

English Lyric Poems and Ballads

Read by Kathleen Danson Read / Folkways Records FL 9882

CONTENTS:

- 1 LP
- 1 program notes (8 p.)

PR
1181
E54
1956
c.1

MUSIC LP

University of Alberta Library



0 1620 0506 6129

The Highwayman (Alfred Noyes)
The Mermaid (Alfred Lord Tennyson)
Meg Merrilies (John Keats)
The Singing of the Magnificat (E. Nesbit)
Sherwood (Alfred Noyes)
A Thing of Beauty (John Keats)
The Crowning of Dreaming John (John Drinkwater)
Martha (Walter de la Mare)
The Forsaken Merman (Matthew Arnold)
How Far Is It To Bethlehem? (Frances Chesterton)
The Pied Piper of Hamelin (Robert Browning)
Rosabelle (Sir Walter Scott)

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

English Lyric Poems and Ballads

Folkways Records FL 9882

COVER: OLD HOUSE AT STAMFORD, LINCOLNSHIRE

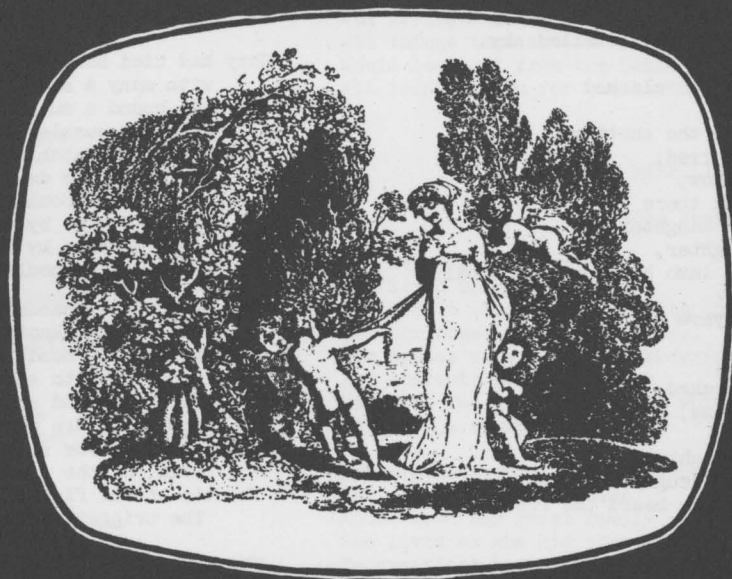
COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE

Library of Congress Catalogue Card No. R 59-63
©1956 FOLKWAYS RECORDS & SERVICE Corp.
701 Seventh Ave., New York City
Distributed by Folkways/Scholastic Records,
906 Sylvan Ave., Englewood Cliffs, N.J. 07632

PR
1181
E54
1956

MUSIC LP

English Lyric Poems and Ballads



read by Kathleen Danson Read

KATHLEEN DANSON READ

Born in Burnley, Lancashire, England.

Educated in Burnley, Blackpool (England) and Pretoria (South Africa).

Studied Elocution and Dramatic Art under Mr. Ryder Boys of Manchester.

Holds the diploma of Associate of the Incorporated London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art and the L. A. M. D. A. Gold Medal for proficiency.

Was also awarded the Gold Medal for Elocution at the Wallasey (Cheshire) Musical Festival and has

won many other trophies and medals at Eistedfords and Musical Festivals throughout Great Britain.

Ran a school of Elocution and Dramatic Art in Burnley, and was also registered as an associate teacher of the Incorporated London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art.

Has played in Stock (Repertory) Companies and with Amateur Societies in England and in Geneva (Switzerland) in Shakespearean, Classical and Modern Drama.

Mrs. Read can be heard on FOLKWAYS Records album No. FL-9881 in the spoken literature of EARLY ENGLISH BALLADS.

ENGLISH LYRIC POEMS AND BALLADS

THE HIGHWAYMAN

By Alfred Noyes

The wind was a torrent of darkness among the gusty trees,
The moon was a ghostly galleon tossed upon cloudy seas,
The road was a ribbon of moonlight over the purple moor,
And the highwayman came riding -
Riding - riding -
The Highwayman came riding, up to the old inn-door.

He'd a French cocked-hat on his forehead,
a bunch of lace at his chin,
A coat of the claret velvet,
and breeches of brown doeskin;
They fitted with never a wrinkle:
his boots were up to the thigh!
And he rode with a jewelled twinkle,
His pistol-butts a-twinkle,
His rapier-hilt a-twinkle, under the jewelled sky.

