Nakhshoon Gakavig
(Colorful Partridge)

Informant/Performer:
Siranoosh Shapazian
from Armenia
Fowler, CA, 1939

Source:
Library of Congress AFS 4266 A2
Collected by Sidney Robertson Cowell

Background Information
The Song of the Partridge is better known in the version composed by the great Armenian composer and
ethnomusicologist Komitas Vardapet, who wrote his own music to the traditional text. Mrs. Shapazian sings what
appears to be the original folk song, learned in Western Armenia prior to the Armenian genocide which destroyed
the Armenian population of her home town of Harpoot, as documented in Days of Tragedy in Armenia: Personal
Experience in Harpoot, 1915-1917, by the American missionary Henry H. Riggs.

Informant Information
Siranoosh [Topoozian] Shapazian, born 1889 in Harpoot (Harput, Kharpert), traditionally considered Western
Armenia (near present-day Elazig, Turkey). With her husband Vartan Sarkis Shapazian she arrived in Halifax, N.S.,
from Liverpool and lived briefly in Montreal before entering the U.S. in 1907.

Armenian Text
1. Arev patsvets tukh amberen,
   gakav terav gananch saren.
   Gananch saren sari dzeren
   Parev perav dzaghikneren.
   Refrain: Sirunig, sirunig, nakhshoon gakavig. (2x)

2. Ko puyn huhtsvats dzaghignerov
   Shushan, narkiz, nunufarov
   Ko degh letsvadz tsogh u shoghov
   Kuhnes gyelnes yerk u daghov.
   Refrain

English Translation
1. The sun rose out of the dark clouds,
   the partridge flew out from the green mountains.
   From the green mountains, from the source of the mountains,
   She brought greetings from the flowers.
   Refrain: Sweet, sweet, colorful partridge! (2x)

2. You weave your nest with flowers:
   Lilies, daffodils, and daisies,
   Fresh and glistening with dewdrops;
   You sing yourself to sleep and awake with a song.
   Refrain

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