

Guilty Or Not Guilty - song lyrics

American Old-time song lyrics from www.traditionalmusic.co.uk

GUILTY OR NOT GUILTY?

A Popular Recitation.

She stood at the bar of justice,
A creature wan and wild,
In form too small for a woman.
In feature too old for a child;
For a look so worn and pathetic
Was stamped on her pale young face.
It seemed long years of suffering
Must have left that silent trace.

"Your name," said the Judge, as he eyed her.
With kindly look, yet keen,
"Is-" "Mary Maguire, if you please, sir."
"And your age?" " I am turned fifteen."
"Well, Mary,"-and then from a paper
He slowly and gravely read-
"You are charged here-I am sorry to say it-
With stealing three loaves of bread."

"You look not like an old offender,
And I hope that you can show
The charge to be false. Now, tell me,
Are you guilty of this, or no?"
A passionate burst of weeping
Was at first her sole reply;
But she dried her tears in a moment.
And looked in the Judge's eye."

"I will tell you just how it was, sir,
My father and mother are dead.
And my little brothers and sisters
Were hungry, and asked mo for bread.
At first I earned it for them,
By working hard all day,
But somehow the times were hard, sir,
And the work all fell away."

"I could get no more entertainment;
The weather was bitte freezing
The young ones cried and Shivered
So what was I to do, sir?
I am guilty, but do not condemn;
I took-O! was it stealing ?
The bread to give to them."

Every man in the court-room-
Graybeard and thoughtless youth-
Knew, as he looked upon her.
That the prisoner spoke the truth.
Out from their pockets came 'kerchiefs,
Out from their eyes sprung tears,
And out from old, faded wallets,
Treasures hoarded for years.

The Judge's face was a study.
The strangest you ever saw,

From the music archive at www.traditionalmusic.co.uk

As he cleared his throat and murmured
Something about the law.
For one so learned in such matters.
So wise in dealing with men,
He seemed, on a simple question,
Sorely puzzled just then.

But no one blamed him, or wondered,
When at last these words they heard:
"The sentence of this young prisoner
Is for the present deferred.
And no one blamed him or wondered
When he went to her and smiled,
And tenderly led from the court-room,
Himself, the "guilty" child!