

**BRITISH TRADITIONAL BALLADS (CHILD BALLADS)
IN THE SOUTHERN MOUNTAINS SUNG BY JEAN RITCHIE
EDITED BY KENNETH S. GOLDSTEIN FOLKWAYS RECORDS FA 2301**

VOLUME 1

COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE



GYPSY LADDIE (Child #200)
FALSE SIR JOHN (Child #4)
HANGMAN (Child #95)
LORD BATEMAN (Child #53)
THE HOUSE CARPENTER (Child #243)
LORD THOMAS AND FAIR ELENDR (Child #73)
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LORD LOVEL (Child #75)
OLD BANGUM (Child #18)
BARBARY ALLEN (Child #84)
FAIR ANNIE OF LOCHROYAN (Child #76)

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

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VOLUME 1

FOLKWAYS RECORDS FA 2301

CHILD BALLADS IN AMERICA, Volume 1

sung by
Jean Ritchie

Notes by

KENNETH S. GOLDSTEIN



The Ritchie Family of Kentucky (Jean Ritchie, lower left hand corner, in white dress)

CHILD BALLADS IN THE RITCHIE FAMILY

Back in the days when Balis and Abigail Ritchie's big family was "a-bornin' and a-growin'," none of them had ever heard of Francis J. Child, nor had anyone else in that part of the Kentucky Mountains, I believe. The word 'ballad', or 'ballit' meant, in our community, the written-down words for a song. I remember hearing one old lady near home say proudly to another, "Now I've got Barbry Ellen up there in my trunk. Joe's Sally stopped in and she writ me out the ballit of it."

"Writing out the ballit" for our family songs was rarely done. All of us, Mom, Dad, and all thirteen children could write, but these old songs and their music were in our heads, or hearts, or somewhere part of us, and we never needed to write them down. They were there, like games and rhymes and riddles, like churning-chants and baby-bouncers and gingerbread stackcake recipes, to be employed and enjoyed when the time came for them. Nobody got scholarly about them and I have a feeling that's why they have been genuinely popular all these years.

These old story songs, now. We sang and listened to them, for ourselves. For the excitement of the tale, or the beauty and strength of the language or of the graceful tunes, for the romantic tingle we got from a glimpse of life in the long-ago past, for the uncanny way the old, old situations still fir the present. Heads nodding over Lord Thomas and Fair Ellender. "Ain't that right, now? That's j'ist what he ort to a-done to her!"

As I remember, it took a special time for us to appreciate these "big" ballads. Of course, we hummed them about the housework, and when walking along the roads, and in the fields, but that wasn't really singing them out. It had to be a quiet time for that, as when the family gathered on the front porch, evenings, and after awhile the house clatter ended and the talk dwindled and died. Then was the time for Lord Bateman, or The Gypsie Laddie to move into our thoughts. Or, it could be a time at play-parties when the players dropped down to rest, between spells of dancing, - that was a time to listen to a good long tale.

- Jean Ritchie

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

Between 1882 and 1898, the greatest single scholarly investigation of ballad literature was published. This five volume study, "THE ENGLISH AND SCOTTISH POPULAR BALLADS", edited by Professor Francis James Child of Harvard University, has been the best of almost every modern study of British traditional ballads. It is not unusual, therefore, that these ballads have come to be known as the "Child" ballads and the Child's system of numbering them is still observed.

Child edited 305 ballads with more than 1,000 versions. George Lyman Kittredge, who carried the work to completion after Child's death, believed that it "comprised the whole extant mass of the material." Since then, however, diligent collectors of folksongs have taken down many thousand more variants and versions of these ballads in England, Scotland, Ireland and North America.

Though Professor Child was aware that some of these ballads were still in oral circulation in America amongst the descendants of the original and later British immigrants to the colonies, he was completely unaware of the extent of this oral tradition in North America. He certainly would have doubted that this tradition existed in America to a greater degree than it did in the British Isles. This, however, proved to be the case.

There is more than a bit of gentle irony in the situation as it developed. An American scholar had taken it upon himself to make the definitive study of the balladry of Britain...less than a quarter of a century later an English collector-scholar was to make the major collection of living balladry in America.

Cecil J. Sharp, coming from England in search of survivals of British traditional songs in the New World, found in the United States a living tradition of the "Child" ballads in isolated parts of the Southern Appalachians. And this only ten years after Sharp himself had nostalgically written, "The English ballad is moribund; its account is well nigh closed."

Since Sharp's initial forays into this area, many other ballad collectors have made notable finds in both this and other sections of the country rich in ballad tradition. Within twenty years of the initial publication of Sharp's Appalachian collection, American ballad hunters produced collections from almost every state of the Union as well as the Maritime provinces of Canada. And this work has continued in the last 20 years, without a year going by that does not result in still more grist being added in an already well-stocked mill. Nor is the end in sight, for, while authorities have been proclaiming its death every few years since the turn of the century, the "Child" ballads persist in oral tradition and circulation in this country. Though it is true that conditions favoring such circulation have been vanishing rapidly, these ballads remain alive wherever they have the slightest chance, clinging tenaciously to the folk. And this, in itself, is perhaps the greatest commentary on the excellence, both textually and musically, of the British traditional ballad in America.

As a result of my own folksong collecting in the Southern mountains, New England and Scotland, I have come to the conclusion (which is undoubtedly shared by other collectors as well) that a vital folksong tradition is dependent upon more than a great amorphous mass of 'ordinary' folksingers. To be sure, they are an essential part of the picture. But far more important are those few highly gifted tradition bearers whom the 'ordinary' folk themselves recognize as the best or great singers of their respective communities. These are the folk with the largest repertoires, the finest voices (in terms of a folk aesthetic), the most representative and engaging singing styles, and who are the greatest creative and re-creative singing personalities. These are the folk who are the major inspirational force in a singing community - it is their songs, their versions, and their style which are borrowed, copied or imitated by their friends, neighbors and relatives. If folksong tradition is vanishing it is mainly because there are far fewer of these 'great' singers alive today than there were in past decades and centuries.

