# An American Variant of ‘The Wife of Usher’s Well’

# – ‘The Lady Gay’

There was a lady and a lady gay,

Of children she had three,

She sent them away to the North Countree

To learn their grammaree

They'd not been gone but a very short time,

Scarcely three weeks and a day,

When death, cruel death, came hasting along

And stole those babes away.

"There is a King in Heaven," she cried

"A King of third degree

Send back, send back my three little pages,

This night send them back to me."

She made a bed in the uppermost room,

On it she put a white sheet,

And over the top a golden spread

That they much better might sleep.

"Take it off, take it off," cried the older one,

"Take it off, take it off," cried he,

"For what's to become of this wide wicked world

Since sin has first begun."

She set a table of linen fine,

On it she placed bread and wine,

"Come eat, come drink of mine."

"We want none of your bread, mother,

Neither do we want your wine,

For yonder stands our Savior deer,

To Him we must resign."

"Green grass is over our heads, mother,

Cold clay is over our feet,

And every tear you shed for us,

It wets our winding-sheet."

mudcat.org lyrics: LADY GAY

Word bank:

* Gay = happy
* Grammaree = magic (or grammar)
* Pages = boys or young men
* Winding sheet = a sheet a person is buried in