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Riddles in German and English folk songs

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RIDDLES IN GERMAN AND ENGLISH FOLK SONGS

BY

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A. B. University of Illinois, 1906

THESIS

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the

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IN GERMAN

IN

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I HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER MY SUPERVISION BY

Mary Louise Gay

ENTITLED Riddles in German and English Folk Songs

BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING THIS PART OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE

DEGREE OF Master of Arts

Julius Goebel
In Charge of Major Work

Julius Goebel
Head of Department

Recommendation concurred in:

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R I D D L E S

I N E N G L I S H A N D G E R M A N F O L K S O N G S.

A study of the literature of different nations clearly shows that man has always had a fondness for expressing himself in enigmatic fashion, for riddles play an important part in popular story and that from very remote times. In the Hebrew chronicles there appear certain problems which the Queen of Sheba set King Solomon as a test of his wisdom. According to a legend of ancient Greece the Gods sent a monster to prey upon the people of Thebes until some man should come, wise enough to solve the famous sphinx riddle. OEdipus answered it and the monster turned to stone - a fitting symbol of the riddle solved. Again, the Latins displayed a fondness for enigmas, as evinced by many of their writers who set their people some of the self-same riddles that have busied the mind of man from that day on to this.

Among no other nations, however, has the riddle been so popular as among Teutonic peoples. They have always taken a peculiar delight in this form of wit. It has appealed not only to their learned men, but also, in still greater degree, to the people in general. Whoever wishes, then, to get a true idea of Teutonic folk lore must take into account the riddle for it appears everywhere in our early literature, and rightly claims for itself the most careful consideration.

To make a complete study of Teutonic riddles would be a monumental task because of their wide-spread popularity and the innum-

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erable variations that the same riddle shows in different localities. The purpose of this study, however, is to compare only those riddles which appear in German and English folk song. No attention, therefore, will be given to the countless puzzle questions or prose riddles current among the two peoples, but rather to those rhymed riddles which in their simplicity of content and form, and in their origin belong to the folk song. These folk riddles have been handed down by word of mouth from father to son, and show variations, accordingly, in details but a surprising correspondence in thought! They exist singly in the two countries and also are to be found, incorporated in ballads or in other more ambitious poems.

The riddle as it appears, woven into the folk songs until it becomes an integral part of the fabric is especially interesting. The largest class of these riddle tales is that in which one party has to guess another's riddles or two rivals compete in giving or guessing them under penalty in either instance of forfeiting life or some other heavy wager. In English the most famous riddle song of this class is the ballad of King John and the abbot.[1] The King, jealous of his subjects' riches, accuses him of treason:

"Yes, yes, father abbot, thy fault it is highe,
And now for the same thou needest must dye;
For except thou canst answer me questions three,
Thy head shall be smitten from thy bodie.

"And first," quo' the king, "when I'm in this stead,
With my crowne of gold so faire on my head,

---

1 English and Scottish Ballads: Child. Vol. VIII, p. 6 ff.

Among all my liege-men so noble of birthe,
Thou must tell me to one penny what I am worthe.

"Secondlye, tell me, without any doubt,
How soon I may ride the whole world about;
And at the third question thou must not shrink,
But tell me here truly what I do think."

The abbot is given three weeks in which to answer the questions, but is entirely at sea. He meets a shepherd who offers to ride to London and, dressed in the abbot's gown, answer for him. To the first riddle he says:

"For thirty pence our Saviour was sold
Among the false Jews, as I have been told:
And twenty nine is the worth of thee,
For I think thou art one penny worser than he."

To the second question the pseudo abbot replies:

"You must rise with the sun and ride with the same
Until the next morning he riseth againe;
And then your grace need not make any doubt
But in twenty-four hours you'll ride it about."

The King is well pleased at these answers but propounds again his third riddle, as to what he thinks, and receives this solution:

"Yea, that shall I do, and make your grace merry;
You thinke I'm the abbot of Canterbury;

But I'm his poor shepherd, as plain you may see,
That am come to beg pardon for him and for mee."

Delighted at the shepherd's wit, the King rewards him and grants the abbot a pardon.

This ballad was very popular and appeared in many English versions,[1] in all of which the riddles remain practically unchanged. In German, too, this theme has been used several times. It is found in Burcard Waldis' Esopus under the title of "Wie ein Sewhirt zum Apte wird". Again it appears in Johannes Pauli's "Schimpf und Ernst", in a Fastnachtspiel, probably by Hans Folz, entitled "Ein Spiel von einem Keiser und eim Apt". Finally, Bürger has a version called "Der Kaiser und der Abt", 1782.

Another less familiar riddle ballad of the same type appears in a manuscript of about 1450, under the title of "Inter Diabulus et Virgo".[2] The stake here is the soul of a maiden whom the devil threatens to carry off if she cannot answer his riddles. She solves them all, and calls the devil by his right name, thus no doubt putting him to flight. This ballad contains many characteristic riddles which appear in other songs both English and German. It reads as follows:

Wol ze here a wonder thynge
Betwyxt a mayd and the fowle fende?

Thys spake the fend to the mayd:
Beleue on me, mayd, to-day.

---

1 Cf : King John and the Bishop in English and Scotch Popular Ballads p. 2 : Edited by Sargent and Kittredge.
2 English and Scotch Popular Ballads, p. 4 : Sargent and Kittredge.

Mayd, mote y thi leman be,
Wyssedom y wolle teche the:

All the wyssedom off the world,
Hyf you wolt be true and forward holde.

What ys hyer than ys (the) tre?
What ys dupper than ys the see?

What ys scharpper than ys the thorne?
What ys loder than ys the horne?

What (ys) longger than ys the way?
What ys rader than ys the day?