In Jean Ritchie, we have the personification of one of these 'great' tradition bearers. The youngest number of the famous "Singing Ritchies of Kentucky", Jean is recognized as a highly talented singer not only in her own community, but has become the best known traditional singer in America. This is no mean feat in a nation where there is a sharp cleavage between the 'natural' rural native and the 'sophisticated' urbanite, the 'real'-and-simple and the phony-and-brash, the relaxed-and-unselfconscious and the affected-and-pretentious. That Jean has been widely proclaimed by audiences on both sides of the vast socio-psychological barrier is perhaps the finest testament to her 'greatness' as a folksinger.

Hers is one of the largest repertoires of any singer in America; her singing style is the finest representative of what may be broadly referred to as the "southern white - mountain style; and her performances, whether of ballads or songs, are enthralling, attention-demanding, and engrossing. And all of these are perhaps found in this recording. Today, when a collector finds someone who knows three or four of these ballads, he is apt to turn somersaults; to find as many as twenty in an entire state would be a major collecting experience. So, when finding one singer who has that number in her repertory, it is a near-world-shaking occurrence. But Jean's repertory of these ballads is not to be congratulated merely for its size - for both her texts and tunes are superb examples of their kind. And in Jean's performance of them we are treated to one of the great experiences of ballad listening. We should be grateful for the invention and perfection of the tape recorder and long-playing phonograph record for they give us an opportunity to bring this experience into our living-rooms; it is the next best thing to seeing her perform these ballads.

-Kenneth S. Goldstein

A SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

In the notes to the Child ballads included in this album will be found selected references to the major bibliographical guides, and regional collections containing additional texts, tunes and information relative to the ballads being discussed. Included are references to the two major Scottish collections of this century, as well as the most recent American regional collections.

In the left-hand column, the reader will find the short reference designation for each of the books in this bibliography, which are described in detail in the right hand column.

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|------------------|---|
| BROWN COLLECTION | THE FRANK C. BROWN COLLECTION OF NORTH CAROLINA FOLKLORE, 7 volumes, Duke University Press, Durham, North Carolina, 1952 - . (Volume II - Folk Ballads from North Carolina - is edited by H.M. Belden & A.P. Hudson). |
| CHILD | Francis James Child, THE ENGLISH AND SCOTTISH POPULAR BALLADS, 5 Volumes, Boston, 1882-1898. (Reprinted by The Folklore Press, New York, 1956) |
| BRONSON | Bertrand Harris Bronson, THE TRADITIONAL TUNES OF THE CHILD BALLADS, 5 volumes, Princeton Univ. Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1959 - . (To date only Volume I, containing the tunes and texts to Child ballads #1 - 53, has been published.) |
| COFFIN | Tristram P. Coffin, THE BRITISH TRADITIONAL BALLAD IN NORTH AMERICA, Volume II of the Bibliographical Series of the American Folklore Society, Philadelphia, 1950. |
| DAVIS | Arthur Kyle Davis, MORE TRADITIONAL BALLADS OF VIRGINIA, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1960. |
| DEAN-SMITH | Margaret Dean-Smith, A GUIDE TO ENGLISH FOLK SONG COLLECTIONS, 1822-1952, University Press of Liverpool in Association with the English Folk Dance & Song Society, Liverpool, 1954. |
| FLANDERS | Helen Hartness Flanders, ANCIENT BALLADS TRADITIONALLY SUNG IN NEW ENGLAND, with critical analysis by T.P. Coffin, 4 volumes, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1960. (To date only Volume I, containing the tunes and texts to Child ballads #1-51, has been published.) |
| GREIG & KEITH | LAST LEAVES OF TRADITIONAL BALLADS AND BALLAD AIRS, collected in Aberdeenshire by Gavin Greig and edited by Alexander Keith, The Buchan Club, Aberdeen, 1925. |
| ORD | John Ord, THE BOTHY SONGS AND BALLADS OF ABERDEEN, BANFF AND MORAY, ANGUS AND THE MEARNES, Gardner, Paisley, 1930. |
| SHARP | Cecil J. Sharp, ENGLISH FOLK SONGS FROM THE SOUTHERN APPALACHIANS, edited by Maud Karpeles, 2 volumes, Oxford University Press, London, 1932. (Reprinted 1952) |

SIDE I, Band 1: GYPSY LADDIE (Child #200)

Tradition has it that this ballad is connected to several historical characters of the 17th century, but there appears to be no factual support for such tales. In 1624, a well known gypsy chieftain, Johnny Faa (mentioned in early versions of the ballad), was hanged. His execution appears to have made such a strong impression that the ballad tale was attributed to him. Towards the end of the century, a story circulated concerning the wife of the Earl of Cassilis who ran off with Sir John Faa, who came to the castle disguised as a gypsy. As the legend goes, the Earl returned in time, went in pursuit, captured and hanged his wife's abductor. History has it otherwise; no such incident is known to have happened to any member of the Cassilis family. Nevertheless their names appear in many British versions of this ballad.

The ballad still exists widely in tradition in both Britain and America. T.P. Coffin indicates 8 versional forms for the ballad as it exists in this country. The American versions have dropped several important features still found in Old World variants: no mention is made of the gypsies casting a spell over the lady, none of the gypsies are hanged or punished, and the names Faa and Cassilis are omitted.

Jean Ritchie's version, learned from her uncle Jason Ritchie, is closest to Coffin's type C version, in which the gypsy casts the lady off in the end. A more common ending for American versions of the ballad is for the lady to refuse to return to her husband and to ride away forever with her gypsy lover. For an unusual cowboy version of this ballad see "Clayton Boone" as sung by Harry Jackson in The Cowboy: His Songs, Ballads & Brag Talk (Folkways Records FH 5723).

For additional texts and information, see:

Child, Volume IV, p. 61 ff.; Coffin, pp. 120-124;
Dean-Smith, p. 69;
Brown Collection, Volume II, pp. 161-168; Davis,
pp. 253-261;
Ord, p. 411; Greig & Keith, pp. 126-129; Sharp,
Volume I, pp. 233-239.

