

Folk & Traditional Song Lyrics

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The Saracen

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I'll hang my harp on the willow tree
and away to the war I'll go.
My peaceful home has no charm for me.
the battlefield no pain.

The lady I love will soon be a bride
with a diadem on her brow.
Oh why did she flatter my boyish pride?
She's going to leave me now.

She took me away from my warlike lord
and gave me a silken suit.
I thought no more of my master's sword
while I played on my mistress's lute.

She seemed to think me a boy above
her pages of low degree.
Had I but loved with a boyish love
It would have been better for me.

One tress of her golden hair I'll twine
with my helmet's sable plume.
and then on the fields of Palestine
I'll seek an early doom.

And if by Saracen I fall
mid the noble and the brave.
A tear from my lady love is all
I ask for a warrior's grave.

My grandmother Alice Duffield sang me the following song
recently on the occasion of her 100th birthday.

She stated that her mother sang it when she was a child
which places the time of her hearing it in the 1900-1910
range. Her father was alternately a manager, owner, clerk,
and labor arbitrator in coal mines throughout the
southeastern united states. Because of their remote
living conditions, I believe this song to be a genuine
ballad about one of the crusades. ES

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