What (ys) bether than ys the bred?
What (ys) scharpper than ys the dede?

What (ys) grenner than ys the wode?
What ys sweeter than ys the note?

What ys swifter than ys the wynd?
What ys recher than ys the kynge?

What ys geluer than ys the wex?
What (ys) softer than ys the flex?

'But thou now answery me,
Thou schalt forsothe my leman be.'

Ihesu; for thy myld mygth
As thou art kynge und knygt,

Lene me wisdome to answere here rygth,
And schylde me fram the foule wygth!

Hewene ys heyer than ys the tre,
Helle ys dypper than ys the see.

Hongyr ys scharpper than (ys) the thorne,
Thonder ys lodder than ys the horne.

Loukynge ys longer than ys the way,
Syn ys rader than ys the day.

Godys blesse ys better than ys the brede,
Payne ys strenger than ys the dede.

Gras ys grenner than ys the wode
Loue ys swetter than ys the notte

Thowt ys swifter than ys the wynde,
Ihesus ys recher than ys the kynge.

Safer ys geluer than ys the wex,
Selke ys softer than ys the flex

Now, thou fende, styl thou be;
Nelle ich speke no more with the!

Very like this is another contest of wits described in an English ballad called "The fause knight upon the road".[1] The idea at the bottom of this tale is that the devil will carry off the wee boy if he can nonplus him with his questions, but he fails in

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1 Child: English and Scottish Ballads Vol. VIII, p. 269.

his efforts. This is not strictly speaking a riddle song but is very closely akin to it:

"O whare are ye gaun?"
  Quo' the fause knicht upon the road;
"I'm gaun to the scule,"
  Quo' the wee boy, and still he stude.

"What is that upon your back?"
  Quo' the fause knicht etc.
"Atweel it is my bukes,"
  Quo' the wee boy, etc.

"Wha's aucht they sheep?"
  Quo' the fause knicht etc.
"They are mine and my mither's "
  Quo' the wee boy, etc.

"How monie o' them are mine?"
  Quo' the fause knicht etc.
"A' they that hae blue tails,"
  Quo' the wee boy, etc.

"I wiss ye were on yon tree:" etc.
"And a gude ladder under me," etc.

"And the ladder for to break:" etc.
"And you for to fa' down", etc.

"I wiss ye were in yon sie:" etc.
"And a gude bottom under me", etc.

"And the bottom for to break," etc.

"And ye to be drowned," etc.

Mention must also be made of another delightful English ballad of the same type, in which, however, only a single riddle appears. This is the "Marriage of Sir Gawain",[1] and the stake here for the solution of the problem is the life of King Arthur:

Arthur had been wandering in a wood and had been captured by a baron who set him free on these terms, - that he come back on New Year's day,

"And bring me word what thing it is
That a woman (will) most desire;
This shall be thy ransome, Arthur," he says,
"For Ile have noe other hier."

Arthur puts this question in all quarters, but in vain. As he rides back on the fated day, he meets a frightfully ugly woman who promises to help him answer the riddle if he will give her one of his knights as a husband. He assents and offers this explanation to the baron:

"As I came over a more,
I see a lady where shee sate
Betweene an oke and a green hollen;
She was clad in red scarlett
And she says a woman will have her will,
And this is all her chief desire."

Upon Arthur's return he tells his knights that he has a wife for

---

1 English and Scotch Popular Ballads. p. 55 f: Edited by Sargent and Kittredge.

one of them. When they see the bride they decline the honor. Gawain at last chivalrously offers to marry her, does so, and she becomes a beautiful woman. For through marriage only could she be released from the spell of ugliness which had been cast upon her by a jealous stepmother.

The German, too, shows many Rätsel of this class in which the reward for their solution is the life of a person sentenced to death. I have not been able, thus far to find them incorporated in songs, but there are several really volkstümliche, rhymed riddles in which a life is at stake. The Ilo-Ratsel[1] is an especially well known example of the kind, for it is spread over the whole land, and appears in more than 150 variations.

Auf Ilo geh ich,
Auf Ilo steh ich,
Auf Ilo bin ich hubs ah und fein,
Rat't, meine herren, was soll das sein.

A woman condemned to death saves her life through this riddle: she had had a pair of shoes made for herself from the skin of her dog Ilo.

In another similar Märchen,[2] a poor criminal as he was being led to execution, saw a nest containing seven young birds on the gallows and the parent birds were feeding them from the flesh of a criminal who had preceded him to execution. He propounded the following riddle to the authorities, which they were unable to answer, and so pardoned him:

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1 Wossidlo: Mecklenburgische Volksüberlieferungen, I, p. 191.
2 Simrock: Deutsche Volksbücher, Vol. 7, p. 435. Other Rätsel märchen are also to be found here: p. 435, ff.

Hoch hing ich
Sieben lebendige fing ich,
Einen Todten sah ich dabei
Ihr Herren rathet was das sei;
Und könnt ihr's nicht erdenken,
So wollt mir das Leben schenken."

There is among the folk songs of Sweden one[1] which belongs to this same class of riddle songs. It is submitted here because it contains several riddles which exist singly in the folk rätsel of Germany. The Goth King Hydrik had sworn to free any condemned man who could put to him a riddle that he could not solve. The God, Odin, disguised as Gester, a blind man who had fallen under the ban of the King's displeasure, submitted a number of riddles in the hope of saving Gester's life. Hydrik was very wise and answered them all except the last: "Was Odin seinem Sohn Balder ins Ohr gesagt habe, als dieser zum Scheiterhaufen getragen wurde?" Hydrik now realized that he was contesting with the God and attacked him with his sword but Odin escaped. One or two examples of the truly volkstümliche riddles of this Herwörsaga follow:

1. Wer ist der Dunkele,
Der über Land fährt;
Verschlingt See und Wald;
Den Wind er fürchtet
Nicht aber den Menschen
Die Sonne verzehrt ihn. (Der Nebel).

