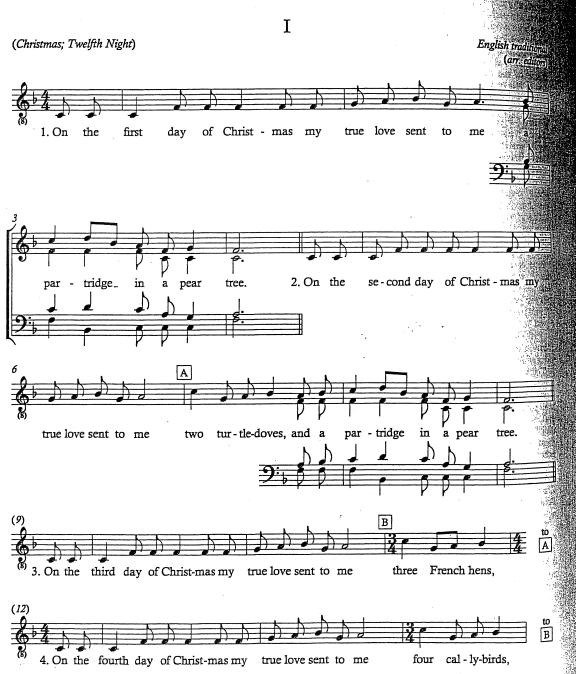
## 133

## The Twelve Days of Christmas







6. On the sixth c 7. On the seventh 8. On the eighth

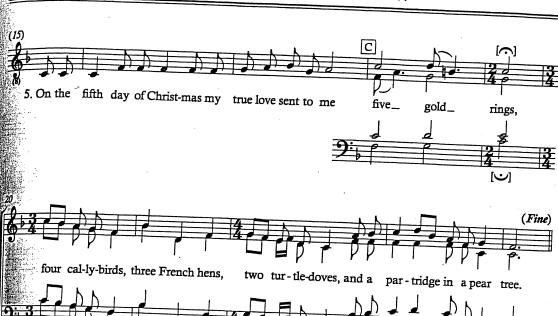
9. On the ninth 10. On the tenth

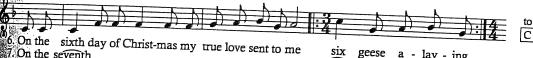
11. On the elevent 12. On the twelfth

This song derives frc was played on Twelft player would have named by the previou game was probably to

Gallic origin.

'Cally-' or 'colly-b perhaps a corruptio goldfinches) or 'g' 'French' has the me The origin of the perdrix, French for pear tree have beer partridge as symbol the Virgin Mary is belief that a girl wl on Christmas Eve image of her futur Song Society, vol.





On the seventh

On the eighth

9. On the ninth

10. On the tenth

On the eleventh

On the twelfth

six geese a - lay - ing, seven swans a - swim-ming, eight maids a - milk - ing, nine la - dies dan - cing, ten lords a - leap - ing, eleven pi - pers pi - ping, twelve drum-mers drum-ming,

> English traditional (Husk, 1864)

this song derives from a traditional forfeits game which was played on Twelfth Night (hence the twelve days). Each player would have to remember and recite the objects amed by the previous players and then add one more. The Rane was probably universal, but the song seems to be of Gallic origin.

Cally or 'colly-birds' are blackbirds; the 'gold rings' are haps a corruption of 'goldspinks' (Scottish dialect for addinctics) or 'gulderer' ('gulder-cock' is a turkey);
stradic las the meaning 'exotic' in some English dialects. be longin of the mysterious pear tree may simply be Prench for 'partridge'. However, the partridge and tree have been the subject of arcane speculation: the attribe as symbol of the devil, who reveals to Herod that Mary is hiding behind a sheaf of corn; the folk circinata a girl who walks backwards towards a pear tree The Early was some and walks round it thrice will see the de Of her future husband; etc. (See Journal of the Folk-8 Occepy, vol. 5, pp. 277-81, which has five variant

tunes and notes by Cecil Sharp, Annie Gilchrist, and Lucy Broadwood; two more are in Sharp and Marson, Folk Songs from Somerset, 1904-9; and see The Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes, 1951, p. 122.)

The text appears in various forms in broadsides from the early eighteenth century onward. Version I is the now standard one, as printed by Husk for the first time in a collection of carols' (Songs of the Nativity, 1864). The tune is the usual modern one sung in England, with bars 18-19 dating only from Frederick Austen's 1909 arrangement. E is sometimes found for F as the seventh note, and the pause on 'rings' tends to lengthen from verse to verse.

Version II is the one still sung by the men of the Copper family from Sussex (Bob Copper, Early to Rise, 1976), who preserve an oral part-singing tradition (see also 'Shepherds, arise!', 147).

PERFORMANCE I, choir; II, voices.

English traditional (arr. editors)

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of Christ - mas my