SIDE I, Band 2: FALSE SIR JOHN (Child #4)

In the opening lines of his more than 40 pages of notes, analogues and texts of this ballad (under the title "Lady Issbel and the Elf-Knight"), Child writes: "Of all ballads this has perhaps obtained the widest circulation. It is nearly as well known to the southern as to the northern nations of Europe." Undoubtedly as a result of such widespread tradition, the ballad has been subjected to extensive study with major contributions to its analysis having been made by scholars from several countries. The Norwegian scholar, Sophus Bugge, believed the ballad to be an off-shoot of the biblical story of Judith and Holofernes, but little weight need be given to this theory when one considers the frequency with which "Bluebeard"-type stories occur. In recent years, two highly detailed studies of this ballad have been made. In Iivar Kemppinen's "The Ballad of Lady Isabel and the False Knight" (Helsinki, 1954), the author comes to the conclusion that the ballad probably originated between 1100 and 1200, citing philological and musical evidences in support of his claims. And in Holger Nygard's "The Ballad of Heer Halewijn" (FFC #169, Helsinki, 1958), we are given an analysis of its forms and variations in Europe and of its course of transmission through Western European countries.

In most recently collected variants of the ballad, both in Europe and America, the character of the antagonist has been changed from that of a supernatural being (an elf or demon) to a human creature - the ballad now concerns a totally human drama.

Of the five variant forms of the ballad as outlined by T.P. Coffin, Jean Ritchie's version, learned

from her Uncle Jason, is closest to Coffin's story type A.

An indication of the popularity of this ballad in English language tradition may be obtained by reading the 141 texts with tunes published by B.H. Bronson. This number can probably be doubled when the number of textual variants collected without tunes are considered.

For additional texts and information, see:

Child, Volume I, p. 22 ff.; Coffin, pp. 32-35;
Dean-Smith, p. 97;
Bronson, Volume I, pp. 39-100; Brown Collection,
Volume II, pp. 1526;
Davis, pp. 16-25; Flanders, Volume I, pp. 82-123;
Sharp, Volume I, pp. 5-13.

SIDE I, Band 3: HANGMAN (Child #95)

This ballad, referred to by Child as "The Maid Freed from the Gallows", is a prime example of the use of incremental repetition as a ballad device. In that capacity, this ballad has served as a pawn for those scholars who followed the 'communal' school in the study of ballad origins.

A truly international ballad, it is known in most European countries in a much fuller form than it is usually found in any of the English-speaking nations. British and American variants have reduced the ballad tale to the attempt by a prisoner to be saved by the intervention of various members of his or her family, the wife or sweetheart finally coming to the rescue. In this form (and with the aid of the incremental device) the ballad has maintained a very firm framework upon which many interesting forces of variation have played. It has also been found as a folk drama, as a children's game, as a prose tale and as a cante-fable, and is one of the best known of the traditional ballads among American and West Indian Negroes.

The original form of the ballad appears to have referred to the potential victim as a female, but most recently collected versions (as in this version of Jean Ritchie's, learned from her father) have a man awaiting execution. This version conforms with T.P. Coffin's story type C for American ballad versions. For a unique version of the ballad, in which the victim waits in vain for the usual rescue and is left by his sweetheart to be hung, see Harry Jackson's version in The Cowboy: His Songs, Ballads and Brag Talk (Folkways Records FH 5723).

For additional texts and information, see:

Child, Volume II, p. 346 ff.; Coffin, pp. 96-99;
Dean-Smith, p. 86;
Sharp, Volume I, pp. 208-214; Brown Collection,
Volume II, pp. 143-149;
Davis, pp. 221-228.

SIDE I, Band 4: LORD BATEMAN (Child #53)

This is one of the most popular of the Child ballads, and has circulated widely in England, Scotland and America. Part of its textual popularity has undoubtedly been due to the frequency with which it appeared on broadsides and in songsters of the 19th century, and this also certainly explains the relative textual stability of both English and American versions.

Attempts have been made to indicate the ballad tale is derived from the legend of Gilbert a Becket, father of St. Thomas of Canterbury, who was supposed to have had an adventure similar to that which occurred to the ballad hero. Little credence has been given to this theory, though there is no doubt that the legend has indeed affected the ballad.

In early Scottish texts, the hero's captors bore a hole through his shoulder and place a draw-tree

through it so that he can be worked as a draught-animal. This barbarous treatment has been modified in modern texts, and in Jean Ritchie's version, learned from her father, Bateman is simply chained to a tree, which, strangely enough, grows inside the prison.

For additional texts and information, see:

Child, Volume I, p. 454 ff.; Coffin, pp. 63-65;
Dean-Smith, p. 5;
Greig & Keith, pp. 40-43; Bronson, Volume I,
pp. 409-465;
Brown Collection, Volume II, pp. 50-61; Davis,
pp. 102-110.

SIDE I, Band 5: THE HOUSE CARPENTER (Child #243)

The versions of this ballad included by Child in his volumes appear under the title "James Harris or The Daemon Lover". In most versions collected in America (and practically every published collection includes one or more variants of "The House Carpenter"), any suggestion of the returning lover's supernatural or demonic character has been eliminated.

The Child A text of this ballad (a blackletter broadside from the Pepysian collection) was typical of the low order of composition turned out by the hack broadside scribes of the 17th century. It was Child's opinion that this broadside was the original or ancestor of the other variants of the ballad which he included in his corpus. If such was indeed the case, then we have an excellent example of what Barry termed "communal recreation", for in the course of oral circulation it has become one of the finest English language ballads.

Jean Ritchie's version, learned from her father, is closest to the form of Coffin's story type B, in which some slight degree of the lover's demonic character is still evident from his ability to interpret the woman's vision of their destination, after the ship sinks.

For additional texts and information, see:

Child, Volume IV, p. 361 ff.; Coffin, pp. 138-140;
Dean-Smith, p. 80;
Greig & Keith, pp. 196-197; Sharp, Volume I, pp.
244-258; Davis, pp. 270-289.

SIDE I, Band 6: LORD THOMAS AND FAIR ELLENDER (Child #73)

Child thought that the Scottish version of this ballad which Percy included in his *Reliques* was "one of the most beautiful of our ballads, and indeed of all ballads." Child's evaluation of this ballad appears to have paralleled the tastes of the British and American folk, for it has proved to be one of the most popular of all ballads on both sides of the Atlantic.

The ballad tale involves the ever-popular literary cliché of the love triangle - but the tale ends rather gruesomely with the death of all three parties. Frequently the ballad ends with the popular commonplace of the love-animating plants that spring from the graves of the dead lovers, a motif not found in Jean Ritchie's version.

