False Sir John 2

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1 FALSE Sir John a wooing came
To a maid of beauty fair;
May Colven was this lady's name,
Her father's only heir.

2 He wood her butt, he wood her hen,
He wood her in the ha,
Until he get this lady's consent
To mount and ride awa.

3 He went down to her father's bower,
Where all the steeds did stand,
And he's taken one of the best steeds
That was in her father's land.

4 He's got on and she'a got on,
And fast as they could flee,
Until they came to a lonesome part,
A rock by the side of the sea.

5 'Loup off the steed,' says false Sir John,
'Your bridal bed you see ;
For I have drowned seven young ladies,
The eight one you shall be.

6 ' Cast off, cast off, my May Colven,
All and your silken gown,
For it's oer good and oer costly
To rot in the salt sea foam.

7 ' Cast off, cast off, my May Colven,
All and your embroiderd shoen,
For they 're oer good and oer costly
To rot in the salt sea foam.

8 '0 turn you about, 0 false Sir John,
And look to the leaf of the tree,
For it never became a gentleman
A naked woman to see.

9 He turnd himself straight round about,
To look to the leaf of the tree;

So swift as May Colven was
To throw him in the sea.

10 '0 help, 0 help, my May Colven,
O help, or else I'll drown;
I'll take you home to your father's bower,
And set you down safe and sound.'

11 'No help, no help, 0 false Sir John,
No help, nor pity thee;
Tho seven king's-daughters you have drownd,
But the eight shall not be me.'

12 So she went on her father's steed,
As swift as she could flee,
And she came home to her father's bower
Before it was break of day.

13 Up then and spoke the pretty parrot:
'May Colven, where have you been?
What has become of false Sir John,
That woo'd you so late the streen?

14 'He woo'd you butt, he woo'd you ben,
He woo'd you in the ha,
Until he got your own consent
For to mount and gang awa.

15 '0 hold your tongue my pretty parrot,
Lay not the blame upon me;
Your cup shall be of the flowered gold,
Your cage of the root of the tree.'

16 Up then spake the king himself,
In the bed-chamber where he lay:
'What ails the pretty parrot,
That prattles so long or day?'

17 'There came a cat to my cage door,
It almost a worried me.
And I was calling on May Colven
To take the cat from me.'

Child #4
Child's version C
a. Herd's MSS, I, 166. b. Herd's Ancient and Modern Scottish Songs, 1776, I, 93.
c. Motherwell's Minstrelry, p. 67, =b "collated with a copy obtained from recitation."
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