

The Flower of Serving Men

My fa - ther he built me a ___ shad - y bow - er ___

And co-ver'd it o - - ver with sham - rock flow - ers;

The fin - est bow ___ er that ev - er I see,

My ag - ed fa - - ther he ___ built for me

My father he built me a shady bower,
And cover'd it over with shamrock flowers.
The finest bower that ever I see,
My aged father he built for me.

My father he married me to a noble knight,
My mother she ow'd me a dreadful spite;
She sent nine robbers all in one night,
To rob my bower and slay my knight.

How could she have done me a bigger harm
To murder my babies all in my arms?
Left nothing at all for to wrap them in,
But the bloody sheets that my Love died in.

All alone, all alone then I will wash them,
All alone, all then I will bury them;
Cut off my hair and I'll change my name,
From Fair Eleanor to Sweet William.

I will saddle my horse and away I'll ride,
Till I come to where some fair king do reside,
To one of his servants I'll give a gay gold ring,
To carry a message unto the King.

"It's do you want either cook or groom,
Or do you want any stableman?
Do you want a manservant all in your hall.
To wait on the nobles when they do call?"

"It's we don't want neither cook nor groom,
Nor we don't want ne'er a stableman;
But we wants a manservant all in our hall,
To wait on the nobles when they do call."

Not very long after it happen'd so,
The young King and his nobles did a-hunting go,
Left no-one at all but a gay old man,
To keep company with Sweet William.

And when she thought she was all alone,
Took down her fiddle and play'd a tune:
"Once my love was a rich, noble knight,
And me myself was a lady bright."

Then bye and bye this young King came home,
"What news, what news, oh! my gay old man?"
"Good news, good news, oh! my Lord," said he,
"Your servant man is a gay lady."

"Go and fetch me down, then, a pair of stays,
That I might lace up her slender waist,
Go and fetch me down that gay gown of green,
That I might dress her up much like my Queen."

"Oh no. Oh! no. Oh! my Lord", said she.
"Pay me my wages and I'll go free,
For I never heard tell of a stranger thing,
As a servantman to become a queen."