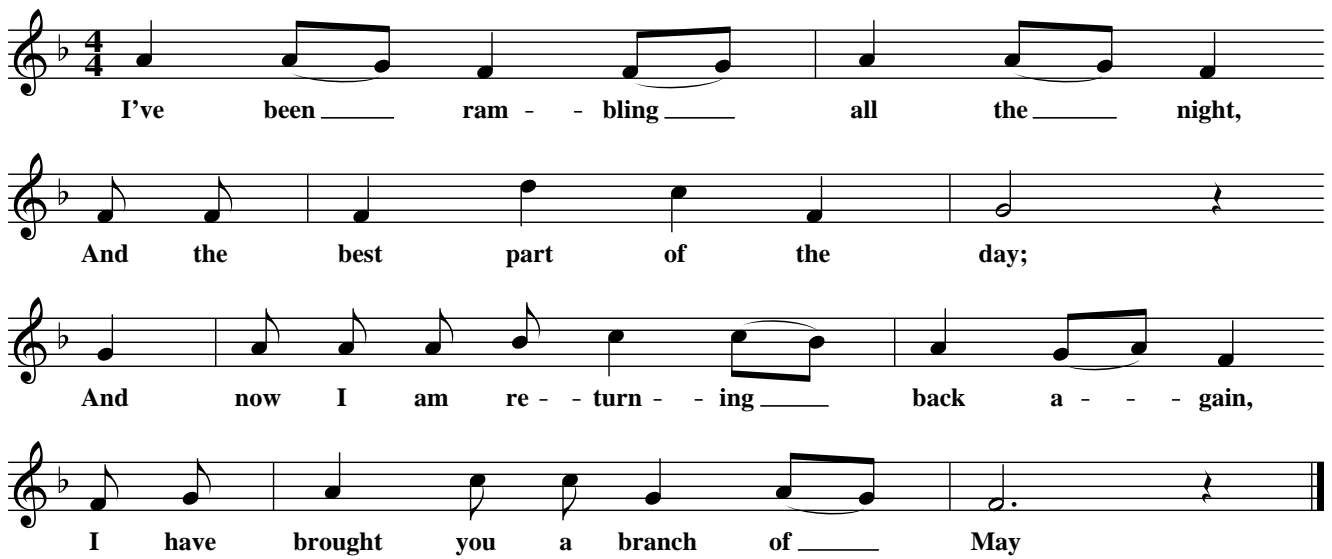


Bedfordshire May Carol



I've been rambling all the night,
And the best part of the day;
And now I am returning back again,
I have brought you a branch of May.

A branch of May, my dear, I say,
Before your door I stand,
It's nothing but a sprout, but it's well budded out,
By the work of our Lord's hand.

Go down in your dairy and fetch me a cup,
A cup of your sweet cream,*
And, if I should live to tarry in the town,
I will call on you next year.

The hedges and the fields they are so green,
As green as any leaf,
Our Heavenly Father waters them
With His Heavenly dew so sweet.

When I am dead and in my grave,
And covered with cold clay,
The nightingale will sit and sing,
And pass the time away.

Take a Bible in your hand,
And read a chapter through,
And, when the day of Judgment comes,
The Lord will think on you.

I have a bag on my right arm,
Draws up with a silken string,
Nothing does it want but a little silver
To line it well within.

And now my song is almost done,
I can no longer stay,
God bless you all both great and small,
I wish you a joyful May.

(* cheer?)