---

1 Friedrich: Geschichte des Rätsels, S. 105.

2. Vier gehen, [1]
Vier hängen
Den Weg zwei zeigen
Und den Hunden wehren;
Einer hängt hinten. (Eine Kuh).

3. Wie war das Wunder,
Ich draussen gewahrte:
Mit zehn der Zungen,
Mit zwanzig Augen,
Mit vierzig Füssen;
Schritt langsam einher.

An English version of no. 3 appears in the Holme riddle book[2]:

As I went on my way
I heard a great wonder
Of a monster that had ten heads, ten tayls,
Forty feet and four score nayls.
(A sow with nine pigs).

---

1 Cf. Wossidlo: Mecklenburgische Volksuberlieferungen, S. 80 for 22 popular versions of this riddle.
2 Cf. Modern Language notes, N. S. 11, p. 226, no. 53.

II

In a second great class of riddle songs the reward for the solution of the problems is the hand of the lady, which the suitor can gain only in this way. Perhaps the most famous riddle ballad of this class in English, is "Captain Wedderburn's Courtship". [1]

The Captain meets the Lord of Roslin's daughter walking alone in the wood. Attracted by her beauty, he carries her away to be his wife. She refuses him except he fulfill these three conditions:

"It's ye maun get to my supper
A cherry without a stane;
And ye maun get to my supper
A chicken without a bane;
And ye maun get to my supper
A bird without a ga'."

He solves the problems readily, -

"It's when the cherry is in the flirry,
I'm sure it has nae stane;
And when the chicken's in the egg,
I'm sure it has nae bane;
And sin the flood o' Noah
The dow she had no ga'.

The young lady is still unsatisfied and tests him with these riddles:

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1 Child: Eng. and Scot. Ballads, Vol. 8, p. 4.

"What's greener than the greenest grass?
  What hicher than the trees?
What's waur nor an ill woman's wish?
  What's deeper than the seas?
What bird sings first? and whareupon
  The dew doth first down fa'?"

To this he answers:

"Vergris is greener than the grass;
  Heaven's hicher than the trees;
The deil's warse nor a woman's wish;
  Hell's deeper than the seas;
The cock craws first; on cedar top
  The dew down first doth fa'."

Again the good Captain unravels her riddles:

"My father he has winter fruit
  That in December grew;
My mither has an Indian gown,
  That waft was ne'er ca'd thro';
A sparrow's horn is quickly found;
  There's ane on every claw;
There's ane upon the neb o' him,
  Perhaps there may be twa.
The priest he's standing at the door,
  Just ready to come in:
Nae man can say that he was born,
  To lie it were a sin;

A wild bore tore his mither's side,
He out o' it did fa'."

There is another familiar example[1] in English of a riddle song where a bride is at stake. The version given here is called "The Bonny Hind Squire," but it also appears under the titles "The Courteous Knight" and "Proud Lady Margaret." The squire comes to woo the lady who has treated all her lovers with scant courtesy. He says he will die if she refuses him her favor, but she retorts that many a better man has died for her sake. She then asks him these riddles:

"What's the first thing in flower, she said,
That springs in muir or dale?
What's the neist bird that sings, she says,
Unto the nightingale?
Or what is the finest thing, she says,
That king or queen can wile?"

"The primrose is the first in flower,
That springs in muir or dale;
The thristle-throat is the neist that sings
Unto the nightingale.
And yellow gowd is the finest thing
That king or queen can wile."

"You have asked many questions, ladye,
I've you as many told;
But how many pennies roun'
Mak' a hundred pound i' gold?

---

1 Percy Society, Vol. 17, p 42.

How many sma' fishes
Do swim the salt seas roun'?
Or what's the seemliest sight you'll see
Into a May mornin'?"

Here the riddles end, the rest of the ballad telling that the Jolly Hind Squire is her brother who had died in a far off land. He comes back in this vision, to make her "leave off her pride."

The German, too, does not lack for songs in which the lover wins his ladye faire by answering the riddles she sets for him. The following Märchen[1] is a delightful example of this type:

"Ein Junggesell sprach eine Jungfer an
Ob sie ihn haben wollt zum Mann;
Das Jungfräulein antwortet eben:
Junggesell, könnt ihr mir geben
Was ich von Herzen wünschen wollt
Über alle Schätze, Silber und Gold,
Was ich nicht hab und Ihr nicht habt,
Werdet nimmermehr damit begabt,
Könnt es auch gar nicht haben:
Wollt ihr mich damit begaben,
Ich geb euch meine Hand zur Treu,
Und gelob euch ohne Scheu
Dass Niemand auf der Erde,
Mir jemals lieber werde."

In his Mecklenbürgische Volksüberliefenengen, Nr. 40, Wossidlo has another riddle of this type which appears in many versions:

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1 Simrock: Deutsche Volksbücher, Vol. 7, p. 435.

"In meines herren garten sind sieben Kameraden,
Keen eeken, keen boken, kein wunderlichesgleichen;
Wer dieses kann raten, der soll's haben,
Wer dieses kann denken, dem will ich mein herz schenken."
(Siebengestirn).

An older Germanic song which is a true prototype of these later riddle songs is to be found in the Eddalied vom Alvis. [1] The dwarf Alvis wishes to marry Thor's beautiful daughter, but she is refused him unless he can answer all the riddles that Thor gives him. He succeeds in answering them all, but loses his life by tarrying until day breaks.