Over the cobbles he clattered and clashed
in the dark inn-yard,
And he tapped with his whip on the shutters,
but all was locked and barred;
He whistled a tune to the window,
and who should be waiting there
But the landlord's black-eyed daughter,
Bess, the landlord's daughter,
Plaiting a dark red love-knot into her long black hair.

And dark in the dark old inn-yard
a stable-wicket creaked,
Where Tim the ostler listened;
His face was white and peaked;
His eyes were hollows of madness,
his hair like mouldy hay,
But he loved the landlord's daughter,
The landlord's red-lipped daughter,
Dumb as a dog he listened, and he heard the robber say -

"One kiss, my bonny sweetheart,
I'm after a prize tonight,
But I shall be back with the yellow gold before
the morning light;
Yet, if they press me sharply, and harry
me through the day,
Then look for me by moonlight,
Watch for me by moonlight,
I'll come to thee by moonlight,
though hell should bar the way."

He rose upright in the stirrups;
he scarce could reach her hand,
But she loosened her hair i' the casement!
His face burnt like a brand
As the black cascade of perfume
came tumbling over his breast;
And he kissed its waves in the moonlight,
(Oh, sweet black waves in the moonlight!)
Then he tugged at his rein in the moonlight,
and galloped away to the west.

PART 2

He did not come in the dawning;
he did not come at noon;
But out o' the tawny sunset,
before the rise o' the moon,
When the road was a gypsy's ribbon,
looping the purple moor,

A red-coat troop came marching,
Marching, - marching -
King George's men came marching, up to the old inn-door

They said no word to the landlord,
they drank his ale instead,
But they gagged his daughter and bound her
to the foot of her narrow bed;
Two of them knelt at her casement,
with muskets at their side!
There was death at every window,
And hell at one dark window,
For Bess could see, through her casement,
the road that he would ride.

They had tied her up to attention,
with many a sniggering jest;
They had bound a musket beside her,
with the muzzle beneath her breast!
"Now keep good watch!" and they kissed her.
She heard the dead man say -
"Look for me by moonlight;
"Watch for me by moonlight;
"I'll come to thee by moonlight,
though hell should bar the way!"

She twisted her hands behind her,
but all the knots held good!
She writhed her hands till her fingers
were wet with sweat or blood!
They stretched and strained in the darkness,
and the hours crawled by like years,
Till, now, on the stroke of midnight,
Cold, on the stroke of midnight,
The tip of one finger touched it!
The trigger at least was hers!

The tip of one finger touched it;
she strove no more for the rest!
Up she stood to attention,
with the muzzle beneath her breast,
She would not risk their hearing;
she would not strive again;
For the road lay bare in the moonlight,
Blank and bare in the moonlight,
And the blood of her veins in the moonlight
throbbed to her love's refrain.

Tlot-tlot! tlot-tlot! Had they heard it?
The horse-hoofs ringing clear?
Tlot-tlot, tlot-tlot, in the distance?
Were they deaf that they did not hear?
Down the ribbon of moonlight,
over the brow of the hill,
The highwayman came riding,
Riding, riding!
The red-coats looked to their priming!
She stood up, straight and still!

Tlot-tlot, in the frosty silence!
Tlot-tlot, in the echoing night!
Nearer he came and nearer!
Her face was like a light!
Her eyes grew wide for a moment -
she drew one last deep breath,

Then her finger moved in the moonlight,
Her musket shattered the moonlight,
Shattered her breast in the moonlight,
and warned him - with her death.

He turned, he spurred to the westward;
he did not know who stood
Bowed, with her head o'er the musket,
drenched with her own blood!
Not till the dawn he heard it,
and his face grew grey to hear
How Bess, the landlord's daughter,
The landlord's black-eyes daughter,
Had watched for her love in the moonlight,
and died in the darkness there.

Back he spurred like a madman,
shrieking a curse to the sky,
With the white road smoking behind him
and his rapier brandished high!
Blood-red were his spurs i' the golden noon,
wine-red was his velvet coat,
When they shot him down on the highway,
Down like a dog on the highway,
And he lay in his blood on the highway,
with the bunch of lace at this throat.

And still of a winter's night, they say,
when the wind is in the trees,
When the moon is a ghostly galleon,
tossed upon cloudy seas,
When the road is a ribbon of moonlight
over the purple moor,
A highwayman comes riding,
Riding - riding -
A highwayman comes riding,
up to the old inn-door.

Over the cobbles he clatters and clangs,
in the dark inn-yard;
And he taps with his whip on the shutters,
but all is locked and barred;
He whistles a tune to the window,
and who should be waiting there
But the landlord's black-eyed daughter,
Bess, the landlord's daughter,
Plaiting a dark red love-knot
into her long black hair.

