

# Hereford

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## THE GOODWIVES OF WEINSBERG.

FROM THE GERMAN OF BURGER.

BY MARY HOWITT.

Who can tell me where Weinsberg lies?  
As brave a town as any;  
It must have cradled good and wise,  
Both wives and maidens many.  
Should I e'er wooing have to do,  
Faith, in Weinsberg will I woo!

The Emperor Conrad, on a time,  
In wrath the town was battering;  
And near it lay his warriors prime,  
And sturdy horsemen clattering;  
And, with fierce firing, rode and ran  
All round about it horse and man.

As him the little town withstood,  
Though every thing is wasted,  
So did he swear in vengeful mood  
No mercy should be granted;  
And thus his herald spoke—"This know,  
I'll hang you, rascals, in a row!"

When in the town was heard this threat,  
It caused a great dejection,  
And every neighbour neighbour met  
With mournful interjection:  
Though bread was very dear in price,  
Yet dearer still was good advice.

"Ah woe for me, most wretched man!  
Guilt was the sin we won us!"  
They cried, and every priest began  
"The Lord have mercy on us!"  
"Oh, woe! woe! woe!" on all sides clung;  
"We feel e'en now as good as hanged!"

When in despair wise men will sit,  
In spite of council-masters,  
How oft has saved them woman's wit  
From manifold disasters!  
Since woman's wit, as all men know,  
Is subtler than aught else below.

There was a wife to her good man  
But yesterday united;  
And she a wise scheme hit upon  
Which the whole town delighted,  
And made them all as full of glee,  
They laughed and chattered freely.

Then, at the hour of midnight damp,  
Of wives a deputation  
Went out to the besiegers' camp,  
Praying for capitulation:  
So soft they prayed, so sweet they prayed!  
And for these terms their prayer was made:

"That all the wives might be allowed  
Their jewels forth to carry;  
What else remained the warriors need  
Might rice, and honey, and tarry;  
To this the Emperor swore consent,  
And back the deputation went.

Thenon, as soon as morn was sped,  
What happened? Give good hearing!  
The nearest gate was opened wide,  
And out each wife came, bearing—  
True as I live!—all pick-a-pack,  
Her worthy husband in a sack!

Then many a courtier, in great wrath  
The goodwives would have routed;  
But Conrad spoke, "My kingly faith  
May not be false or doubted!  
"Ha! bravo!" cried he, as they came;  
"Think you our wives would do the same!"

Then gave he pardon and a feast,  
Those gentle ones to pleasure;  
And music all their joy increased,  
And dancing without measure;  
As did the maypole winking twirl,  
So did the beam-bending girl.

Ay, tell me now where Weinsberg lies,  
As brave a town as any,  
And cradled has it good and wise,  
Both wives and maidens many:  
If wooing e'er I have to do,  
Faith! one of Weinsberg will I woo!

*Ackermann's Forget-me-Not.*