There is another German folk song - Die Trugrose[2] - in which there is a great similarity to the Rätsellieder in which the suitor gains the lady's hand by solving her riddles. In this song the lady jestingly sets the knight a task which she believes he will find impossible to perform. To his wooing she answers:

"Und euer Schlafbuhl bin ich nicht,
Ich bin ein Mägdlein reine,
Ihr bringt mir denn drei Rosen roth
Die dies Jahr sind gebrochen."

It is winter and he rides over hill and dale in vain search until he hits upon the expedient of having an artist paint for him three roses which he takes to her:-

"Das Mägdlein auf der Laube stund,
Gar kläglich tat sie weinen;
Ach Herr, ich hab's in Schimpf geredt,

---

1 Friedrich: Geschichte des Rätsels, S.123 ff.
2 Deutsche National Litteratur, Herder's Werke I. 2. p. 454.

Ich meint, ihr findt ihr keine" etc.

III

In a third type of riddle songs a clever girl wins a husband and sometimes a crown by her quickness of wit in solving difficult but practicable problems. The English ballad, "Lay the Bent to the Bonny Broom"[1] is representative of this class. This song is known also as "A Riddle Wittily Expounded" and as "The Three Sisters":

A young knight tests the lady whom he loves with these riddles:

"If thou canst answer me questions three,
This very day will I marry thee."

"O what what is longer than the way?
Or what is deeper than the sea?"

"Or what is louder than a horn?
Or what is sharper than a thorn?"

"Or what is greener than the grass?
Or what is worse than a woman was?"

"O love is longer than the way,
And hell is deeper than the sea."

"And thunder's louder than the horn,
And hunger's sharper than a thorn."

---

1 Child: English and Scottish Ballads, Vol. 8, p. 18.

"And poyson's greener than the grass,
And the devil's worse than a woman was." [1]

There is another English version of this ballad called "The Unco' Knight's Wooing." [2] Here, however, the riddle is made more of, and there are ten questions to be answered. The maid discovers, too, that her suitor is the foul fiend himself and tells him so, thus putting him to flight. This ballad is a combination of "Lay the Bent to the Bonny Broom", and the contest "Inter Diabulus et Virgo". The unco' knight says to the maid:

"Gin ye will answer me questions ten,
The morn ye shall be made my ain.
O what is higher nor the tree?
And what is deeper nor the sea?
Or what is heavier nor the lead?
And what is better nor the breid?
Or what is whiter nor the milk?
Or what is safter nor the silk?
Or what is sharper nor a thorn?
Or what is louder nor a horn?
Or what is greener nor the grass?
Or what is waur nor a woman was?"
"O heaven is higher nor the tree,
And hell is deeper nor the sea.
O sin is heavier nor the lead,
The blessings' better nor the breid.

---

1 Cf. Deutsche National Litteratur, Herder's Werke, Vol. I, 2, Book V, No. 19 for the ballad, "Die Drei Fragen", in which the same riddles appear.
2 Sargent and Kittredge: Eng. and Scotch Popular Ballads, p. 2.

The snow is whiter nor the milk,
And the down is safter nor the silk.
Hunger is sharper nor a thorn,
And shame is louder nor a horn.
The pies are greener nor the grass,
And Clootie's waur nor a woman was.
As sune as she the fiend did name,
He flew awa in a blazing flame."

There is a German folk song, too, which embodies many of the same riddles. It is to be found in Erk and Böhme's Liederhort, Nr. 1063 under the title "Rätsellied". The knight meets the fair lady and promises to marry her if she will answer these riddles:

"Welcher Schütz zielt immer und trifft nie?
(Der Bogenschütz am Himmel).
Und was lernt ein Mädchen ohne Müh?
(lieben).
Was geht tiefer als ein Bolz?
(Liebe).
Und welches ist das trefflichste Holz?
(Die Rebe).
Welche Jungfrau ist ohne Zopf?
(Die Jungfrau in der Wiege).
Und welcher Turm ist ohne Knopf?
(Der Turm zu Babel).
Welches Wasser ist ohne Fisch?
(Das Wasser in den Augen).
Und welches Haus ist ohne Tisch?

(Das Vogelhaus).

Welches Wasser ist ohne Sand?

(Wasser in den Wolken).

Und welcher König ohne Land?

(Zaunkönig).

Welche Strasse ist ohne Staub?

(Die Milchstrasse).

Und welcher Wald ist ohne Laub?

(Der Fichtenwald).

Welches Tier ist ohne Maul?

(Der Vogel).

Und welches Haus ist ohne Saul?

(Das Schneckenhaus).

Welches Feuer ist ohne Brand?

(Gemaltes Feuer).

Und welches Haus ist ohne Wand?

(Des Himmel's Haus).

Errathen, liebes Mädchen,
Hast du die Rätsel all';
Komm hinter meinen Rucken
Reit mit durch Berg und Thal,
Und ewge, ewge Liebe sei dein Lohn!
Hopp, hopp, hopp, hopp, gings mit ihr davon."

It is of interest to know that in Rufach the folk still sing a jesting Rätselgedicht[1] composed of six of these same riddles and their answers. This runs as follows,-

---

1 H. Menges in Zeitschrift für den deutschen Unterricht Vol. 8, p. 849.

Was isch das firr e Kinnik ohne Land?
Was isch das firr e Wasser ohne Sand?
Der Kinnik uff de Kahrde isch ohne Land,
Unn's Wasser in die Aughe isch ohne Sand!
Was isch das firr e Faier ohne Hitz?
Was isch das firr e Masser ohne Spitz?
Das ausgeleschte Faier isch ohne Hitz,
Unn's abgebroche Masser isch ohne Spitz.
Was isch das firr e Kirchdurn ohne Knopf?
Was isch das firr e Jumfer ohne Zopf?
Der Kirchdurn ze Babilon isch ohne Knopf,
Unn d' Jumfer in der Wahghel isch ohne Zopf.

