

BRITISH TRADITIONAL BALLADS (CHILD BALLADS)
IN THE SOUTHERN MOUNTAINS SUNG BY JEAN RITCHIE
EDITED BY KENNETH S. GOLDSTEIN FOLKWAYS RECORDS FA 2302

VOLUME 2

COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE



FOLKWAYS FA 2302

THE UNQUIET GRAVE (Child #78)
LITTLE DEVILS (Child #278)
SWEET WILLIAM AND LADY MARGARET (Child #74)
THERE LIVED AN OLD LORD (Child #10)
THE WIFE OF USHER'S WELLS (Child #79)
CHERRY TREE CAROL (Child #54)
EDWARD (Child #13)
GENTLE FAIR JENNY (Child #277)
LORD RANDALL (Child #12)
LITTLE MUSGRAVE (Child #81)

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

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BRITISH TRADITIONAL BALLADS (CHILD BALLADS) IN THE SOUTHERN MOUNTAINS SUNG BY JEAN RITCHIE VOLUME 2

CHILD BALLADS IN AMERICA,

Volume 2

sung by
Jean Ritchie

Notes by

Kenneth S. Goldstein



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

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 com-

pletely 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 Ritches 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) |

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 themselves. 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'st 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

SIDE III, Band 1: THE UNQUIET GRAVE (Child #78)

It is possible that this is only a fragment of a once longer popular ballad, for it contains lines very reminiscent of stanzas in several other Child ballads, including "Sweet Williams Ghost" (Child #77) and "The Two Brothers" (Child #49). Child preferred to believe that the ballad as it has come down to us is an imperfect survival and states that "Even such as it is...this fragment has a character of its own."

The ballad is extremely widespread in England, was known in the 19th century in Scotland, but has been reported rarely in America. Fewer than a half dozen texts have been reported in this hemisphere.

Jean Ritchie's Kentucky version, learned from her Uncle Jason, is almost identical (with a few minor verbal variations) with Child's A text. It is notable for its exhibition of several universal popular beliefs, including a talking ghost, the idea that excessive grief on the part of mourners disturbs the peace of the dead, a troth-plight binding lovers even after death (with the death-kiss perhaps indicating a return of the troth), and the belief that the kiss of a dead person may result in death. Jean Ritchie's version, truly exquisite as to both its poetry and music, is a valuable addition to our recorded ballad lore.

For additional texts and information, see:

Child, Volume II, p. 78 ff.; Coffin, p. 82;
Dean-Smith, p. 113;
Brown Collection, Volume II, pp. 94-95; Davis,
pp. 157-160.

SIDE III, Band 2: LITTLE DEVILS (Child #278)

Child summarizes this humorous ballad (titled by him "The Farmer's Curs't Wife") as follows: "The Devil comes for a farmer's wife and is made welcome to her by the husband. The woman proves to be no more controllable in Hell than she had been at home; she kicks the imps about, and even brains a set of them with her pattens or a maul. For safety's sake, the devil is constrained to take her back to her husband." Child published only two texts of this ballad, but in the numerous variants collected since his time in England and America, the ballad tale has remained exceedingly stable, a comment perhaps on its basic charm and meaning to the folk who have aided its persistence in tradition.

It is probable that in an unreported earlier form of the ballad the farmer made a pact with the devil in order to secure help to plow his fields. In return the devil was to receive the soul of some member of the family. This would explain the wording in stanza two, in which the devil indicates that he is ready to receive a member of the family "now".

Many variants collected in recent years in England and America end with a humorous philosophic commentary on one of womankind's most unique virtues. Most versions contain jungling nonsense refrains, or on occasion (as in Jean's version a whistled refrain. Jean's version was learned from her uncle Jason.

For additional texts and information, see:

Child, Volume V, p. 107 ff.; Coffin, p. 148-150;
Dean-Smith, p. 66;
Sharp, Volume I, pp. 275-281; Brown Collection,
Volume II, p. 188;
Davis, pp. 316-327.

SIDE III, Band 3: SWEET WILLIAM AND LADY MARGARET (Child #74)

This ballad traces back to at least the beginning of the 17th century, for two stanzas from it are quoted in Beaumont and Fletcher's "Knight of the Burning Pestle" (ca. 1611). By the end of the 18th century, it had been printed frequently as a broadside or stall ballad, which may account for its popularity in tradition. Similarly, in America, where it has been collected frequently in versions quite far removed from the Child texts, frequent printings in early popular songsters may have accounted for its widespread distribution.

Like "The Unquiet Grave", this ballad is a rich repository of popular superstitious beliefs: in it we find ghostly visitants, gruesome dream omens, the death kiss, and the continuity of love after death in the rose-and-brier motif.

Jean's version, learned from Justis Begley of Hazard, Kentucky, corresponds closely to Coffin's story type A.

