

Folk & Traditional Song Lyrics

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Clerk's Twa Sons o' Owsenford

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Oh I will tell a tale of woe,
Which makes my heart richt sair;
The Clerk's two sons of Oxenfoord
Are too soon gone to lair.

They thought their father's service mean,
Their mother's no great affair;
But they would go to fair Berwick,
To learn [some] unco lair.

They had not been in fair Berwick
A twelve month and a day,
Till the clerk's two sons of Oxenfoord
With the mayor's two daughters lay.

This word came to the mighty mayor,
As he htmted the rae,
That the clerks two sons of Oxenfoord
With his two daughters lay.

'If they have lain with my daughters,
The heirs of all my land,
I make a vow, and will keep it true,
To hang them with my hand.'

When he was certain of the fact,
An angry man was he,
And he has taken these two brothers,
And hanged them on the tree.

Word it has come to Oxenfoord's clerk,
Ere it was many day,
That his two sons sometime ago
With the mayor's two daughters lay.

'O saddle a horse to me,' he cried,
'O do it quick and soon,
That I may ride to fair Berwick,
And see what can be done.'

But when he came to fair Berwick
A grieved man was he,

When that he saw his two bonnie sons
Both hanging on the tree.

'O woe is me,' the clerk cried out,
'This dismal sight to see,
All the whole comfort of my life
Dead hanging on the tree!'

He turned his horse's head about,
Making a piteous moan,
And all the way to Oxenfoord
Did sad and grievously groan.

His wife did hastily cry out,
'You only do I see;
What have you done with my two sons,
You should have brought to me?'

'I put them to some higher lair,
And to a deeper scule;
You will not see your bonnie sons
Till the haly days of Yule.

'And I will spend my days in grief,
Will never laugh nor sing;
There's never a man in Oxenfoord
Shall hear my bridle ring.'

Child #72

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