Though the oldest known versions of this ballad were Scottish, American texts appear to stem not from any Scottish source, but from a frequently printed 17th century English broadside text.

Jean's version was learned from her father.

For additional texts and information, see:

Child, Volume II, p. 179 ff.; Coffin, pp. 74-76;
Dean-Smith, p. 85;
Greig & Keith, pp. 54-57; Sharp, Volume I, pp.
115-131; Davis, pp. 123-137;
Brown Collection, Volume II, pp. 67-79.

SIDE II, Band 1: THE MERRY GOLDEN TREE (Child #286)

The earliest known text to this favorite ballad is a broadside version from the Pepysian collection dating back to the last half of the 17th century. In that version, the villain-captain is Sir Walter Raleigh, but in later texts ballad singers have deleted all references to him. There seems to be no actual historical event, concerning Walter Raleigh or any other naval figure, to which this ballad is connected.

Details of the ballad vary greatly in the many versions collected since Child. Aside from the usual havoc wreaked by oral circulation on names and places, an unusual amount of variation exists in the emotional contexts of the ballad's ending. In some versions, the cabin-boy hero is amply rewarded for his ship wrecking activity, in others he is left to drown, or is pulled aboard too late and dies on deck. Some few texts end with the cabin-boy taking his revenge by returning a ghost form and sinking the ship.

Jean Ritchie's version, learned from her mother, corresponds to Coffin's story type A, certainly the most common form for the ballad in American tradition.

For additional texts and information, see:

Child, Volume V, pp. 135 ff.; Coffin, pp. 153-155;
Dean-Smith, p. 69;
Sharp, Volume I, pp. 282-290; Brown Collection,
Volume II, pp. 191-195;
Davis, pp. 339-343.

SIDE II, Band 2: LORD LOVEL (Child #75)

When compared with many of the Child ballads, "Lord Lovel" is a ballad of rather recent vintage, the earliest known text dating from the last quarter of the 18th century. The ballad is very popular in America in texts which are all pretty similar. Almost all versions collected in this century in both Britain and America follow Child's H text, an English broadside from the middle of the 19th century. Undoubtedly both its popularity and the standardized form of the text are due to its frequent appearance in print, as it was published frequently in 19th century songsters and broadsides in this country.

Several scholars have commented on the seeming incongruity of the ballad text to its tune. Reed Smith (in "South Carolina Ballads", p. 121) writes: "The difference between reading it as a poem and singing it as a song is the difference between tragedy and comedy." A.K. Davis (in "Traditional Ballads of Virginia", pp. 240-241) in referring to the delightfully rollicking tunes to which the text is sung, comments: "They are quite out of harmony with the deep tragedy of the ballad story. To sing the tune is to mitigate the tragedy, perhaps even to run the risk of burlesquing it." And indeed, the ballad has been frequently burlesqued, and numerous parodies have been sung widely throughout the Southern states.

Jean Ritchie's version was learned from her uncle Jason.

For additional texts and information, see:

Child, Volume II, p. 204 ff.; Coffin, pp. 78-79;
Dean-Smith, p. 85;
Greig-Keith, pp. 57-58; Sharp, Volume I, pp. 146-149; Davis, pp. 146-151;
Brown Collection, Volume II, p. 84-88.

SIDE II, Band 3: OLD BANGUM (Child #18)

Modern variants of this ballad show in gross detail the degree to which a ballad can degenerate with the passage of time. The original ballad, titled "Sir Lionel" by Child, was, in all probability, based on the courtly romance of "Sir Eglamour of

Artois", though the ballad story has been so garbled that it is barely recognizable today. Its degeneration, perhaps through stage influences, has resulted in its current status as a comic burlesque, in which form it has survived more vigorously in the United States than in England. The changed mood is best illustrated by its various nonsense refrains. Gone are the lady in distress and the cruel giant; all that remains of this tale of medieval pagentry is a fight between a knight and a boar, and, in some versions, an involvement with a wild woman.

Jean Ritchie's version, rather typical of the American forms of the ballad in modern tradition, was learned from her mother's cousin, Ellen Fields.

For additional texts and information, see:

Child, Volume I, p. 208 ff.; Coffin, pp. 48-49;
Dean-Smith, p. 105;
Bronson, Volume I, pp. 265-274; Sharp, Volume I,
pp. 54-55; Davis, pp. 72-78;
Flanders, Volume I, pp. 226-229.

SIDE II, Band 4: BARBRY ELLEN (Child #84)

In his diary entry for January 2, 1666, Samuel Pepys wrote, "In perfect pleasure I was to hear her (Mrs. Knipp, an actress) sing, and especially her little Scotch song of Barbary Allen." Many others have shared his "perfect pleasure" since Pepys' days, for "Barbary Allen" is certainly the best known and most widely sung of the Child ballads.

The consistency of the basic outline of the ballad story and the amazing number of texts which have been reported on both sides of the ocean is no doubt due, in large part, to the numerous songster, chapbook, and broadside printings of the ballad in the 19th century. A widespread oral tradition has, however, left its mark, for no ballad shows, in its different variants, so many minor variations.

It is interesting to note that while the heroine's name has remained constant in almost every known version on both sides of the ocean (undoubtedly due to its frequent use as a rhyme word throughout the ballad), the dying lover's name varies greatly - except in Scotland where the name has almost always been John Graeme.

Jean Ritchie's family sings this ballad to two different tunes, with the texts differing only slightly.

For additional texts and information, see:

Child, Volume II, p. 276 ff.; Coffin, pp. 87-90;
Dean-Smith, p. 51;
Ord, p. 476; Greig & Keith, pp. 67-70; Sharp, Volume I, pp. 183-195;
Brown Collection, Volume II, pp. 111-131; Davis, pp. 182-198.

SIDE II, Band 5: FAIR ANNIE OF LOCHROYAN (Child #76)

This tragic story is one of the most moving in the Child canon; nevertheless it has been recorded rarely from tradition. One can not simply blame the length of the ballad for this situation (though it must be taken into account), for longer ballads have been collected in recent years. Perhaps the indelicacy of a situation in which the heroine is an unwed mother has driven this ballad from a folk society in which pristine morality, religious 'hell-and-damnation' teachings, and general squeamishness hold sway.

