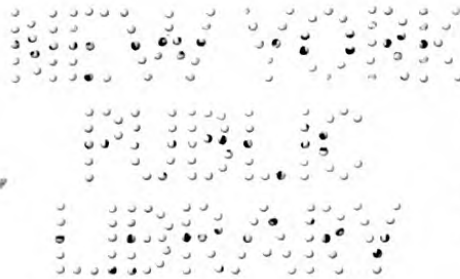


The
Story of the Carol

BY
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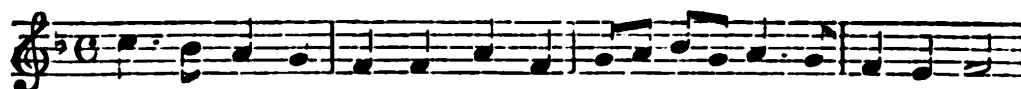
London
The Walter Scott Publishing Co., Ltd.
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1911

Story of the Carol

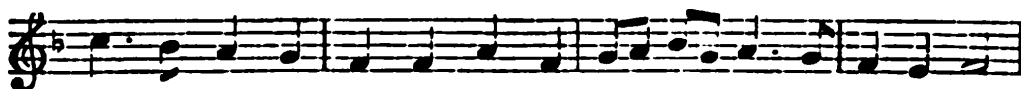
Midsummer carols similarly marked the summer solstice, which, like that of Yule-tide, was represented by a wheel in the old Runic *Fasti*, because (said Bede) of the sun's annual rotation. In old times (and to this day in Cornwall) the people lighted fires on Midsummer Eve, and danced before them with singing.¹ Anciently the Watch of London used to march (two thousand strong) on this eve, a custom arising with Henry III. and declining with Henry VIII. In the *Blodengerdd Cymrii* (Anthology of Wales), 1779, there are also carols to Winter, to the Nightingale, whom one would imagine

**Carols
of the
Seasons**

NOS GALAN. (New Year's Night.)



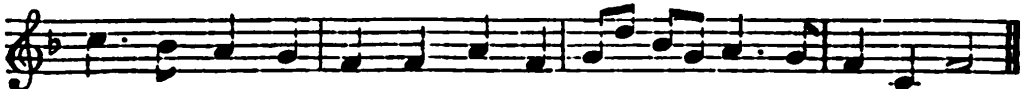
O mor gyn-nes myn-wes mein-wen fa lal fa la la la la.
O how soft my fair one's bo-som fa lal fa la la la la.



O mor fwyn yw Hwyn Mei llio-nem; fa la fa la la la la.
O how sweet the grove in blos-som; fa la fa la la la la.



O mor fel-us yw'r aif-an-an dad lea dad lea, lal lal la,
O how bless-ed are the bliss-es dad lea dad lea, lal lal la,



Gyd a ferch a mwyn-ion eir-ian fal lal fa la la la la.
Words of love and mu-tual kiss-es fal lal fa la la la la.

¹ As late as the seventeenth century apprentices and servants of York danced in the nave of the Minster on Shrove Tuesdays.

Whitsun Plays

was well able to sing his own, and another to Cupid. Here is one which is sung on New Year's Eve; it is copied from Jones's *Welsh Bards* (1794).

Easter, like Christmas, has its mystery-plays, church celebrations, and popular songs. The Italians boast of a *Ludus Paschalis* dating from the twelfth century. In England a *Ludus Paschalis*, or Easter play, of the fifteenth century was regularly performed at Hyde Abbey and St. Swithin's Priory (Winchester); it also became part of the Corpus Christi celebrations at Coventry, and the Whitsun plays of Chester.¹ The popular vagrant pace-egging songs, which like those of the ancient Rhodian boys Chelidonizing, were sung in anticipation of a gift, in spite of their rude doggerel rhyme bespeak a custom widely prevalent all over Europe.

Pace-
Egging

Here's two or three jolly boys, all of one mind,
We have come a pace-egging, and hope you'll prove kind;
I hope you'll prove kind with your eggs and strong beer,
And we'll come no more near you until the next year.

The German formula is in better taste :—

Alle gute ding seynd drey.
Drum schenk dir drey Oster Ey
Glaub und Hoffnung sambt der Lieb.
Niemahls auss dem Herzen schieb
Glaub der Kirch, vertrau auf Gott,
Lieb Ihn biss in den todt.

¹ See Wright's *Chester Plays* (1847), p. 227, where it is found to be in Latin. Sharp (*Pageants*, 1825, p. 5) mentions a *Ludus Coventriae* in the old English rhythm.