Old King Coul (3)

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Old King Coul was a jolly old soul,
And a jolly old soul was he:
Old king Coul he had a brown bowl,
And they brought him in fidlers three:
And every fidler was a very good fidler,
And a very good fidler was he.
Fidell-didell, fidell-didell, with the fidlers three:
And there's no a lass in a' Scotland
Compared to our sweet Marjorie.

[further stanzas add on the personnel, the music being repeated ad lib. for the relevant phrase; last stanza:]

Old King Coul was a jolly old soul,
And a jolly old soul was he:
Old King Coul he had a brown bowl,
And they brought him in drummers three.
Rub-a-dub, rub-a-dub, with the drummers;
Twarra-rang, twarra-rang, with the trumpeters;
Twingle-twangle, twingle-twangle, with the harpers;
Ha-didell, how-didell, with the pipers;
Fidell-didell, fidell-didell, with the fiddlers three:
And there's no a lass in a' Scotland
Compared to our sweet Marjorie.

Herd 1776 (1869 repr. II.183), and almost verbatim (via Burns) in SMM V (1796), 486 (no. 473), with music; [Our auld king Coul,/ fill'd a jolly brown bowl,/ And he ca'd for his fidlers three/ quo' the fiddlers three/ 5-6 omitted/ 8 Like our]. Stenhouse (Illus. 417) is at some pains to supply Celtic authenticity for Cole ("the fabled father of the giant Fyn M'Coule"), but it seems an English song. (He also refers to a song in PPM [1719-20, III.61], as a parody; but the resemblance is mostly in the cumulation. Dr. Wm. King quotes "Good King Cole" in his Useful Transactions [1708-9], but mixes it up with PPM's "Four and twenty fiddlers", as William Chappell notes [PMOT, 634].) The SMM tune is a version of the air in Gay's Achilles (1733). See ODNR 134 (no. 112).

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