In this century the full ballad has not been reported from tradition in England, though several excellent variants have been collected in Scotland and Ireland. In America, prior to this recording of a Kentucky version by Jean Ritchie, the ballad has been reported only from North Carolina and West Virginia. Jean's version is a major addition to the store of American versions of the Child ballads, for her text contains certain elements not previously reported in any

American versions and found but rarely in older British forms of the ballad.

It should be noted that there is a great similarity between the version sung by Jean Ritchie and a Scottish text which was communicated to Sir Walter Scott by a major Hutton in 1802 (Printed in Child, Volume IV, pp. 471-474). The Hutton text contains 50 four-line stanzas; Jean's text has 14 1/2 double stanzas (8 lines each) which very closely correspond to 29 of Hutton's 50 stanzas. To be sure, Jean's text is almost totally Americanized, though some few Scots words appear unobtrusively here and there. Since the text published in Child has not appeared elsewhere in print, and since Jean has indicated to me that her Uncle Jason (from whom she learned the ballad) had no access to the Child volumes, we have here a truly remarkable instance of a unique version of a ballad appearing in two widely separated places 150 years apart. In T.F. Henderson's edition of Scott's "Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border" Volume III, page 254, the editor indicates his belief that the Hutton text was sent to Scott in 1802 (after the publication of the Minstrelsy), and that "Major Hutton has evidently fashioned his version by combining the recollection of his father and family with the stanzas of the Minstrelsy version." Either Henderson's supposition is incorrect, and Hutton's text represents a fully traditional version, or the text "fashioned" by Hutton then passed into oral tradition (without the aid of print) to turn up a century-and-a-half later in Kentucky.

Like most other published texts, Jean's version begins with the commonplace "who will shoe my feet" lines, which have frequently been reported as a separate lyric song or in combination with other song or ballad matter (see Coffin, p. 81, for a partial list of ballad to which these stanzas have been appended). Collectors have all too frequently resorted to listing a version of The Lass of Roch Royal among their finds when their contribution to recorded lore is merely another "who will shoe" text. This is all the more ludicrous when one realizes that it has never been determined whether these stanzas originated with this ballad. It should be noted that these same stanzas are also found in another Child ballad, "The New-Slain Knight" (Child #263); Child, however, thought that these stanzas were borrowed from The Lass of Roch Royal.

For additional texts and information, see:

Child, Volume II, p. 213 ff.; Coffin, pp. 30-31;
Dean-Smith, p. 65;
Greig & Keith, pp. 52-63; Brown Collection, Volume II, p. 88-92.

SIDE I, Band 1: GYPSY LADDIE
(Child #200)

An English Lord came home one night
Enquiring for his lady,
The servants said on every hand,
She's gone with the Gypsy Laddie.

Go saddle up my milk-white steed,
Go saddle me up my brownie
And I will ride both night and day
Till I overtake my bonnie.

Oh he rode East and he rode West,
And at last he found her,
She was lying on the green, green
grass
And the Gypsies arms around her.

Oh, how can you leave your house
and land,
How can you leave your money,
How can you leave your rich young
lord
To be a gypsy's bonnie.

How can you leave your house and
land,
How can you leave your baby,
How can you leave your rich young
lord
To be a gypsy's lady.

Oh come go home with me, my dear,
Come home and be my lover,
I'll furnish you with a room so neat,
With a silken bed and covers.

I won't go home with you, kind sir,
Nor will I be your lover,
I care not for your rooms so neat
Or your silken bed or your covers.

It's I can leave my house and land,
And I can leave my baby,
I'm a-goin' to roam this world around
And be a gypsy's lady.

Oh, soon this lady changed her mind,
Her clothes grew old and faded,
Her hose and shoes came off her feet
And left them bare and naked.

Just what befell this lady now,
I think it worth relating,
Her gypsy found another lass
And left her heart a-breaking.

SIDE I, Band 2: FALSE SIR JOHN
(Child #4)

False Sir John a-wooing came
To a lady young and fair
May Colvin was this lady's name
And her father's only heir
Her father's only heir.

He woo'd her while she spun the thread,
And while they made the hay,
Until he gained her low consent
To mount and ride away,
To mount and ride away.

It's bring-a me some of your father's
gold
And some of your mother's fee
I'll take thee to some far-off land
And there I'll marry thee,
And there I'll marry thee.

She's gone into her father's coffer,
Where all of his monies lay,
She's took the yeller and left the
white
And lightly skipped away,
And lightly skipped away.

She's gone into her father's stables
Where all of his steeds did stand,
She's took the best and left the
worst
In all of her father's land,
In all of her father's land.

She's mounted on a milk-white steed
And he on a dapple-grey
And they rode till they come to a
lonesome spot,
A cliff by the side of the sea.

Light down, light down, said false
Sir John,
Your bridle bed you see,
It's seven women have I drowned
here
And the eighth one you shall be,
And the eighth one you shall be.

Have off, have off your holland
smock,
With borders all around,
For it's too costly to lay down
here
And rot on the cold, cold ground.
And rot on the cold, cold
ground.

Cast off, cast off your silks so fine,
And lay them on a stone,
For they're too fine and cost-i-lie
To rot in the salt sea foam,
To rot in the salt sea foam.

Take off, take off your silken stays,
Likewise your handsome shoes,
For they're too fine and cost-i-lie
To rot in the sea with you,
To rot in the sea with you.

Turn around, turn around, thou false
Sir John,
And look at the leaves of the tree,
For it don't become a gentleman
A naked woman to see,
A naked woman to see.

Oh false Sir John has turned around
To gaze at the leaves on the tree,
She's made a dash with her tender
little arms
And pushed him into the sea,
And pushed him into the sea.

Oh help, oh help, May Colvin,
Oh help or I shall drown,
I'll take thee back to thy father's
house
And lightly set thee down,
And lightly set thee down.

No help, no help, said May Colvin,
No help will you get from me,
For the bed's no colder to you sir
Then you thought to give to me,
Then you thought to give to me.

She mounted on the milk-white steed,
And led the dapple-grey,
And rode till she come to her father's
house
At the breakin' of the day,
At the breakin' of the day.