THE MERMAID

By Alfred Lord Tennyson

Who would be
A mermaid fair,
Singing alone,
Combing her hair,
Under the sea,
In a golden curl,
With a comb of pearl,
On a throne?

I would be a mermaid fair;
I would sing to myself the whole of the day;
With a comb of pearl I would comb my hair,
And still as I comb'd I would sing and say,
"Who is it loves me? Who loves not me?"
I would comb my hair till my ringlets would fall
Low adown, low adown,
From under my starry sea-bud crown
Low adown and around;
And I should look like a fountain of gold
Springing alone
With a shrill inner sound,
Over the throne
In the midst of the hall;
Till that great sea-snake under the sea
From his coiled sleeps in the central deeps
Would slowly trail himself sevenfold
Round the hall where I sate, and look in at the gate

With his large calm eyes for the love of me.
And all the mermen under the sea
Would feel their immortality
Die in their hearts for the love of me.

But at night I would wander away, away,
I would fling on each side my low-flowing locks,
And lightly vault from the throne and play
With the mermen in and out of the rocks;
We would run to and fro, and hide and seek,
On the broad sea-wolds in the crimson shells,
Whose silvery spikes are nighest the sea.
But if any came near I would call, and shriek,
And adown the steep like a wave I would leap
From the diamond ledges that jut from the dells;
For I would not be kiss'd by all who would list,
Of the bold merry mermen under the sea;
They would sue me, and woo me, and flatter me,
In the purple twilights under the sea;
But the king of them all would carry me,
Woo me and win me and marry me,
In the branching jaspers under the sea;
Then all the dry pied things that be
In the hueless mosses under the sea
Would curl round my silver feet silently,
All looking up for the love of me.
And if I should carol aloud, from aloft
All things that are forked, and horned, and soft
Would lean out from the hollow spheres of the sea,
All looking down for the love of me.

MEG MERRILIES

By John Keats

Old Meg she was a gypsy,
And lived upon the moors;
Her bed it was the brown heath turf,
And her house was out of doors.
Her apples were swart blackberries,
Her currants pods o' broom;
Her wine was dew of the wild white rose,
Her book a churchyard tomb.

Her brothers were the craggy hills,
Her sisters larchen trees,
Alone with her great family
She lived as she did please.
No breakfast had she many a morn,
No dinner many a noon,
And 'stead of supper she would stare
Full hard against the moon.

But every morn of woodbine fresh
She made her garlanding,
And every night the dark yew glen
She wore, and she would sing,
And with her fingers old and brown
She plaited mats of rushes,
And gave them to the cottagers
She met among the bushes.

Old Meg was brave as Margaret Queen,
And tall as Amazon;
An old red blanket cloak she wore,
A ship-hat had she one;
God rest her aged bones somewhere!
She died full long agone!

THE SINGING OF THE MAGNIFICAT

By E. Nesbit

In midst of wide green pasture lands, cut through
By lines of alders bordering deep-banked streams,
Where bulrushes and yellow iris grew,
And rest, and peace, and all the flowers of dreams,
The abbey stood - so still it seemed a part

Of the marsh-country's almost pulseless heart.

The brothers in their simple works were glad;
Yet all men must have sorrows of their own.
And so a bitter grief the brothers had,
Nor mourned for others' heaviness alone.
This was the secret of their sorrowing -
That not a monk in all the house could sing!

Was it the damp air from the lonely marsh,
Or strain of scarcely intermitted prayer,
That made their voices, when they sang, as harsh
As any frog's that croaks in evening air -
That made less music in their hymns to lie
Than in the hoarsest wild-fowl's hoarsest cry?

If love could sweeten voice to sing a song,
Theirs had been sweetest song was ever sung;
But their hearts' music reached their lips all wrong,
The soul's intent spoiled by the traitorous tongue.

The brothers prayed with penance and with tears
That God would let them give some little part
Out for the solace of their own sad ears
Of all the music crowded in their heart.
But nature and the marsh air had their way,
And still they sang more vilely every day.

At length the Abbot, anxious to remove
This, the reproach how laid on them so long,
Rejected counsel, and for very love
Besought a brother, skilled in art of song,
To come to them, his cloister far to leave,
And sing Magnificat on Christmas Eve.

So when each brown monk duly sought his place,
By two and two, slow pacing to the choir,
Shrined in his dark oak stall, the strange monk's face
Shone with a light as of devotion's fire,
Good, young and fair, his seemed a form wherein
Pure beauty left no room at all for sin.

And when the time for singing it had come,
"Magnificat", face and voice raised, he sang:
Each in his stall the monks stood glad and dumb,
As through the chancel's dusk his voice out-rang,
Pure, clear and perfect, - as the thrushes sing
Their first impulsive welcome of the spring.

