

Shelling Green Peas - song lyrics

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SHELLING GREEN PEAS

Tune-"Sarah's Young Man."

I sing you a ditty, of a damsel so pretty,
Who liv'd from the city some seventeen miles;
Her name is Maria, her worthy old sire
Was clerk and town crier-his name was John Styles.
With lips like the cherry, a smile, too, so merry,
I thought her the very one suited to please,
And when I first met her, and tried hard to get her,
For worse or for better, she was shelling green peas.

Chorus.

Under the trees, a bowl on her knees,
Maria sat silently shelling green peas.

I'd long lov'd her dearly, truly, sincerely,
At length I thought, really, I'd settle in life;
Although aged fifty, I'd been very thrifty,
And thought 'twas high time to be taking a wife.
With bosom on fire, in search of Maria,
Thro' lanes of wild-brier, o'er-shadowed by trees;
I stroll'd to the spot where, outside her cot there,
She was sitting so patiently shelling green peas.
Under the trees, a bowl on her knees, &c.

I step up unto her, commencing to woo her,
I said, "That no truer fond heart could be found
Than mine, if she'd take me some morning, and make me
The happiest mortal for twenty miles round."
I said, "Our life might be one round of delight,
Like the little birds singing upon the green trees."
To a whisper then dropping my voice, without stopping,
The question was popping, as she popped the peas.
Under the trees, a bowl on her knees, &c.

No answer she made, and I was much afraid
That this beautiful maid had not heard all I said.
It her feet kneeling, I tried to be stealing
A kiss-when came reeling her hand on my head;
'Do you think I'd engage." she cried out, in a rage,
"With a man twice my age, so clear out if you please."
In a terrible passion, at me she sent crashing,
On my head smashing, the bowl of green peas.
Under the trees, a bowl on her knees, &c.

By way of addenda, she said, "Sir, remember.
That May and December can never unite,
If our leave, sir, be taking," my neck nearly breaking,
I made my escape in a terrible fright.
I never will marry, but single will tarry,
Tho' friends and acquaintances do nothing but tease;
Whenever they meet me, in this style they greet me,
"Old boy, what's the price now of lamb and green peas?"
Under the trees, a bowl on her knees, &c.