IV

Very like this type of riddle song in which the maid wins a husband by her cleverness, is the old Scotch ballad called the Elfin Knight. The knight sits on a hill and "blaws his horn baith loud and shrill". The lady hears the weird music and wishes that the Elfin Knight were her bridegroom. No sooner has she expressed her wish than he appears at her side, saying:

[1] "Married with me if thou wouldst be,
A curtisie thou must do to me:
It's ye maun mak a sark to me
Without any cut or seam," quoth he;
"And ye maun shape it, knife-sheerless,
And also sew it needle,-threedless."

---

1 Child: Eng. and Scot. Ballads, Vol. 1, p. 246.

"If that piece of curtisie I do to thee,
Another thou must do to me.
I have an aiker of good ley land,
Which lyeth low by yon sea strand;
It's ye maun till't wi' your tooting horn,
And ye maun sow't wi' the pepper corn" etc.

In this type of ballad the man imposes tasks of which the girl stands acquitted if she can match each of them with another of no less difficulty. The question is not one of solving the riddles but of proposing others equally impossible to answer, the stake being the marriage of the contestants.

There are many other ballads similar to this of the Elfin Knight in that they embody riddles either actually impossible of solution, as here, or apparently so, as in the song:-

"Wo's schneit rothe Rosen
Da regnet's Thränen drein." [1]

The lover, here, is bidding his sweetheart farewell and she asks him when he will come back to her. He answers enigmatically -

"Wenn's schneiet rothe Rosen,
Wenn's regnet kühlen Wein;
So lang sollst du noch harren,
Herz allerliebste mein."

The lover goes away, the maiden dies, and when

"Der Knabe kehrt zurücke
Geht zu dem Garten ein,

---

1 Des Knaben Wunderhorn, S 481 : Edited by E. Grisebach, 1906.

Trägt einen Kranz von Rosen
Und einen Becher Wein."

Hat mit dem Fuss gestossen
Wohl an das Hügelein
Er fiel, da schneit es Rosen,
Da regnet's kuehlen Wein."

V

A fifth type of riddle song which is perhaps the most interesting of all is that in which the questions are put to an unknown traveler who makes an appeal for hospitality. The host hesitates about receiving a strange guest and decides to test him first with certain riddles. If the wanderer can answer these he is assured of a welcome. A familiar example of this type of ballad is the Traugemund's Lied,[1] dating from the twelfth century. This poem is an antique frame for a collection of popular riddles. The host greets the guest on the threshold with questions as to where he has lain over night, with what he has been covered, and whence he has obtained clothing and food. Having answered these riddles satisfactorily, Meister Traugemund is given the following which are more worthy of a man who has boasted that he knows seventy and two lands:

"Welcher Baum gebiert ohne Blüt?
Welcher Vogel ist ohne Zunge?
Welcher Vogel säugt seine Jungen?

---

1 Erk u. Böhme : Deutscher Liederhort, Nr. 1061.

Welcher Vogel ist ohne Magen?

The traveler answers that, -

"Der Wachholder gebiert ohne Blüt,
Die Fledermans säugt ihre Jungen,
Der Storch ist ohne Zunge,
Die Schwarbe ist ohne Magen."

Again the host questions, -

"Was ist weisser denn der Schnee?
Was ist schneller denn das Reh?
Was ist höher denn der Berg?
Was ist finstrer denn die Nacht?"

"Die Sonn ist weisser denn der Schnee,
Der Wind ist schneller denn das Reh,
Der Baum ist höher denn der Berg,
Die Ram ist schwarzer denn die Nacht."

The host, realizing that his riddles are too simple for the stranger, now gives him some of deeper significance:

"Durch was ist der Rhein so tief?
Warum sind Frauen also lieb?
Durch was sind die Matten so grün?
Durch was sind die Ritter so kühn?"

"Von manchem Ursprung ist der Rhein so tief,
Von hoher Minne sind die Frauen so lieb,
Von manchen Würzen sind die Matten grün,
Von manchen starken Wunden sind die Ritter kühn."

Unsatisfied still, the host asks,-

"Durch was ist der Wald so greise?
Durch was ist der Wolf so weise?
Durch was ist der Schild verblichen?
Durch was ist manch gut Gesell vom anderen gewichen."

To this Traugemund replies -

"Von manchem Alter ist der Wald so greise,
Von unnützen Gängen der Wolf so weise,
Von manchen Heerfahrt ist der Schild erblichen,
Unnützen Sibichen ist manch' gut Gesell entwichen."

With the following riddles the host concludes his crossquestioning, -

"Was ist grüner als der Klee?
Was ist weisser als der Schnee?
Was ist schwärzer als die Kohl?
Was zeltet rechter als der Fohl?

"Die Agelster ist grüner als der Klee?
Und ist weiss so wie der Schnee;
Und ist schwärzer denn die Kohl,
Und zeltet rechter als der Fohl."

Some of these same riddles appear in a rätselgedicht called "Die Sieben Vögel"[1] which is still current among the German folk. It is to be noted, however, that the reward here is not, as it is in the Traugemund's Lied, the enjoyment of hospitality:

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1 Wossidlo: Mecklenburgische Volksüberlieferungen, Nr. 170, b.

"Die leber ist vom huhn,
sieben vögel konnen es thun,
dem ersten mangelt's an mut, (taube)
dem zweiten an blut, (biene)
der dritte hat keine gall, (krammelsvogel)
den vierten beherrschen die anderen all, (eule)
der fünfte säuget seine jungen, (fledermans)
der sechste weiss von keiner zung', (kukuk)
dem siebensten genügt dreijährig speis; (?)
Wer dieses zu erraten weiss,
den will ich hoch zu rühmen wissen,
der soll die schönste jungfer küssen."

