

Folk & Traditional Song Lyrics

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Queen Mary

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1.

My name is Queen Mary,
My age is sixteen;
My father's a farmer
In yonder green.
He has plenty of money
To dress me in silk,
But no bonnie laddie
Will take me awa.

One morning I rose
And I looked in the glass:
Says I to myself
'What a handsome young lass!'
My hands by my side,
And I laughed a ha ha!
For some bonnie laddie
Will take me awa.

2.

Queen Mary, Queen Mary, my age is sixteen,
My father's a farmer on yonder green,
With plenty of money to dress me fu' braw,
But nae bonnie laddie will tak' me awa.'
One morning I rose, and I looked in the glass,
Says I to myself I'm a handsome young lass;
My hands by my side and I gave a ha! ha!
Yet there's nae bonnie laddie will tak' me awa'.

3.

A row of children stand up--Sweet Mary faces them, and
stepping backward and forward recites the following:-

"Sweet Mary, Sweet Mary! my age is sixteen.
My father's a fairmer near old Aberdeen;
He has plenty o' money to dress me fu' braw,
Yet there's nae bonnie laddie will tak' me awa'."

Here Sweet Mary takes one of the row of children before
her by the hand; and, with hands joined and moving round
one another, she continues--

"One morning I rose, an' look't i' the glass;
Says I to mysel', I'm a handsome young lass--"

Here they let go hands, and Mary goes on,

"I put my hands to my sides an' gae a ha! ha!"
[All do the same.]

"For there's nae bonnie laddie will tak' me awa'."

4.

Queen Mary, Queen Mary, my age is sixteen,
My father's a farmer on yonder green;
He has plenty of money to keep me sae braw,
Yet nae bonnie laddie will tak' me awa'.

The morning so early I looked in the glass,
And I said to myself what a handsome young lass;
My hands by my side, and I gave a ha, ha,
Come awa', bonnie laddie, and tak' me awa'.

5.

My name is Queen Mary,
My age is sixteen,
My father's a farmer in Old Aberdeen;
He has plenty of money to dress me in black--
There's nae bonnie laddie 'ill tack me awa'.
Next mornin' I wakened and looked in the glass,
I said to myself, what a handsome young lass;
Put your hands to your haunches and give a ha, ha,
For there's nae bonnie laddie will tack ye awa'.

6.

My name is Queen Mary,
My age is sixteen,
My father's a farmer in yonder green;
He's plenty of money to dress in silk [fu' braw'],
For there's nae bonnie laddie can tack me awa'.
One morning I rose and I looked in the glass,
Says I to myself, I'm a handsome young lass;
My hands by my edges, and I give a ha, ha,
For there's nae bonnie laddie t' tack me awa'.

7.

Sweet Mary, sweet Mary, her age is sixteen,
My father's a farmer in yonder green,
He has plenty of money to keep him and me,
For there's no a laddie will take me awa'.

One morning I rose and I looked in the glass,

Says I tae mysel', Sic a handsome young lass,
Wi' my hauns on my hanches, I gave a Ha ha,
For there's no a laddie will take me awa'.

8.

My name is sweet Jenny, my age is sixteen,
My father's a farmer in yonder green;
He's plenty of money to dress me in silk,
And nae bonnie laddie'll tak' me a walk.

I rose in the morning, I looked in the glass,
I said to myself, What a handsome young lass.
My hands by my side and I gave a ha-ha,
And nae bonnie laddie'll tak' me awa'.

(1) Nicholson Golspie (1897), 132, with music (2 tunes)
p. 199. Used for a simple "line game", i.e. the soloist
stands in front of a line of her peers singing, and at
some point chooses a successor from the line. N. goes
into some detail on variants, local and other, with
suggestions as to original form, etc., and connects with
the English game "Green Gravel", of which a Scottish
version is in Gomme II (1898), 426: see "'Round Apples".
The tunes referred to are The Campbells Are Coming and
The Band at a Distance.

(2) Ford CR , 84: "It is played by girls only, who stand
in a row, with one in front alone to begin with, who
sings the verses, and chooses another from the line.
The two then join hands and advance and retire,
repeating together the verses, with suitable action, as
the one had done before alone. At the close they select
a third from the line; and the game proceeds thus until
all are taken over."

Montgomerie SNR (1946), 123 (no. 156) gives the same text
as Ford, except a bit more Scots.

(3) "Sweet Mary", from Stirling (SNQ II.5 [Nov. '88],
91). [Very similar to the Cullen version.]

(4) Gomme II (1898), 103, Berwickshire; from A.M. Bell,
Antiquary, XXX.17.

(5) Gomme ibid., from N. E. Scotland (Rev. W. Gregor).

(6) Gomme ibid., from Cullen (Gregor).

(7) Maclagan GDA (1901), 85. Sung moving round in a
ring; at "Ha ha" they place they hands on their sides
and laugh.

(8) MacColl Streets of Song, no. 17, from Glasgow; Ritchie
(1964), 12, from Edinburgh; and (Golden City, 1965, 152)
another version closer to the older ones: QM QM/ on/ sae
braw/ But nae bonnie laddie will tak' me awa'./ For.

The version in Kerr's Guild of Play (20, no. 25) is very similar [QMQM/ on/ in silk [or sae braw]/ But there's nae bonnie laddie will tak' me awa'.//One morning I rose and I looked in the glass,/ Said I to myself I'm a handsome young lass,/ Put my hands by my side and I gave a Ha Ha!/ But there's nae bonnie laddie will tak' me awa'. [Also in Buchan 101 SS (1962), 144, with music.] Fraser (1975), 107, and lines 1-4 [plenty o' siller tae dress me sae braw] for skipping, 131.

See FSJ pt. 19, 221-3; Ford Song Histories, 125-134, on "Bonny Dundee", which goes nowadays to this tune, put to it around 1840 by Miss Dolby and popularised quickly; previously occurring as a piano piece, "The Band at a Distance", and beyond doubt borrowed from the children's song. The use of the tune for Henri Hemy's hymn-tune Stella is from his hearing it sung by little girls at the village of that name near Newcastle game.

Cf. Gomme II (1898), 102, a version from Hexham (with a second part, "Father, mother, may I go" etc., to the tune of "London Bridge"); see "Father and Mother". A Somerset version in Gomme & Sharp V (1912), 8; with a variant, "Sweet Daisy", p. 10.

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