Then up and spoke that little parrot,
Said, May Colvin, where have you been,
And what have you done with false
Sir John
That went with you ridin',
That went with you ridin'?

Oh hold your tongue my pretty parrot,
And tell no tales on me,
And I'll buy you a cage of beaten gold
With spokes of i-vor-y,
With spokes of i-vor-y.

SIDE I, Band 3: HANGMAN (Child #95)

Hangman, hangman slack up your rope,
Oh slack it for a while,
I looked down yonder and I seen paw
comin',
He's walked for many long mile.

Oh paw, say paw, have you brung me
any gold,
Any gold to pay my fee
Or have you walked these many long
miles
To see me on the hangin' tree?

No, son, no son, hain't brung you no
gold
No gold for to pay your fee,
But I just walked these many long
miles
To see you on the hangin' tree.

Hangman, hangman slack up your rope,
Oh slack it for a while,
I looked down yonder and I seen maw
comin',
She's walked for many long mile.

Oh maw, say maw, have you brung me
any gold,
Any gold to pay my fee,
Or have you walked these many long
miles
To see me on the hangin' tree?

No, son, no son, hain't brung you no
gold
No gold for to pay your fee,
But I just walked these many long
miles
To see you on the hangin' tree.

Hangman, hangman slack up your rope,
Oh slack it for a while,
I looked down yonder and I seen my
true love comin',
She's walked for many long mile.

Oh true love, say true love, have
you brung me any gold,
And gold to pay my fee,
Or have you walked these many long
miles
To see me on the hangin' tree?

Yes love, yes love, I brung you some
gold,
Some gold for to pay your fee,
And I just come for to take you home
So we can married be.

SIDE I, Band 4: LORD BATEMAN
(Child #53)

Lord Bateman was a noble lord,
He thought himself of a high degree,
He could not rest nor be contented
Till he had sailed the old salt sea.

Oh he sailed east and he sailed to
the westward,
He sailed all over to the Turkish
shore,
There he got caught and put in prison
Never to be released any more.

There grew a tree inside of this
prison
There grew a tree both broad and high,
And there they took and boond him
prisoner
Till he grew weak and like to die.

Now the Turk he had one only daughter
And she was fair as she could be,
She stole the keys to her father's
prison

And declared Lord Bateman she'd set
free.

She took him down to the deepest
cellar,
She gave him a drink of the strongest
wine;
She threw her loving little arms
around him,
Crying, Oh Lord Bateman, if you were
mine.

They made a vow, they made a promise,
For seven long years they made it to
stand;
He vowed he'd marry no other woman,
She vowed she'd marry no other man.

Well, seven long years has rolled
around,
Seven years and they seem like
twenty-nine;
It's she's packed up all of her gay
clothing
And declared Lord Bateman she'd go
find.

Well, she sailed east and she sailed to
the westward,
She sailed all over to the England
shore;
She rode till she came to Lord
Bateman's castle
And she summonsed his porter right
down to the door.

Oh is this not Lord Bateman's castle,
And is his Lordship not within?
Oh yes, oh yes, cried the proud
young porter,
He's a-just now bringing his new
bride in.

Go bid him to send me a slice of bread,
Go bid him to send me a drink of wine,
And not to forget the Turkish lady
That freed him from his close confine.

What's the news, what's the news, you
proud young porter,
What's the news, what's the news, that
you brung to me?
There stands a lady outside of your
castle,
She's the fairest one I ever did see.

She has got a gold ring on every
finger,
And on one finger she has got three,
And enough gay gold all around her
middle
As would buy Northumberland of thee.

She bids you to send her a slice of
bread,
She bids you to send her a drink of
wine,
And not to forget the Turkish lady
That freed you from your close con-
fine.

Oh up and spoke that new bride's
mother,
She never was known to speak so
free,
Well, what's to become of my only
daughter,
She has just been made a bride to
thee.

Oh I've done no harm to your only
daughter,
And she is the none of the worse for
me;
She came to me with a horse and
saddle
And she shall go home in coacharee.

Lord Bateman he pounded his fist on
the table,
And he broke it in pieces one, two,
three,
Says, I'll forsake all for the
Turkish Lady,
She has crossed that old salt sea
for me.

SIDE I, Band 5: THE HOUSE CARPENTER
(Child #243)

Well met, well met, my own true love,
Well met, well met, said he,
I've come from far across the sea
And it's all for the sake of thee.

I could have married the King's
daughter fair,
And she would've married me,
But I have forsaken the crowns of
gold
And it's all for the sake of thee.

If you could've married a king's
daughter fair,
I'm sure I'm not to blame,
For I have married me a house
carpenter
And I'm sure he's a fine young man.

Oh will you leave your house
carpenter
And sail away with me
I'll take you where the grass grows
green
Down in sweet Italy.

Oh if I leave my house carpenter,
And sail away with ye,
What will ye have to maintain me
upon
When we are far away.

Oh I have seven ships upon the sea
Seven ships upon the land
Four hundred and fifty bold sailor
men
To be at your command.

She turned herself three times
around
She kissed her babies three,
Farewell, farewell you sweet little
babes
Keep your father sweet company.

They hadn't been sailin' but about
two weeks,
I'm sure it was not three
When this fair lady begin for to
weep
And she wept most bitterly.

Are you weepin' for your house
carpenter
Are you weepin' for your store
Or are you weepin' for your sweet
little babes,
That you never shall see any more.

Not a-weepin' for my house carpenter
Not a-weepin' for my store
Yes, I'm weepin' for my sweet little
babes
That I never will see any more.

They hadn't been sailin' but about
three weeks,
I'm sure it was not four,
When the ship spring a leak and
down she sank
And she sank to rise no more.

What hills, what hills so fair and
so bright,
What hills so white and fair?

Oh those be the hills of heaven,
my dear;
But you won't never go there.
What hills, what hills down in
yonder sea,
What hills so black as coal?
Oh those be the hills of hell, my
dear,
Where we must surely go.

SIDE I, Band 6: LORD THOMAS AND FAIR
ELLENDER (Child #73)

Oh mother, oh mother, come riddle it
down,
Come riddle two hearts as one,
Say must I marry fair Ellender
Or bring the brown girl home.
The brown girl she has houses
and lands,
Fair Ellender she has none,
Oh, the best advice I can give
you, my son,
Is go bring me the brown girl
home.