VI

Finally, there is a sixth class of riddle songs in which the reward for success in solving the problems is a wreath of honor. In this Kranzsingen it is sometimes a lover who wins the wreath that his beloved wears. There is a charming old song of a youth who wants the maiden's Rosenkränzlein. She answers

"Hubscher Knab', auf meines Vaters Giebel
Sitzen der Vöglein sieben:
Wovon die Vöglein leben,
Könnt ihr mir das sagen,
So sollt ihr mir mein Rosenkränzlein von hinnen tragen."
"Der erste lebt von eurer Jugend,
Der andre von eurer Tugend,
Der dritte von eurer süssen Äuglein Blicke,

Der vierte lebt eures Gutes,
Der fünfte eures Muthes,
Der sechste eures stolzen Leibes,
Der siebente eures reinen Herzens schreins.
Gebt mir das Rosenkränzlein,
Es ist an der Zeit, zart Jungfräulein,
Es sei denn ihr wollt mir versagen
Mit hübschen Worten und daran nicht verzagen.

"Hübscher, junger Knabe! könnt ihr mir zeigen
Den Stein, den nie Glock überscholl.
Nie Hund überboll,
Nie Wind übersauste,
Nie Regen überbrauste?
Könnt ihr mir das sagen,
So sollt ihr mir mein Rosenkränzlein von hinnen tragen!"

"Der Stein liegt in der Hölle Grund,
Der nie Glock überscholl,
Nie Hund überboll
Nie Wind übersauste
Nie Regen überbrauste.
Zart Jungfräulein,
Gebt mir euer Rosenkränzlein."

In another form of the Kranzlied[1] two singers contest for the wreath of honor woven by the maidens of the village. The first singer asks his rival:

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1 Simrock: Volksbücher, Vol. 7, p. 446.

Was ist höher weder Gott,
Und was ist grösser denn der Spott,
Und was ist weisser denn der Schnee,
Und was ist grüner denn der Klee?

The second singer answers readily

"Die Kron ist höher weder Gott,
Die Schand ist grösser denn der Spott,
Der Tag ist weisser denn der Schnee
Das Märzenlaub ist grüner denn der Klee."

He wins the Kranz but generously offers to leave it in the possession of the maiden if she can tell him:

"Welches die mittelst Blum im Kränzlein ist?"

A great silence ensues; nobody can answer this riddle. He must perforce solve it himself and says to her:

"Ihr mögt wol die mittelst Blum im Kränzlein sein."

VII

Thus far only those folk riddles which are bound together in poetic form have been considered. In the riddle books, however, there are to be found many rhymed riddles which are truly volkstümlich both in form and content. Indeed many riddles which occur in ballads exist singly elsewhere, as already noted in a few instances. These have either lost the poetic framework in which they were embodied; or else, and this is far more probable, they first existed as single riddles and have kept their original form in some districts.

The number of these rhymed rätsel which really deserve to be classed among the folk songs is legion. Only a small percentage of them, however, resemble the riddle ballads in offering certain rewards for their solution. Of the twenty-one riddles recorded by Halliwell in his Nursery Rhymes two only mention prizes; and of the one hundred and forty-four to be found in the Holmes manuscript only two are of this type. Yet the Holmes book is one of the oldest and most extensive of all English collections of problems.

In the German riddle books, too, the number of Belohnungsrätsel is comparatively speaking very small. Among the thousand puzzles collected by Wossidlo there are about a score which name the stake; Pfaff's collection of three hundred and thirty-six riddles from the Breisgau contains two of this type; and of some five hundred rhymed folk riddles published by Simrock, only ten are of this class.

The Liebe Motiv is prominent in a large number of the Belohnungsrätsel, as in the riddle songs. It appears in the following familiar examples:

1. Roth, gelb, grün,
   Rathst du mich,
   So nehm ich dich;
   Rathst du's in vier wochen,
   So sind wir zwei versprochen;
   Rathst du's in dem halben Jahr,
   So sind wir zwei ein ganzes Paar. (Regenbogen).

2. Rath, in jenem Land
   Stehen drei Rosen schön genannt.

Es sind drei Rosen inniglich;
Räth du das, so nehm ich dich.
Räth's du's in dreien Tagen,
So will ich dich für einen Buhlen haben.
Räthst du's aber ehe,
So nehm ich dich zur ehe;
Rathst du's in kürzer Frist,
So thu ich alles was dir lieb ist.

(Jungfrauen tugend, und ihre Jugend und ihr schöner, stolzer Leib.)

3. Kugelrund und spitzig,
Wer's nit glabt, der irrt sich.
Wer's errot in drei Tag,
Macht e gute Heirat. (Wacholderbeere).

4. Dor gäng 'ne witt madamm
in'n blanken, smallen gang (im bach)
hadd dree rode knaken,
wer't röddt, sall bi mi slapen. (Storch).

5. Hoch geschoben, rund gebogen,
wer kann's raten, der soll die schönste jungfrau
küssen. (Regenschirm).

6. Ach, mädchen, ich will Sie ein rätsel aufgeben,
Und so Sie es erraten, so heirat ich Sie;
Was für ein Müller ist ohne Mühl?
(ein abgebrannter).
Und was für ein löffel ist ohne stiel?
(ein abgebrochener).

Ach nenne mir ein zeichen, rot grün und blau,
Und so Sie es erraten, so sind Sie meine frau.
(Regenbogen).

Was für knechte haben keinen lohn?
(Stiefelknechte).

