocks of midnight
Their twelve strokes did tell,
Her white hand she gave me
For the last farewell.

“ My suit of black velvet,
Mother, give me here,
All in black and silver
I will mourn my dear.”

The Lost Shoe

(A Picardy Folk Song)

As we danced upon the grass
My white shoe was lost, alas !

One shoe off and one shoe on,
Still I danced at the Saint John.

In the meadows wet with dew
The next morn I found my shoe.

My white shoe all soiled and worn,
My white shoe all crushed and torn.

I went to the cobbler lad,
When he saw me he was glad.

“ Jean, my cobbler lad so fine,
Wilt thou mend this shoe of mine ?

“ Cobbler lad so fine and fair,
Make it fit for me to wear.”

How he smiled as our eyes met !
“ Yes, my heart, yes, my Babette.

“ I will clean and mend thy shoe,
I will make it good as new.

“ When I bring it back for this
Thou shalt pay me with a kiss.”

The Sabot-Maker

(A Breton Folk Song)

The sabot-maker sings all day,
The songs he makes are blithe and gay,
The shoes he makes are strong and good,
The sabot-maker in the wood.

His hut is black with soot within
And hung with webs the spiders spin ;
From morn till night he knows no care,
But sings and whistles debonair.

“Is there a path by which I can
His dinner take to my good man?”
“Go on, good wife, and have no fear,
His axe and saw from far thou’lt hear.”

“What hast thou brought on which to dine?
Let me unpack the basket fine.”
“To-night thy table must be spread
With but a cake of the black bread.”

“Sweet heart, we shall be richer soon,
When I have sold my wooden shoon.
On Sunday bacon we will eat
And drink the red wine with our meat.”

Jannik le Bon-Garçon
(*A Breton Folk Song*)

From Paris, from Rouen,
Good travellers all, beware,
And at the "Golden Cock,"
Lodge not at Carhaix fair.

Jannik le Bon-Garçon
Is stayed by night perforce
To sleep at that same inn
And bait his good white horse.

Nona, the sewing-maid,
Now lights him up to rest,
Jannik, as men will do,
Begins with her to jest.

Nona gives a great sigh
And sadly shakes her head,
As Jannik to her says
That he is newly wed.

"Nona, my maid so fair,
Why heave so deep a sigh?"
"Merchant, for thee, poor lad,
Who must so shortly die.

“ Look now beneath the bed,
Thou’lt shudder there to see
The knife with which they mean
To make an end of thee.

“ Last year on the Fair Day
Three merchants here were slain.”
“ Nona, from this ill place,
Bring me out safe again.

“ I have three brothers dear,
All tall and straight and strong,
The lad thou likest best
Choose thou the three among.”

The host wakes, starting up
Suddenly at midnight,
He takes his great sharp knife,
His candle he doth light.

But Jannik the meanwhile
Is far upon his way,
And little Nona rides
Behind him until day.

Of little Nona now
The wealth cannot be told,
Her stockings are of silk,
Her earrings are of gold.

Of those three brothers fine
She chose the fairest youth,
The richest merchant he
In Rouen town, good sooth.

Two Breton Folk Songs

The Angelus

The bell rings out the Angelus,
The earth counts yet another day,
Ever as now, O Pia,
Blessed be thou, Ave Maria !
The star of June shines over us,
We smell the good scent of the hay,
Ever as now, O Pia,
Blessed be thou, Ave Maria !

The Dance

Maids and men all in a row
With fife and flute, come, greet the spring,
The sky is blue, the wind is low,
The apple trees have flowers of snow.
Maids and men, join in a ring,
Round and round, to and fro,
Fleetly as the swallows go,
Turn and turn till evening.

“ Lest they also Come ”

(Breton)

For his mistress,
In dire distress
And great torment
A lover went.

He longed to gaze
On her dear face
And to rejoice
In her sweet voice.

Sick for the sight
Of his Delight,
He made his prayer
To Lucifer.

He saw with woe
No heart may know
His dear Desire
All wrapped in fire.

“ I’ll fast and pray
And weep away,
By day and night
To win respite.

“ For mortal sin
That I was in,
The time is past
For prayer and fast.

“ Masses are vain
To ease this pain ;
Now speed thee forth
Once more to earth.

“ My sisters tell
The pangs of hell,
Lest they too come
To this fell doom.”

The Parting of Soul and Body

(Breton)

“ My Body, farewell now,”
The Soul that flees away,
When Soul and Body part,
Doth to the Body say,
“ Yet, Sister, sorrow not,
We shall meet at Doom’s Day.”

“ My Soul, in that long time,
No dust will there remain.”
“ My Body, do not doubt,
Thou wert not made in vain,
God, Who made thee, Sister,
Can raise thee up again.”

The Renewal

(*Charles of Orleans, c. 1420*)

The year has left his mantle grey
For gold and blue of shining skies,
The frost and cloud of his disguise
By the clear sun is swept away.

There is no beast nor bird to-day
But in his jargon sings or cries ;
The year has left his mantle grey
For gold and blue of shining skies.

River and brook and fountain play,
They sparkle in such gallant wise,
Their silverwork makes glad the eyes ;
New is each leaf and flower and spray,
The year has left his mantle grey.

“Arlequin Marie sa Fille”

(French)

Arlequin has given to-day
His daughter fat and fresh and gay,
To be wed to Pierrot,
Ah! Riguingette! Ah! Riguingo!