He rode till he come to fair Ellender's
gate,
He tingled the bell with his cane,
No one so ready as fair Ellender
herself
To arise and bid him come in.
Oh what's the news, Lord Thomas,
she cried,
What's the news you brung to me,
I've come to ask you to my wedding,
Now what do you think of me?

Oh mother, oh mother, come riddle it
down,
Come riddle two hearts as one,
Oh must I go to Lord Thomas's wedding
Or stay at home and mourn.
Oh the brown girl she's got
business there,
You know you have got none;
Oh the best advice I can give you,
my daughter,
Is to stay at home and mourn.

She dressed herself in a snow-white
dress,
Her maids they dressed in green,
And every town that they rode through
They took her to be some queen.
She rode till she come to Lord
Thomas's gate,
She pulled all in her rein;
No one so ready as Lord Thomas
himself
To arise and bid her come in.

He took her by the lily-white hand,
He led her through the hall,
He seated her down in a rockin'-chair,
Amongst those ladies all.
Is this your bride, Lord Thomas,
she cried,
She looks so wonderful brown,
You once could-a married a maiden
as fair
As ever the sun shone on.

Dispraise her not, fair Ellender, he
cried,
Dispraise her not to me,
For I think more of your little finger
Than of her whole body.
The brown girl had a little pen
knife,
It being both keen and sharp,
Betwixt the long ribs and the
short,
Pierced fair Ellender to the heart.

Oh what's the matter, Lord Thomas he
cried,
You look so pale and wan,
You used to have a rosy a color
As ever the sun shone on.
Oh are you blind, Lord Thomas,
she cried,
Or is it you cannot see;
And can't you see my own heart's
blood
Come a-trinkling down to my knee.

Lord Thomas he drew his sword from
his side,
As he run through the hall;
He cut off the head of his bonny
brown bride
And kicked it against the wall.
Then placin' the handle against
the wall,
And the blade a-towards his heart,
Said, did you ever see three true-
lovers meet
That had so soon to part.

Oh mother, oh mother, go dig my grave,
And dig it both wide and deep,
And bury fair Ellender in my arms,
And the brown girl at my feet.

SIDE II, Band 1: THE MERRY GOLDEN
TREE (Child #286)

There was a little ship and she
sailed upon the sea,
And she went by the name of The
Merry Golden Tree,
As she sailed upon the low and the
lonesome low,
As she sailed upon the lonesome sea.

There was another ship and she sailed
upon the sea,
And she went by the name of The
Turkish Robbery,
As she sailed upon the low and the
lonesome low,
As she sailed upon the lonesome sea.

There was a little cabin boy upon the
Golden Tree,
Said, Captain, oh Captain, what will
you give to me,
If I sink them in the low and the
lonesome low,
If I sink them in the lonesome sea.

Oh a half of my ship shall be made
unto thee,
And my youngest daughter shall be
wed unto thee,
If you sink them in the low and the
lonesome low,
If you sink them in the lonesome sea.

He bowed upon his breast and away
swum he,
Till he come to the ship called
The Turkish Robbery,
Gonna sink you in the low and the
lonesome low,
Gonna sink you in the lonesome sea.

Then out of his pocket an instrument
he drew
And he bored nine holes for to let
that water through,
For to sink them in the low and the
lonesome low,
For to sink them in the lonesome sea.

Oh some had hats and some had caps,
And they tried for to stop these
ferverish water gaps,
But he sunk them in the low and the
lonesome low,
But he sunk them in the lonesome sea.

He bowed upon his breast and back
swum he,
Till he come to the ship called
The Merry Golden Tree,
As she sailed upon the low and the
lonesome low,
As she sailed on the lonesome sea.

Oh captain, oh captain, pray draw me
up on board,
Oh captain, oh captain, pray give me
my reward,
For I've sunk them in the low and the
lonesome low
For I've sunk them in the lonesome sea.

I'll never draw you up on board,
No I've never known a cabinboy to gain
such reward,
Though you sunk them in the low and
the lonesome low,
Though you sunk them in the lonesome
sea.

If it weren't for the love of your
daughter and your men,
I would do unto you what I've done
unto them,
I would sink you in the low and the
lonesome low,
I would sink you in the lonesome sea.

He bowed upon his breast and down
sunk he,
Farewell, farewell to The Merry Golden
Tree,
For I'm sinkin' in the low and the
lonesome low,
For I'm sinkin' in the lonesome sea.

SIDE II, Band 2: LORD LOVEL
(Child #75)

Lord Lovel he stood at his castle gate
A-combin' his milk-white steed,
When up came Lady Nancybell
To wish her lover good speed, -good
speed,
To wish her lover good speed.

Where are you goin', Lord Lovel, she
said,
Oh where are you goin', said she.
I'm goin', my Lady Nancybell,
Strange countries for to see, - to
see,
Strange countries for to see.

When will you be back, Lord Lovel,
she said,
Oh when will you come back, said she.
In a year or two or theree at the
most
I'll return to my fair Nancy, -Nancy,
I'll return to my fair Nancy.

But he hadn't been gone a year and a
day,
Strange countries for to see,
When languishing thoughts came into
his head,
Lady Nancybell he'd go see, -go see,
Lady Nancybell he'd go see.

So he rode and he rode on his milk-
white steed
Till he came to London town,
And there he heard those parish
bells ring
And the people go mournin' around,
-around,
And the people go mournin' around.

Oh what is the matter, Lord Lovel he
said,
Oh what is the matter, said he.
A lord's lady's dead, a woman
she said,

And some call her Lady Nancy, -Nancy,
And some calls her Lady Nancy.

He ordered the grave to be opened
wide
And the shroud he turned down,
And there he kissed her clay cold
lips
Till the tears came tricklin' down,
-lin' down,
Till the tears came tricklin'
down.

Lady Nancy she died as it might be
today,
Lord Lovel he died as tomorrow;
Lady Nancy she died out of pure,
pure grief,
Lord Lovel he died out of sorrow,
of sorrow,
Lord Lovel he died out of sorrow.