Was für ein herz thut keinen schlag?
(das tote Herz).

Was für ein tag hat keine nacht?
(der allerjüngste Tag).

This riddle, which is here quoted only in part, presents variations of the questions propounded in the Rätsellied already given. (Page 19).

7. I had a little castle upon the sea-side,
One half was water, the other was land;
I open'd my little castle door, and guess what I found;
I found a fair lady with a cup in her hand.
The cup was gold, filled with wine;
Drink fair lady, and thou shalt be mine.

These seven riddles are to be found:

No's 1, 2, Simrock: Deutsche Volksbücher, Vol. 7, Pages 289, 362.

No. s, Pfaff: Volkskunde im Breisgau, Nr. 30.

No's, 4, 5, 6, Wossidlo: Mecklenburgische Volksüberlieferungen, Nr. 172, 214, 406.

No. 7, Percy Society, Vol. 4; Halliwell's Nursery Rhymes.

Another prize frequently offered in the Belohnungsrätsel is food or wine. This naturally follows from the fact that the folk

were wont to gather at evening in the taverns and inns and to amuse themselves there with trials of wit. The most obvious reward under the circumstances was a supper, or a glass of wine. The following riddles are of this type:

1. Ein Vogel hoch in der luft schwebt,
der nur von wind und wasser lebt,
seine federn sind im feuer gebraten,
wer dies kann, der soll haben sieben braten.
(Wetterhahn).

2. Dor wier mal eens'n riken mann,
de hadd'n groten lustgoorn,
'un in den lustgoorn 'n groten boom,
un de boom hadd all de johren tweeunföftig eckern,
un in jede ecker wier 'ne kamer,
un in jede kainer 'ne jungfer,
un jede jungfer hadd soeben kinner,
un jedes kind wier half witt half swart;
kannst du dat raden, gäw'k di 'n braten. (Jahr).

This world-riddle is to be found both in English and German in many variations. In this one only does the reward appear.

3. In meines vater's garten steht ein baum,
hier ein baum und da ein baum;
in dem baume ist ein nest,
hier ein nest und da ein nest;
in dem nest da ist ein ei, hier ein ei und da ein ei;
in dem ei da ist ein vogel, hier ein vogel, da ein vogel;
und wer dies kann raten, darf sich den vogel braten.
(Stangenbohne).

4. Jungfer, helfen Sie mir schneiden
Rot und gelbe seiden
Ohne messer, ohne scher!
Wer das rat't von ungefähr,
Soll ein gläschen wein bekommen. (Der Safran).

5. Ich pflück' ein gelbes blümchen ab
Auf einem weissen see,
Und wer es mir kann raten,
Den zieh' ich nach der höh,
Und wer es mir kann denken,
Dem will ich ein hühnchen schenken.

6. I sat wi' my love,
and I drank wi' my love,
and my love she gave me light;
I'll give any man a pint o' wine,
that'll read my riddle right.

7. Es ritt ein Männchen über Land,
Gewickelt und gewackelt,
Hatt ein Kleid von lauter Tand,
Gezickelt und gezackelt;
Wer dies Räthsel kann errathen,
Dem lass ich eine Henne braten;
Und wer es kann erdenken,
Dem lass ich Wein einschenken. (Schmetterling).

8. Rut, rut, rut,
Fläsch un kä Blut;
Der das wird errathen,
Dem will ich einen Kapaunen braten.
(Gekochter Krebs).

The first three of these riddles are in Wossidlo, Meck. Volksüber. I, numbers 104; 36; 37.

Numbers 4 and 5 in the Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie 9, P. 75 (Frischbier); and 11, P. 355, respectively.

Number 6 in Chambers (No. 1).

Numbers 7 and 8 in Simrock: Deutsche Volksbücher Vol. 7, P. 318 and P. 317, respectively.

Sometimes the prize for the solution of the problem took the more substantial form of money as in these riddles:

1. As I went through the garden gap,
Who should I meet but Dick Red-cap!
A stick in his hand, a stone in his throat;
If you'll tell me this riddle, I'll give you a groat.
(A cherry).

(Cf. Percy Society, Vol. 4, Halliwell: Nursery Rhymes).

2. Hie un dar un allerwegen,
Kast mi do ok en pund ûtwaegen?
Kast mi dat ok denke,
Will 'k di 'ne grosche schenke. (der Wind).

(Cf. Zeitschrift fur d. Philologie, V, P. 151.)

3. Als tochter geboren und muttergewesen,
und doch tochter geblieben,
durch mauern gesogen, fürsten und herren betrogen;
all meine herren, dies zu wissen,
und all meine herren, dies zu raten,
Sollen Sie drei dukaten haben.
(Cf. Wossidlo I, Meckl. Volksüber, Nr. 968, 5).

The reward was frequently the thing itself about which the question was asked:

1. Meine 1 Silbe ist halb drei Fuss
" 2 " " " tausend
" 3 " " " brausend
" 4 " " " duft
" 5 " " " kalt
" 6 " " " braten;
Erräthst du mich, so erhältst du 3000 dukaten.
(Dreitausend Dukaten).
(Cf. Pfaff: Volkskunde im Breisgau, Nr. 321).

For cleverness in answering riddles coveted honors were sometimes bestowed as in the following:

1. Dor seet'n mann up 'n sagen,
den drüdden sehch he dragen,
dree köpp un acht bein,
wer dat raadt, der soll meister sein.
(Zwei Störche einen frosch tragen.)

2. Dor flücht'n vagel stark wol oewer dat groot mark.
Wat hett he in sien rechten been? schier un sliepsteen.
Wat hett he in de siet? dree glas wien.
Wat hett he in'n kroop? dree glas grog.
und wer das rat't, soll bürgermeister sein. (Schiff).
(Cf. Wossidlo: Neck. Volküber. I, Nr. 101 b.

