A. M. F. Robinson (1857-1944)

1   *Captain Gold and French Janet*

The first letter our Captain wrote
    To the Lord of Mantua:
"Did you ever see French Janet
    (He wrote) on any day?"

"Did ye ever see French Janet,   5
    That was so blithe and coy?
The little serving-lass I stole
    From the mountains of Savoy?

"Last week I lost French Janet:
    Hunt for her up and down;   10
And send her back to me, my Lord,
    From the four walls o' the town."

For thirty days and thirty nights
    There came no news to us.
Suddenly old grew Captain Gold   15
    And his voice grew tremulous.

O Mantua's a bonny town,
    And she's long been our ally;
But help came none from Mantua-town
    Dim grew our Captain's eye.   20

"O send me Janet home again!"
    Our Captain wrote anew;
"A lass is but a paltry thing,
    And yet my heart's in two!

"Ha' ye searched in every convent-close,   25
    And sought in every den?
Mistress o' man, or bride of Christ,
    I'll have her back again!

"O Mantua's a bonny town,
　　And she's long been our ally;　　　　　　　　30
But help cometh none from Mantua town;
　　And sick at heart am I."

For thirty days and thirty nights
　　No news came to the camp;
And the life waned old in Captain Gold,　　　35
　　As the oil wanes in a lamp.

The third moon swelled towards the full
　　When the third letter he wrote:
"What will ye take for Janet?
　　Red gold to fill your moat?　　　　　　　40

"Red wine to fill your fountains full?
　　Red blood to wash your streets?
Oh, send me Janet home, my Lord,
　　Or ye'll no die in your sheets!"

O Love, that makes strong towers to sway,　　45
　　And captains' hearts to fall!
I feared they might have heard his sobs
　　Right out to Mantua-wall.

For thirteen days and thirteen nights
　　No messenger came back;　　　　　　　　50
And when the morning rose again,
　　Our tents were hung with black.

The dead bell rang through all the camp;
　　But we rung it low and dim,
Lest the Lombard hounds in Mantua　　　　　55
　　Should know the end of him.

(From *The Collected Poems Lyrical and Narrative of A. Mary F. Robinson*.　London, n.d.)