And as the voice rose higher and more sweet,
The Abbot's heart said, "Thou has heard us grieve,
And sent an angel from beside Thy feet,
To sing Magnificat on Christmas Eve;
To ease our ache of soul, and let us see
How we some day in Heaven shall sing to Thee."

That night - the Abbot lying on his bed -
A sudden flood of radiance on him fell,
Poured from the Crucifix above his head,
And cast a stream of light across his cell -
And in the fullest fervour of the light
An angel stood, glittering, and great, and white.

The angel spoke - his voice was low and sweet
As the sea's murmur on low-lying shore -
Or whisper of the wind in ripened wheat:
"Brother," he said, "the God we both adore
Has sent me down to ask, is all not right?
Why was Magnificat not sung tonight?"

Tranced in the joy of the angel's presence brought,
The Abbot answered, "All these weary years
We have sung our best, but always have we thought
Our voices were unworthy heavenly ears;
And so tonight we found a clearer tongue
And by it the Magnificat was sung."

The Angel answered, "All these happy years
In Heaven has your Magnificat been heard;
This night alone, the angels' listening ears
Of all its music caught no single word.

"The Monk who sang Magnificat is filled
With lust of praise, and with hypocrisy;
He sings for earth, in Heaven his notes are stilled
By muffling weight of deadening vanity;
His heart is chained to earth, and cannot bear
His singing higher than the listening air!

"From purest hearts most perfect music springs,
And while you mourned your voices were not sweet,
Marred by the accident of earthly things,
In Heaven God, listening, judged your songs complete.
The sweetest of earth's music came from you -
The music of a noble life and true!"

SHERWOOD

By Alfred Noyes

Sherwood in the twilight, is Robin Hood awake?
Grey and ghostly shadows are gliding through the brake,
Shadows of the dappled deer, dreaming of the morn,
Dreaming of a shadowy man that winds a shadowy horn.

Robin Hood is here again: all his merry thieves
Hear a ghostly bugle note shivering through the leaves,
Calling as he used to call, faint and far away,
In Sherwood, in Sherwood, about the break of day.

Merry, merry England is waking as of old,
With eyes of blither hazel and hair of brighter gold:
For Robin Hood is here again beneath the bursting spray
In Sherwood, in Sherwood, about the break of day.

Love is in the greenwood, building him a house
Of wild rose and hawthorn and honeysuckle boughs:
Love is in the greenwood, dawn is in the skies,
And Marian is waiting with a glory in her eyes:

Hark! The dazzled laverock climbs the golden steep!
Marian is waiting: is Robin Hood asleep?
Round the fairy grass-rings frolic elf and fay,
In Sherwood, in Sherwood, about the break of day.

Oberon, Oberon, rake away the gold,
Rake away the red leaves, roll away the mould,
Rake away the gold leaves, roll away the red,
And wake Will Scarlet from his leafy forest bed.

Friar Tuck and Little John are riding down together
With quarter-staff and drinking can and grey goose
feather.

The dead are coming back again, the years are rolled away
In Sherwood, in Sherwood, about the break of day.

Softly over Sherwood the south wind blows,
All the heart of England hid in every rose,
Hears across the greenwood the sunny whisper leap,
Sherwood in the red dawn, is Robin Hood asleep?

Hark, the voice of England wakes him as of old,
And, shattering the silence with a cry of brighter gold,
Bugles in the greenwood echo from the steep,
Sherwood in the red dawn, is Robin Hood asleep?

Where the deer are gliding down the shadowy glen
All across the glades of fern he calls his merry men -
Doublets of the Lincoln green glancing through the May
In Sherwood, in Sherwood, about the break of day.

Calls them and they answer, from aisles of oak and ash
Rings the "Follow! Follow!" and the boughs begin to
crash;
The ferns begin to flutter and the flowers begin to fly,
And through the crimson dawning the robber band goes by.

Robin! Robin! Robin! All his merry thieves
Answer as the bugle note shivers through the leaves,
Calling as he used to call, faint and far away,
In Sherwood, in Sherwood, about the break of day.

