

Folk & Traditional Song Lyrics

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Pretty Polly 3

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"Good morning, pretty Polly, we have met in good time,
A question for to ask you which I hope is no crime;
Come, sit you down beside me, and married we will be,
And learn how to love me, my charming Polly.

"I will buy you fine ribbons, I will buy you fine rings,
I will buy you fine presents of fifty fine things,
I will buy you a silk dress all flowered so neat,
And then won't you have me, my charming Polly

"I care not for your ribbons, I care not for your rings,
I care not for your presents of fifty fine things,
I care not for your silk dress all flowered so neat,
For I cannot have a married man until he is free."

"Oh, Polly, oh, Polly, lend me your knife;
I will go right straight home and kill my old wife,
Kill my old wife and children all three,
And then won't you have me, my charming Polly

"Oh, Billy, Oh, Billy, don't you do so;
I will go right straight home and let no one know;
For seven long years I will wait upon thee,
For I cannot have a married man until he is free."

It is six long years rolled over, the seventh one passed;
"My old wife is dying,--she is dead, sir, at last."
He thanked his kind maker, how happy was he,
And straightway went courting his charming Polly.

He married his Polly, and took her home,
He made her a present of which she thought he had none.
Come, all you fair maids, and take warning by me,
And never have a married man until he is free.

The cuckoo is a pretty bird, she sings as she flies,
She brings us good tidings and tells us no lies;
She sucks all sweet flowers to make her voice clear,
And never sings cuckoo till the spring of the year.

A meeting is a pleasure, a parting is a grief,
An unconstant lover is worse than a thief;

A thief can but rob you, and take all you have,
But an unconstant lover will send you to your grave.

The grave can but moulder you and turn you to dust,
There is scarce one in a hundred a fair maid can trust;
They will offer they your tongue to deceive,
There is scarce one in a hundred I can believe.

A-walking and a-talking and a-walking was I
To meet pretty Polly, I'll meet her by and by:
I'll meet her in the green meadows where it is my delight,
And walk with her and talk with her from morning till night.

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From Eddy, Ballads and Songs of Ohio

Collected from Mrs. S.T. Topper of Ashland, Ohio

Kittredge discusses the use of the cuckoo stanza (number 8 above) in Journal
30, PP7 350-j52, i" "Ballads and Songs"

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