

Maisie and the Herald

“The colours of Brexit are red, white and blue;
“For so said the PM¹, so it must be true.
“But please, Mr Herald, just what do they mean?
“You know about colours, red, yellow, and green,
“And blue, white and purple, and orange and grey,”
Said Maisie O’Grady, “Oh tell me, I pray.”

“I’ll tell, if you wish, the meanings implied
“In blazonry, Maisie,” the Herald replied.
“Now red, which we heralds call *gules*, does foretell
“A greathearted spirit that’s gen’rous as well;
“And white we call *argent* and it signifies
“Sincerity, purity, truth with no lies.
“And blue we call *azure* and it does betoken
“A person who’s chaste and whose word is not broken.”

“Oh gosh,” said our Maisie, “so red, white and blue
“Means Brexit’s greathearted, sincere and is true.”

“Alas,” said the Herald, “dear Maise, you’ll find
“That blazonry’s not what was stirring her mind,
“When of those three colours the PM then spoke;
“A tricoloured *flag* ’twas her wish to evoke.”

“I see,” said our Maisie, “so which one perchance?
“The flag of the Netherlands, Norway or France,
“Of Iceland, Croatia, Slovenia or where?
“At least they’re in Europe so we may stay there,
“Half members perhaps, in a loose federation.
“Is that her intention for our British nation?”

“Oh, *no!*” said the Herald, “ ’Tis *not* her intent.
“The flag of our union’s the banner she meant.”

“Oh *I* know that song,” replied Maisie with glee.
“Oh how does it go now? Ah, just let me see.
 ‘*The Union, the Union forever,*
 ‘*Our glorious nation’s sweet hymn,*
 ‘*May the wreaths it has won never wither,*
 ‘*Nor the stars of its glory grow dim,*
 ‘*May the service united ne’er sever,*
 ‘*But they to their colors prove true.*
 ‘*The Army and Navy forever,*
 ‘*Three cheers for the red, white, and blue.*
 ‘*Three cheers for the red, white, and blue ...’*”

1 The Prime Minister in December 2016 was Theresa May

“Oh *no!*” interrupted the Herald, “oh no!
“That Union’s not ours, dear Maisie, so whoa,
“Stop singing ‘Columbia, the gem of the Ocean’;
“The star spangled banner is quite the wrong notion.
“No fifty-first state of the great USA
“Will Britain become when it’s broken away
“From Europe to follow along its own track;
“She’s meaning, dear Maisie, our own Union Jack!”

“How boring,” said Maisie, “if that’s all she meant.
“It tells us just nothing about the intent
“Of her and her ministers – nothing at all!
“Another tautology just to stonewall.
“‘Britannia’s exit is British’ oh wow!’
“I think we all knew that already somehow!”

“Cheer up, my dear Maisie,” the Herald replied.
“Away with frustration; put outrage aside.
“Forget politicians’ evasive replies.
“For Christmas approaches; have done with your sighs.
“Let goodwill abound and remember the reason
“We celebrate during this jubilant season;
“The colours of Christmas, the red and the white”

“And green,” cried out Maisie in joyful delight.
“And yellow,” she added, “was Bethlehem’s star
“That guided the magi who came from afar;
“And yellow’s the gold the magi did bring
“With incense and myrrh for to honour a king.
“I know white is *argent*, by *gules* you mean red;
“Of what each one means I recall what you said.
“But come, Mr Herald, the yellow and green -
“Please tell me their names and explain what they mean.”

“Ah, green we call *vert*,” was the Herald’s reply.
“And we by this tincture on blazons imply
“Abundance and love joined with joy and with hope.
“So cheer up, dear Maisie - no reason to mope.”

“Indeed, there is not,” replied Maisie, “for see:
“What *vert* signifies is what Christmas should be.
“But what about yellow? Oh, could it say more?”

“Oh, yes,” was his answer, “and we call it *or*.
“For gold is its colour, and gold remains true.
“And wisdom and glory and constancy too
“With a faith that endures are what *or* signifies.”

“What joys,” Maisie said, “in my heart now arise!
“The *gules* and the *argent*, the *or* and the *vert*
“All thrill my whole being and this I assert
“They tell of a love which is constant and pure
“Abundant and gen’rous, whose truth shall endure;
“A love full of wisdom, a love full of glory
“Fulfilling the hope of the Bethlehem story.”

“Quite right,” said the Herald, “dear Maisie, and so
“The colours of Christmas and Brexit you know.”

“The colours of Brexit,” said Maisie, “mean nowt;
“But Colours of *Christmas* move me to cry out
“Of love which gives hope and of joy and good cheer:
“Merry Christmas to all and a happy New Year!”