A THING OF BEAUTY

By John Keats

A thing of beauty is a joy for ever:
Its loveliness increases: it will never
Pass into nothingness; but still will keep
A bower quiet for us, and a sleep
Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.
Therefore on every morrow, are we wreathing
A flowery band to bind us to the earth,
Spite of despondence, of th'inhuman dearth
Of noble natures, of the gloomy days,
Of all the unhealthy and e'er-darkened ways
Made for our searching: yes, in spite of all
Some shape of beauty moves away the pall
From our dark spirits. Such the sun, the moon,
Trees old and young, sprouting a shady boon
For simple sheep; and such are daffodils
With the green world they live in; and clear rills
That for themselves a cooling covert make
'Gainst the hot season; the mid-forest brake,
Rich with a sprinkling of fair musk-rose blooms:
And such too is the grandeur of the dooms
We have imagined for the mighty dead;
All lovely tales that we have heard or read:
An endless fountain of immortal drink,
Pouring unto us from Heaven's brink.

Nor do we merely feel these essences
For one short hour; no, even as the trees
That whisper round a temple become soon
Dear as the temple's self, so does the moon,
The passion poesy, glories infinite,
Haunt us till they become a cheering light
Unto our sould, and bound to us so fast,
That, whether there be shine or gloom o'er-cast,
They always must be with us, or we die.

THE CROWNING OF DREAMING JOHN

By John Drinkwater

Seven days he travelled,
Down the roads of England,
Out of leafy Warwick lanes
Into London Town.
Grey and very wrinkled
Was Dreaming John of Grafton,
But seven days he walked to see
A King put on his crown.

Down the streets of London
He asked the crowded people
Where would be the crowning
And when would it begin.
He said he'd got a shilling,
A shining silver shilling,
But when he came to Westminster
They wouldn't let him in.

Dreaming John of Grafton
Looked upon the people,
Laughed a little laugh and then
Whistled and was gone.
Out along the long roads,
The twisting roads of England,
Back into the Warwick lanes
Wandered Dreaming John

As twilight touched with her ghostly fingers
All the meadows and mellow hills,
And the great sun swept in his robes of glory,
Woven of petals of daffodils,
And jewelled and fringed with leaves of the roses -
Down the plains of the western way,
Among the rows of the scented clover
Dreaming John in his dreaming lay.

Since dawn had folded the stars of heaven
He'd counted a score of miles and five,
And now with a vagabond heart untroubled
And proud as the properest man alive,
He sat him down with a limber spirit
That all men covet and few may keep,
And he watched the summer draw round her beauty
The shadow that shepherds the world to sleep.

And up from the valleys and shining rivers,
And out of the shadowy wood-ways wild,
And down from the secret hills, and streaming
Our of the shimmering, undefiled
Wonder of sky that arched him over,
Came a company shod in gold
And girt in gowns of a thousand blossoms,
Laughing and rainbow-aureoled.

Wrinkled and grey, with eyes a-wonder,
And soul beatified, Dreaming John
Watched the marvellous company gather,
While over the clover a glory shone;
They bore on their brows the hues of heaven,
Their limbs were sweet with the flowers of the fields,
And their feet were bright with the gleaming treasure
That prodigal earth to her children yields.

They stood before him, and John was laughing,
As they were laughing; he knew them all.
Spirits of the trees and pools and meadows,
Mountain and windy waterfall,
Spirits of clouds and skies and rivers,
Leaves and shadows and rain and sun,
A crowded, jostling, laughing army,
And Dreaming John knew every one.

Among them then was a sound of singing,
And chiming music, as one came down
The level rows of the scented clover,
Bearing aloft a flashing crown;
No word of a man's desert was spoken,
Nor any word of a man's unworth,
But there on the wrinkled brow it rested,
And Dreaming John was King of the Earth.

Dreaming John of Grafton
Went away to London,
Saw the coloured banners fly,
Heard the great bells ring;
But though his tongue was civil
And he had a silver shilling,
They wouldn't let him in to see
The crowning of the King.
So back along the long roads,
The leafy woods of England,
Dreaming John went carolling,
Travelling alone;
And on a summer evening,
Among the scented clover,
He held before a shouting throng
A crowning of his own.

MARTHA

By Walter de la Mare

"Once ... once upon a time ... "
Over and over again,
Martha would tell us her stories,
In the hazel glen.

Hers were those clear grey eyes
You watch, and the story seems
Told by their beautifulness,
Tranquil as dreams.

She'd sit with her two slim hands
Clasped round her bended knees;
While we on our elbows lolled,
And stared at ease.

Her voice and her narrow chin,
Her grave small lovely head,
Seemed half the meaning
Of the words she said.

"Once ... once upon a time ... "
Like a dream you dream in the night,
Fairies and gnomes stole out
In the leaf-green light.

And her beauty far away
Would fade, as her voice ran on,
Till hazel and summer sun
And all were gone: -

All fordone and forgot;
And like clouds in the height of the sky
Our hearts stood still in the hush
Of an age gone by.