Lady Nancy was laid in St. Francis's
Church,
Lord Lovel was laid in the choir,
And out of her bosom there grew a red
rose,
And out of her lover's a briar, -a
briar,
And out of her lover's a briar.

They grew and they grew to the church
steeple-top,
And then they could grow no higher,
So there they entwined in a true
lover's knot
For all true lovers to admire,
-admire,
For all true lovers to admire.

SIDE II, Band 3: OLD BANGUM
(Child #18)

Bangum rid by the riverside
Dillum down dillum
Three young ladies there he spied
Dillum down dillum
Killy ko cuddle down
Killy ko corn.

There's a wild boar in these woods,
Who'll eat his meat, 'll suck his
blood.

If you would this wild boar see
Blow a blast, he'll come to thee.

Slapped the horn into his mouth,
Blew a blast both North and South.

Wild boar come in such a rush,
Split his way through oak and ash.

Fit four hours by the day,
At last the wild boar run away.

Old Bangum follered him to his den,
Saw the bones of a thousand men.

SIDE II, Band 4: BARBARY ALLEN
(Child #84)

All in the merry month of May
When the green buds they were
swellin',
Young William Green on his death
bed lay
For the love of Barbary Allen.

He sent his servant to the town
To the place where she was dwellin'
Sayin', Master's sick and he sends
for you
If your name be Barbary Allen

So slow-lie, slow-lie she got up
And slow-lie she came a-nigh him
And all she said when she got there
Young man, I believe you're dyin'.

Oh yes, I'm low, I'm very low,
And death is in me dwellin',
No better, no better I'll never be
If I can't get Barbary Allen

Oh yes, you're low and very low,
And death is on you dwellin'
No better, no better you'll never
be
For you can't get Barbary Allen.

For don't you remember in yonder's
town
In yonder's town a-drinkin',
You passed your glass all around
and around
And you slighted Barbary Allen

Oh yes I remember in yonder's town
In yonder's town a-drinkin'
I gave my health to the ladies all
around
But my heart to Barbary Allen.

He turned his pale face to the wall
For death was on him dwellin'
Adieu, adieu, you good neighbors all
Adieu, sweet Barbary Allen.

As she was goin' across the fields
She heard those death bells a-kneelin'
And every stroke the death bell give
Hard hearted Barbary Allen.

Oh mother, oh mother, go make my bed,
Go make make it both long and narrow
Young William's died for me today
And I'll die for him tomorrow.

Oh she was buried near the old church
tower
And he was buried a-nigh her
And out of his bosom grew a red, red
rose,
Out of Barbary's grew a green briar.

They grew and they grew up the old
church tower,
Until they could grow no higher
They locked and tied in a true lover's
knot,
Red rose wrapped around the green
briar.

SIDE II, Band 5: FAIR ANNIE OF
LOCHROYAN
(Child #76)

Oh who will shoe my bonny feet
And who will glove my hand
And who will kiss my rosy cheeks
While you in a far off land?
Your Paw will shoe your bonny feet
Your maw will glove your hand
And I will kiss your rosy cheeks
When I come back again.

Oh who will build a bonny ship
And set her on the sea
For I will go and seek my love
My own love Gregory.
Oh up and spoke her father dear
And a wealthy man was he
And he has built a bonny ship
And set her on the sea.

Oh he has built a bonny ship
To sail upon the sea
The mast was of the beaten gold
As fine as it could be.

She had not sailed but twenty
leagues,
But twenty leagues and three
When she met with a rank robber
And all of his company.

Are you the Queen of Heaven, he
cried,
Come to pardon all our sins
Or are you the Merry Magdelene
That was born at Bethlehem?
I'm not the Queen of Heaven,
said she,
Come to pardon all your sins
Nor I'm the Merry Magdelene
That was born at Bethlehem.

But I am the Lass of Lochroyan
That's sailing on the sea
To see if I can find my love
My own love Gregory.
Oh see you now yon bonny bower
All covered o'er with thyme
And when you sailed around and
about
Lord Gregory is within.

Now row the boat my mariners
And bring me to the land
For it's not I see my true love's
castle
Close by the salt sea strand.
She sailed around and sailed
around
And loud and long cried she
Now break, now break your
fairy charms
And set my true love free.

She has taken her young son in
her arms
And to the door she's gone
And long she's knocked and loud
she's called
But answer she's got none.
Open the door Lord Gregory
Open and let me in
The wind blows cold, blows cold,
my love
The rain drops from my chin.

The shoe is frozen to my feet
The glove unto my hand
The wet drops from my frozen hair
And I can scarce-lie stand.
Up then and spoke his ill
mother,
As mean as she could be
You're not the Lass of the
Lochroyan
She is far out o'er the sea.

Away, away, you ill woman,
You don't come here for good,
You're but some witch who strolls
about

Or a mermaid of the flood.
Now open the doors love Gregory
Open the doors I pray
For thy young son is in my arms
And will be dead ere it is day.

Ye lie, ye lie, ye ill woman,
So loud I hear ye lie,
For Annie of the Lochroyan
Is far out o'er the sea
Fair Annie turned her round and
about
Well since this all is so
May never a woman that's bourne
a son
Have a heart so full of woe.

When the cock had crow'n and the
day had dawned
And the sun begun to peep
Up then and raised Lord Gregory
And sore, sore did he weep.
Oh I have dream't a dream
mother

The thought it grieves me great
That Fair Annie of the
Lochroyan
Lay dead at my bed feet.

If it be for Annie of Lochroyan
You make all of this moan
She stood last night at your bower
window

But I have sent her home
Oh he's gone down unto the shore
To see what he could see
And there he saw fair Annie's
barque
Come a-roarin' o'er the sea.

Oh Annie, oh Annie, loud he cried
Oh Annie, oh Annie, my dear
But all the loud that he did cry
Fair Annie she could not hear.
The wind blew loud, the waves rose
high
And dashed the boat on shore
Fair Annie's corpse was in the
foam
The babe rose never more.

Then first he kissed her pale, pale
cheeks
And then he kissed her chin
And then he kissed her cold, cold
lips
There was no breath within.
Oh woe betide my ill mother,
An ill death may she die
She has not been the death of one
But she has been the death of
three.

Then he took out a little dart
That hung down by his side
And thrust it through and through
his heart
And then fell down and died.