3. Stuonden so vil grawen fein
Als tropfen seindt im rein
Und wer dir auffgesetzt zuo buoss
Sy hinüber zuo fuoren truckens fuoss
On brucken, schiff, steg, karren oder wagen,
Ich lob dich frey kanst du mir es sagen.
(Wackernagel in Zeitschrift für d. Altertum, VIII, P.25.)

There are, too, many Belohnungsräthsel which being current in different localities appear in several variations with different rewards, as in the following:

1. Oben spitz und unten breit,
durch und durch voll süssigkeit;
Wer's kann, raten, der soll's haben. (Zuckerhut)
or (Wer kann's wissen, der soll alle jungfern küssen).
(Wossidlo: Meck. Volksüber, I, Nr. 247.)

The same riddle appears in different guise elsewhere:

2. Weiss am leib, blau am kleid, süsse liebe, meine freud'
Wer dies räthsel kann erraten, der soll kriegen einen dukaten;
Wer es kann wissen, soll die schönste jungfer küssen.

(Zuckerhut).

(Zeitschrift f. d. Philologie 23, P. 253).

3. Peterzillenpipp
ik heff'n ding, dat wippt,
dat licht mi twischen twee knaken.
wer dies wohl kann raten,
wer's sich wohl kann denken,
dem will ich eine wein kalteschale schenken. (Zunge).
or de dat röddt, sall bi mi slapen.
(Wossidlo: Meck. Volksüber I, Nr. 68).

4. Rath, was ist das?
Ein gelbes Blümlein in einem weissen See.
Errathet ihr's, so nehm ich euch zur Eh.
Könnt ihr's erdenken,
So will ich euch ein Viertel Wein schenken. (Ei).
(Cf. Simrock: Deutsche Volksb. Vol. 10, Nr. 29).

5. Hooch erhöht, krummgeböögt,
wunderlich von Gott erschaffen;
wer kann's raten? drei advokaten.
wer kann's wissen, der soll die goldne jungfrau küssen.
or : wer kann's raten der soll haben einen dukaten.
(Regenbogen).
(Cf. Wossidlo: Meck. Volksüber I, Nr. 212).

6. Rot, rot, ritter rot,
Heft e lêwe on kein blöt.
Wer's kann raten,

Kriegt dreitausend dukaten,
Wer's will wissen
Muss drei jungfern küssen. (Krebs).
(Cf. Z. f. d. Philologie, Vol. 11, P. 357).

7. Es klingert und klappert auf eisernen draten.
Wer das kann raten, kriegt füfzig dukaten;
Und wer das kann wissen, kriegt jungfern zu küssen.
(Uhr).
(Cf. Z. f. d. Philologie, Vol. 23, P. 248).

8. In einem weissen see
Schwimmen zwei granaten.
Wer dies rätsel tut raten,
Dem schenke ich zehn dukaten
Und eine tasse thee. (Das Auge).

This riddle which is published in the Z. f. d. Philologie, Vol. 23, P. 241, is particularly interesting because of the second prize offered. It is usually something stronger than "the cup that cheers" that is given to the successful contestant.

9. In all de tunn' un küben, in all de königshüser;
dat kann keen königsdochter raden.
de will sik ok bedenken,
em en buddel wien utschenken. (Spinngewebe).
or: Rannst du dat raden, ik will di een kaken.
(Cf. Wossidlo: Meck. Volksüber. Nr. 430).

10. Grün wie gras, sage mir was,
weiss wie schnee, sage mir weh,

rot wie blut, sage mir gut,
schwarz wie teer, sage mir dieses rätselein her.
wer dieses rätsel kann erraten, soll haben
zehntausend dukaten;
wer dieses rätsel kann wissen, der soll die
schönste jungfer küssen. (Kirsche).
or: soll mein feinsliebchen kussen.
(Cf. Wossidlo: Meck. Volksüber,I, Nr. 217).

Many other Belohnungsrätsel appear in several variations; but in all the rewards are practically the same as those already named. For the solution of the famous Ilo riddle, for instance, these prizes are offered:

wer's raten kann, soll rats herr sein, soll meister sein, ist meisterlich, soll bürgermeister sein, soll mein liebster sein, soll meiner sein etc. (Wossidlo, Nr. 962).

Finally a very interesting type of these riddles differs from the others in that it offers no reward for the quick-witted but threatens a punishment for the stupid:

1. Ich schäme mich, meinen grossen Rachen,
Wie einen Schnabel aufzumachen.
Leder, Leinwand, und Papier,
Das alles fress ich mit Begier.
Mich braucht Gelahrt und Ungelahrt:
Rath es recht,
Oder ich beisse dich in den Bart. (Die Scheere).
(Cf. Simrock: Deutsche Volksb. 7, P. 341.)

2. Es schrieb ein Mann an eine Wand:
Zehn Finger hab ich an jeder Hand,
Fünf and zwanzig an Händen und Füssen;
Wer das nicht räth, der muss es büssen.
(Verändert zu interpungieren).
(Cf. Simrock: Deutsche Volksb. 7, P. 360.)

3. Eine Jungfrau eines Tages alt,
Nahm einen Mann zur Eh alsbald:
Da gebar sie einen Sohn fürwahr
Eh sie alt noch war ein Jahr,
Und starb auch eh sie ward geboren;
Nun rath das, oder gieb verloren. (Eva).
(Cf. Simrock: Deutsche Volksb. 7, P. 364).

4. In ye dinna tell me riddle,
A'll shot ye wi' ma pistal (:crystal) (the watch)
(Cf. Gregor. No. 41).

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