THE FORSAKEN MERMAN

By Matthew Arnold

Come, dear children, let us away;
Down and away below!
Now my brothers call from the bay;
Now the great winds shoreward blow;
Now the salt tides seaward flow;
Now the wild white horses play,
Champ and chafe and toss in the spray.
Children dear, let us away!
This way, this way!

Call her once before you go -
Call once yet!
In a voice that she will know,
"Margaret! Margaret!"
Children's voices should be dear
(Call once more) to a mother's ear:
Children's voices wild with pain -
Surely she will come again!

Call her once, and come away;
This way, this way!
"Mother dear, we cannot stay!"
The wild white horses foam and fret.
Margaret! Margaret!

Come, dear children, come away down!
Call no more!
One last look at the white-walled town
And the little grey church on the windy shore,
Then come down!
She will not come though you call all day.
Come away, come away!

Children dear, was it yesterday
We heard the sweet bells over the bay?
In the caverns where we lay
Through the surf and through the swell,
The far-off sound of a silver bell?
Sand-strewn caverns, cool and deep,
Where the winds are all asleep;
Where the spent lights quiver and gleam;
Where the salt-weed sways in the stream;
Where the sea-beasts ranged all round
Feed in the ooze of their pasture-ground;
Where the sea-snakes coil and twine,
Dry their mail and bask in the brine;
Where great whales come sailing by,
Sail and sail with unshut eye,
Round the world for ever and aye?
When did music come this way?
Children dear, was it yesterday?

Children dear, was it yesterday
(Call once yet) that she went away?
Once she sate with you and me
On a red-gold throne in the heart of the sea,

And the youngest sate at her knee.
She combed its bright hair, and she tended it well,
When down swung the sound of the far-off bell.
She sighed, she looked up through the clear green sea;
She said, "I must go, for my kinsfolk pray
In the little grey church on the shore today.
'Twill be Easter-time in the world - ah, me!
And I lose my poor soul, Merman! here with thee."
I said, "Go up, dear heart, through the waves!
Say thy prayer, and come back to the kind sea-caves!"
She smiled, she went up through the surf in the bay.
Children dear, was it yesterday?

Children dear, were we long alone?
"The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan.
Long prayers," I said, "in the world they say.
Come!" I said, and we rose through the surf in the bay.
We went up the beach by the sandy down
Where the sea-stocks bloom, to the white-walled town.
Through the narrow paved streets, where all was still,
To the little grey church on the windy hill.
From the church came a murmur of folk at their prayers,
But we stood without in the cold blowing airs,
We climbed on the graves, on the stones worn with rains,
And we gazed up on the aisle through the small leaded
panes.

She sate by the pillar; we saw her clear:
"Margaret! Hist! Come quick, we are here.
Dear heart," I said, "We are long alone.
The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan."
But ah, she gave me never a look,
For her eyes were sealed to the Holy Book!
Loud prays the priest; shut stands the door.
Come away, children, call no more!
Come away, come down, call no more!

Down, down, down!
Down to the depths of the sea!
She sits at her wheel in the humming town,
Singing most joyfully.
Hark what she sings: "Oh joy, oh joy,
For the humming street, and the child with its toy,
For the priest, and the bell, and the holy well -
For the wheel where I spun,
And the blessed light of the sun."
And so she sings her fill,
Singing most joyfully,
Till the shuttle falls from her hand,
And the whizzing wheel stands still.

She steals to the window, and looks at the sand;
And over the sand at the sea;
And her eyes are set in a stare,
And anon there breaks a sigh,
And anon there drops a tear,
From a sorrow-clouded eye,
And a heart sorrow-laden
A long, long sigh;
For the cold strange eyes of a little mermaid,
And the gleam of her golden hair.

Come away, away, children,
Come, children, come down!
The hoarse wind blows colder;
Lights shine in the town.
She will start from her slumber
When gusts shake the door;
She will hear the winds howling,
Will hear the waves roar.
We shall see, while above us
The waves roar and whirl,
A ceiling of amber,
A pavement of pearl;
Singing "Here came a mortal,
But faithless was she,
And alone dwell for ever
The kings of the sea."

But, children, at midnight,
When soft the winds blow;
When clear falls the moonlight

When spring-tides are low;
When sweet airs come seaward
From heaths starred with broom,
And high rocks throw mildly
On the blanched sands a gloom;
Up the still, glistening beaches,
Up the creeks we will hie,
Over the banks of bright seaweed
The ebb-tide leaves dry.
We will gaze, from the sand-hills,
At the white, sleeping town;
At the church on the hill-side -
And then come back down:
Singing "There dwells a loved one,
But cruel is she!
She left lonely for ever
The kings of the sea."