For the wedding feast was spread
Mouldy cheese and crusty bread,
Filled with salt an old sabot,
Ah! Riguingette! Ah! Riguingo!

The notary limped as he went by,
The good mayor had but one eye,
The one-armed clerk could write but slow,
Ah! Riguingette! Ah! Riguingo!

At this joyful fête were seen
Parrots red and grey and green,
With canaries in a row,
Ah! Riguingette! Ah! Riguingo!

“ *C’était un Roi de Sardaigne* ”

(*An Old French Chanson*)

There was a Sardinian king,
His least look could terror bring,
He had formed a cunning plan
To make war on the Soldan,
Ran-tan-plan, see horse and man
Go to fight with the Soldan !

His great army was his boast,
Ninety strong was that fell host ;
Ah ! they made a fearsome din,
His four cannons all of tin.
Ran-tan-plan, how brief a span
Of life is left to the Soldan !

Out upon the mountain side
—How the world is great and wide !—
He had sight of the Soldan,
Let him save himself who can !
Ran-tan-plan, see rear and van
In full flight from the Soldan !

Mother Michel

(A French Nursery Rhyme)

Old Mother Michel
Has lost her cat,
For grief she knows not
What to be at.

Simon her neighbour
To soothe her pain
Says "He is not lost,
You will find him again."

Old Mother Michel
Springs up with a bound,
"What do you tell me,
My cat has been found?"

"Your cat is not lost,
And will be restored,"
Says Simon, her neighbour,
"For a reward."

Cries Mother Michel,
"No trouble in this;
Who brings me my cat
I will give him a kiss."

But Simon her neighbour
Had hoped for gold,
Says he, "For a rabbit
Your cat has been sold."

St. Catherine's Watch

In slumber deep
St. Catherine keep
Baby asleep
For fifteen years ;
From her white bed
With saints o'erhead
Keep frights and fears.

Thro' that profound
Sweet sleep and sound,
O maiden crowned !
Lest ill dreams steal,
Both night and day,
Keep watch alway,
With palm and wheel

Till sleep be done.
If a mouse run
In the white sun
Across the floor,
Thy finger tips
Upon thy lips
Make hush once more.

When there have been
Of quiet seen
The years fifteen,
Her sleep will break ;
The Prince so gay
Will come that day—
Baby will wake.

Baby in Church

(Fourth Sunday in Advent)

The cock and the hens,
The sermon begins ;
The cow and the calf,
We've got through it half ;
The cat and the mice,
It's finished—how nice !
See, Baby, see
A mouse runs away,
Put out your hand and take hold of his tail,
If we can catch him we'll make without fail
A big bonnet of fur
For Christmas Day.
We'll trim it with feathers
Of peacocks and owls,
And grey guinea fowls
To wear in all weathers.
In her new bonnet
What a fine sight,
Baby will go
Warm thro' the snow
To hear the cock crow
On Christmas night.

Adieu, Noël

(An Old French Rhyme)

Noël is leaving us,
Sad 'tis to tell,
But he will come again,
Adieu, Noël.

His wife and his children
Weep as they go,
On a grey horse
They ride thro' the snow ;

Colin and Margot,
In their red capes,
Laden with wine
And walnuts and grapes.

The Kings ride away
In the snow and the rain,
After twelve months
We shall see them again.

The Chimes

(An Old French Rhyme)

All night the chimes
Strike at Cléry,
At Orléans,
At Beaugeney,
Vendôme, Vendôme,
From all the towers.

—Oh! the distress,
The weariness,
Through the night time
To count each chime,
Till morning come . . .
The hours, the hours!

The Greek Children's Swallow Song

Come out, good folk,
The swallow is here ;
He brings good days
And the glad New Year.
Here at your door
He twitters and sings,
With the white breast
And the black wings.

Bring from the house
Raisins from your vine,
Honey-cake and almonds
And a cup of wine.
Bring your best white bread
With curds and cheese ;
The swallow will feast
On a handful of peas.

If you content us
We'll bid you good day ;
If you deny us
Here we will stay.
We'll break down the doors
With noise and with din,
And snatch the old woman
Who sits therein.

If you will not give us
Your wine and your cake,
The little old woman
Is easy to take.
Open the door to the swallow,
To summer and all its joys ;
Open the door to the swallow,
We are not old men, but boys.

The Snail Gatherers' Song

(A Provençal Children's Rhyme)

Little snail, shut in thy shell
Like a nun within her cell,
Put thy head forth from the door,
Show thy little horns once more ;
If thou lie so long a-bed
We shall think that thou art dead ;
If thou come not to our call
We will break thy convent wall.

Be not sullen, little snail,
In thy hermitage so frail ;
Come, and in our basket ride
In the fair great world outside ;
Thou may'st even yet be seen
At the table of the Queen,
Where they feast with wine and cakes
At King René's Court at Aix.

La Danse des Jeunes Vierges

(French Flanders)

Up in heaven they dance to-day,
Alleluia.

The young maidens dance and play,
They sing as they dancing go,
Benedicamus Domino,
Alleluia, Alleluia.

'Tis for Rosalie they sing,
Alleluia,
She has done with sorrowing,
So we dance and we sing so,
Benedicamus Domino,
Alleluia, Alleluia.

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