Reynard the Fox (2)

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On the first day of spring in the year ninety-three
There was great recreation was in this country
There was gentlemen and farmers over hills and dales and rocks
They rode so joyfuly in search of a fox.

Tally-ho, hark away, tally-ho hark away
Tally-ho, hark away me boys away, hark away

When Renolds was started he was facing Tullamore
With Arklow and Wicklow along the sea shore
He kept his brush in view every yard of the way
And it's straight he took his course through the main the street
of Rosstrade

Now Renolds, sly Renolds, he hid in a tree that night
But they swore they would watch him until daylight
And early next morning the woods did resound
With the echo of horns and the sweet cry of hounds.

When Renolds left the tree, boys, he faced to the hollow
Where none but the hounds and the footmen could follow
The gentlemen cried, "Watch him, watch him, what shall we do?
For if the rocks don't stop him he will cross Killaloo."

When bold Renolds was taken, his wishes to fulfill,
He called for ink and paper and a pen to write his will
And now you come to mention it they found it wasn't a blank
For he gave them all a cheque on the National Bank.

"To you, Mr Casey, I leave me whole estate
And to you, Pat O'Brien, me money and me plate
And I leave to you, your Ladyship, me brush, me mask and cap
For you jumped walls and ditches and you never looked for a gap."

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Sung by Ewan MacColl on _Champions and Sporting Blades,_ Riverside
RLP 12-652.

The very small differences from your version obviously describe a
completely different mood. Now the cheque is a real one, the three

beneficiaries get clearly valued items; Ladyship gets the greatest prizes, due her for her courage.

I suppose an interesting sidelight might be to know if "The National Bank" means a good, solid one (indication this to be an earlier version) or a failed bank (indicating this to be a parody version.) Doesn't matter a whole lot.

Lloyd's notes on the record don't help much. Just that the joke of the fox willing his assets to the huntsmen is an old one, occuring several times in medieval fables.

AJS

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