HOW FAR IS IT TO BETHLEHEM?

By Frances Chesterton

How far is it to Bethlehem?
Not very far.
Shall we find the stable-room
Lit by a star?

Can we see the little Child?
Is He within?
If we lift the wooden latch
May we go in?

May we stroke the creatures there,
Ox, ass or sheep?
May we peep like them, and see
Jesus asleep?

If we touch His tiny hand
Will He awake?
Will He know we've come so far
Just for His sake?

Great kings have precious gifts,
And we have naught;
Little smiles and little tears
Are all we brought.

For all weary children
Mary must weep.
Here, on His bed of straw,
Sleep, children, sleep.

Good, in His mother's arms,
Babes in the byre,
Sleep, as they sleep who find
Their heart's desire.

THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN

By Robert Browning

(Adapted and abridged by the reader)

Hamelin Town's in Brunswick,
By famous Hanover city;
The river Weser, deep and wide,
Washes its walls on the southern side;
A pleasanter spot you never spied;
But, when begins my ditty,
Almost five hundred years ago,
To see the townsfolk suffer so
From Vermin was a pity.

Rats!

They fought the dogs and killed the cats,
And bit the babies in the cradles,
And ate the cheeses out of the vats,
And licked the soup from the cook's own ladles,

Split open the kegs of salted sprats,
Made nests inside men's Sunday hats,
And even spoiled the women's chats,
By drowning their speaking
With shrieking and squeaking
In fifty different sharps and flats.

At last the people in a body
To the Town Hall came flocking;
"'Tis clear," cried they, "our Mayor's a noddy;
And as for our Corporation - shocking!
To think we buy gowns lined with ermine
For dolts that can't or won't determine
What's best to rid us of our vermine!
Rouse up, sirs! give your brains a racking
To find the remedy we're lacking,
Or, sure as fate, we'll send you packing."
At this, the Mayor and Corporation
Quaked with a mighty consternation.

An hour they sat in council,
At length the Mayor broke silence:
"For a guilder I'd my ermine gown sell;
I wish I were a mile hence!
It's easy to bid one rack one's brain -
I'm sure my poor head aches again,
I've searched it so, and all in vain,
Oh for a trap, a trap, a trap!"
Just as he said this, what should hap
At the chamber door, but a gentle tap
"Bless us," cried the Mayor, "what's that?
Anything like the sound of a rat
Makes my heart go pit-a-pat!
Come in!" the Mayor cried looking bigger;
And in did come the strangest figure.

His queer long coat, from heel to head,
Was half of yellow and half of red;
And he himself was tall and thin,
With sharp blue eyes, each like a pin,
And light loose hair, yet swathy skin,
No tuft on cheek, nor beard on chin;
And nobody could enough admire
The tall man and his quaint attire.

He advanced to the council-table:
And, "Please your honours," said he, "I'm able,
by means of a secret charm, to draw
All creatures living beneath the sun,
That creep, or swim, or fly, or run,
After me, so as you never saw'
And I chiefly use my charm
On creatures that do people harm,

The mole, and toad, and newt, and viper:
And people call me the Pied Piper.
And as for what your brain bewilders,
If I can rid your town of rats,
Will you give me a thousand guilders?"
"One? fifty thousand!" was the exclamation
Of the astonished Mayor and Corporation.

Into the street the Piper stept,
Smiling first a little smile,
As if he knew what magic slept
In his quiet pipe the while;
And ere three shrill notes the pipe uttered,
You heard as if an army muttered;
And the muttering grew to agrumbling;
And the grumbling grew to a mighty rumbling;
And out of the houses the rats came tumbling.
Great rats, small rats, lean rats, brawny rats,
Brown rats, black rats, grey rats, tawny rats;
Grave old plodders, gay young friskers,
Fathers, mothers, uncles, cousins,
Cocking tails and pricking whiskers,
Families by tens and dozens,
Brothers, sisters, husbands, wives -
Followed the Piper for their lives.
From street to street he piped advancing,
And step by step they followed dancing.

Until they came to the river Weser
Wherein all plunged and perished.

You should have heard the Hamelin people
Ringing the bells till they rocked the steeple.
"Go," cried the Mayor, "and get long poles!
Poke out the nests and block up the holes!
Consult with carpenters and builders,
And leave in our town not even a trace
Of the rats!" - when suddenly up the face
Of the Piper perked in the market place.
With a, "First, if you please, my thousand guilders!"

