

Traditional & Folk Songs with lyrics & midi music

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Tarry Wool

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Tarry wool, oh tarry wool
Tarry wool is ill tae spin
Card it well, oh, card it well
Card it well e'er ye begin

When it's carded, wove and spun,
Then your work is almost done
But when it's woven, dressed and cleaned,
It will be clothing for a queen

Up, ye shepherds, dance and skip
O'er the hills and valleys trip
Sing in praise of tarry wool
And of the flock who bears it, too

Poor harmless creatures, without blame
They clothe the back and cram the wame
Keep us warm and hearty, too
Well's on us, our tarry wool

Hart and hind and fallow deer
Not by half so useful are
From kings to him that holds the plough
All are obliged to tarry wool

Who'd be a king, can any tell
When a shepherd lives so well
Lives so well and pays his due
With honest heart and tarry wool

Note: Herd 1776, II.100 (with 4 more stanzas). With music in SMM I (1787), 45 (no. 45), whence Chambers SSPB, 383, Montgomerie SNR (1946), 96 (no. 118), etc. The extra stanzas are probably by Ramsay, who has this in Tea-Table Miscellany IV. The tune appears in McGibbon's 2nd Collection of Scots Tunes, 1746; a slight modification gives the air of "Lewie Gordon". See FSJ pt. 8, 215-6. MS

SOF