

## THE TROUBADOUR

A Troubadour he played  
Without a castle wall,  
Within, a hapless maid  
Responded to his call.

“Oh, willow, woe is me!  
Alack and well-a-day!  
If I were only free  
I'd hie me far away!”

Unknown her face and name,  
But this he knew right well,  
The maiden's wailing came  
From out a dungeon cell.

A hapless woman lay  
Within that prison grim—  
That fact, I've heard him say,  
Was quite enough for him.



“I will not sit or lie,  
Or eat or drink, I vow,  
Till thou art free as I,  
Or I as pent as thou!”

Her tears then ceased to flow,  
Her wails no longer rang,  
And tuneful in her woe  
The prisoned maiden sang:

“Oh, stranger, as you play  
I recognise your touch;  
And all that I can say,  
Is thank you very much!”

He seized his clarion straight,  
And blew thereat, until  
A warder oped the gate,  
“Oh, what might be your will ?”

“I’ve come, sir knave, to see  
The master of these halls:  
A maid unwillingly  
Lies prisoned in their walls.”

With barely stifled sigh  
That porter drooped his head,  
With teardrops in his eye,  
“A many, sir,” he said.

He stayed to hear no more,  
But pushed that porter by,  
And shortly stood before

**SIR HUGH DE PECKHAM RYE.**

**SIR HUGH** he darkly frowned,  
“What would you, sir, with me ?”  
The troubadour he downed  
Upon his bended knee.

“**I’ve** come, **DE PECKHAM RYE,**  
To do a Christian task,  
You ask me what would I?  
It is not much I ask.



“Release these maidens, sir,  
Whom you dominion o’er—  
Particularly her  
Upon the second floor !

“And if you don’t, my lord”-  
He here stood bolt upright.  
And tapped a tailor’s sword—  
“Come out at once and fight!”

**SIR HUGH** he called—and ran  
The warden from the gate,  
“Go, show this gentleman  
The maid in forty-eight.”

By many a cell they passed  
And stopped at length before  
A portal, bolted fast:  
The man unlocked the door.

He called inside the gate  
With coarse and brutal shout,  
“Come, step it, forty-eight!”  
And forty-eight stepped out.

“They gets it pretty hot,  
The maidens wot we cotch—  
Two years this lady’s got  
For collaring a wotch.”

“Oh, ah!—indeed—I see,”  
The troubadour exclaimed—  
“If I may make so free,  
How is this castle named?”

The warden’s eyelids fill,  
And, sighing, he replied,  
“Of gloomy Pentonville  
This is the Female Side!”

The minstrel did not wait  
The warden stout to thank,  
But recollected straight  
He’d business at the Bank.