"A thousand guilders!" the Mayor looked blue;
So did the Corporation too.
"To pay this sum to a wandering fellow
With a gipsy coat of red and yellow!
Beside, "quoth the Mayor, with a knowing wink,
"Our business was done at the river's brink;
We saw with our eyes the vermin sink,
And what's dead can't come to life, I think.
So, friend, we're not the folks to shrink
From the duty of giving you something to drink,
And a matter of money to put in your poke;
But as for the guilders, what we spoke
Of them, as you very well know, was in joke.
Beside, our losses have made us thrifty;
A thousand guilders! Come, take fifty!"

The Piper's face fell, and he cried,
"No trifling! I can't wait; beside,
I've promised to visit by dinner-time
Bagdad, and accept the prime
Of the Head Cook's pottage, all he's rich in,
For having left in the Caliph's kitchen
Of a nest of scorpions no survivor -
With him I've proved no bargain driver,
With you, don't think I'll bate a stiver!
And folks who put me in a passion
May find me pipe to another fashion."

"How?" cried the Mayor, "d'ye think I'll brook
Being worse treated than a cook?
Insulted by a lazy ribald
With idle pipe and vesture piebald?
You threaten us, fellow? Do your worst,
Blow your pipe there, till you burst!"

Once more he stepped into the street;
And to his lips again
Laid his long pipe of smooth straight cane;
And ere he blew three notes, so sweet -
There was a rustling that seemed like a bustling
Of merry crowds justling, at pitching and hustling,
Small feet were pattering, wooden shoes clattering,

Little hands clapping, and little tongues chattering,
And, like fowls in a farmyard when barley is scattering,
Out came the children running.
All the little boys and girls,
With rosy cheeks and flaxen curls,
Tripping and skipping, ran merrily after
The wonderful music with shouting and laughter.

The Mayor was dumb, and the Council stood
As if they were changed into blocks of wood,
Unable to move a step or cry
To the children merrily skipping by,
As the Piper turned from the High Street
To where the Weser rolled its waters
Right in the way of their sons and daughters!
However, he turned from South to West,
And to Koppelberg Hill his steps addressed,
"He never can cross that mighty top!
He's forced to let the piping drop,
And we shall see our children stop!"

When lo! as they reached the mountain side
A wondrous portal opened wide,
As if a cavern were suddenly hollowed;
And the Piper advanced, and the children followed,

And when all were in to the very last,
The door in the mountain-side shut fast.

The Mayor sent East, West, North and South,
To offer the Piper by word of mouth,
Wherever it was men's lot to find him,
Silver and gold to his heart's content,
If he'd only return the way he went,
And bring the children all behind him.
And when they saw 'twas a lost endeavour,
And Piper and dancers were gone forever,
The place of the children's last retreat
They called it the Pied Piper's Street.
And opposite the place of the cavern
They wrote the story on a column,
How their children were stolen away;
And there it stands to this very day.

Rosabelle

by Sir Walter Scott

O listen, listen, ladies gay!
No haughty feat of arms I tell;
Soft is the note, and sad the lay
That mourns the lovely Rosabelle.

'Moor, moor the barge, ye gallant crew!
And, gentle lady, deign to stay!
Rest thee in Castle Ravensheuch,
Nor tempt the stormy firth to-day.

'The blackening wave is edged with white;
To inch and rock the sea-mews fly;
The fishers have heard the Water-Sprite,
Whose screams forbode that wreck is nigh.

'Last night the gifted Seer did view
A wet shroud swathed round lady gay;
Then stay thee, Fair, in Ravensheuch;
Why cross the gloomy firth to-day?'

'Tis not because the ring they ride,
And Lindesay at the ring rides well,
But that my sire the wine will chide
If 'tis not filled by Rosabelle.'

O'er Roslin all that dreary night
A wondrous blaze was seen to gleam;
'Twas broader than the watchfire's light,
And redder than the bright moonbeam.

It glared on Roslin's castled rock,
It ruddied all the copse-wood glen:
'Twas seen from Dryden's groves of oak,
And seen from cavern'd Hawthornden.

Seem'd all on fire that chapel proud,
Where Roslin's chiefs uncoffin'd lie,
Each Baron, for a sable shroud,
Sheath'd in his iron panoply.

Seem'd all on fire within, around,
Deep sacristy and altar's pale;
Shone every pillar foliage-bound,
And glimmer'd all the dead men's mail.

Blazed battlement and pinnet high,
Blazed every rose-carved buttress fair
So still they blaze, when fate is nigh
The lordly line of high Saint Clair.

There are twenty of Roslin's barons bold
Lie buried within that proud chapelle:
Each one the holy vault doth hold,
But the sea holds lovely Rosabelle.

And each Saint Clair was buried there,
With candle, with book, and with knell;
But the sea-caves rung, and the wild waves sung
The dirge of lovely Rosabelle.