For additional texts and information, see:

Child, Volume II, p. 74 ff.; Coffin, pp. 76-78;
Dean-Smith, p. 65;
Sharp, Volume I, pp. 132-145; Brown Collection,
Volume II, pp. 79-84;
Davis, pp. 138-145.

SIDE III, Band 4: THERE LIVED AN OLD LORD (Child #10)

One of the most widely distributed of all British traditional ballads, "The Two Sisters" (as Child titled it) has proved excellent material for detailed study. Of the 27 texts published by Child, the earliest is a broadside dating from the middle of the 17th century, though it may have been sung in Britain at an earlier date.

In an extensive study of the ballad ("The Two Sisters", FFC #147, Helsinki, 1953), Paul G. Brewster comes to the conclusion that it is

definitely Scandinavian in origin. Starting in Norway prior to the 17th century, the ballad spread from there to other Scandinavian countries, and then to Scotland and England. Archer Taylor has made a strong case for his belief that American versions of the ballad derive from English rather than Scottish tradition.

Child considered the heart of the ballad to be the making of a musical instrument from the drowned sister's body, the instrument in turn revealing the identity of her murderer. Most recently collected texts have entirely eliminated this supernatural motif. Despite the loss of this motif (or perhaps because of the loss of such an intriguing element of the ballad tale), and the resultant simplification of the narrative, this ballad has been collected with a greater number of story variations than any Child ballad found in America, Coffin listing 1/4 story types. Jean Ritchie's version, learned from her sister Una, corresponds to Coffin's story type A, certainly the most common of the American forms of the ballad tale.

For additional texts and information, see:

Child, Volume I, p. 137 ff.; Coffin, pp. 38-42;
Dean-Smith, p. 113;
Greig & Keith, pp. 9-13; Ord, p. 430; Bronson,
Volume I, pp. 143-184;
Sharp, Volume I, pp. 26-35; Brown Collection,
Volume II, p. 32-35;
David, pp. 35-50; Flanders, Volume I, pp. 150-170.

SIDE III, Band 5: THE WIFE OF USHER'S WELLS
(Child #79)

The oldest versions of this ballad which were known to Child (both of Scottish provenience) appear to be fragmentary, for no motivation is suggested for the sons' returning to their grieving mother. And, indeed, only in the American texts, which may be descended from some unreported earlier form of the ballad, is a fully coherent story found in which the sons return to inform their mother that excessive grief on her part disturbs their rest by wetting their winding sheets.

In addition to the motif of the dead being disturbed by excessive grief, this ballad contains the equally wide-spread belief concerning the forced return of the dead to their graves at the crowing of the cock and the dawn of the day.

Jean Ritchie's version, learned from her Uncle Jason, is an important recording, for it follows neither of the two story types for this ballad as it has previously been reported in America. Indeed, it is the first American text to conform with the early Scottish texts printed by Child. Jean's version closely follows Child's A text, originally published in Scott's *Minstrelsy*, in 1802, and in addition contains the otherwise unreported stanza 5 of Child's B text (see Jean's text, stanza 10). Jean's version, like the British texts, supplies no motive for the sons' return, but, as Child has said: "...supplying a motive would add nothing to the impressiveness of these verses. Nothing that we have is more profoundly affecting."

For additional texts and information, see:

Child, Volume II, p. 238 ff.; Coffin, pp. 83-84;
Sharp, Volume I, pp. 150-160; Brown Collection,
Volume II, pp. 95-101;
Davis, pp. 161-169.

SIDE IV, Band 1: CHERRY TREE CAROL (Child #54)

This is surely the most popular of English religious folk ballads. The ballad tale is derived from the Pseudo-Matthew gospel, Chapter XX, and, in medieval times, was frequently dramatized in the course of folk plays and pageants, as, for example, the mystery pageant annually produced by the Grey Friars at Coventry.

In the pseudo-gospel, the tree which bows to Mary is a palm; as Child has noted: "The truly popular carol would be sure to adapt the fruit to its own soil", and so in England and America the tree is always a cherry.

A feature found in American texts, but unknown to English versions, is the matter of Jesus' birthday. As Sharp has pointed out, the date usually given is old Christmas day, that is, January 5, 6 or 7, according to one period or another of calendar revision: from 1752-1799, Old Christmas was January 5, in 1800 a day was dropped, making it January 6, and finally in 1900 another day was dropped, making it January 7. We might deduce from this that Jean Ritchie's version, mentioning "the sixth day of January", is traceable to a 19th century text.

The ballad is still widely sung in England and America, and has been collected in Scotland as well. The texts in most cases are very similar, having been standardized in tradition by its many appearances in popular print (it was frequently published in penny carol books and on broadsheets during the 19th century.)

Jean's version was learned from the singing of her Uncle Jason.

For additional texts and information, see:

Child, Volume II, p. 1 ff.; Coffin, pp. 65-67;
Dean-Smith, p. 57;
Greig & Keith, pp. 44-45; Sharp, pp. 90-94;
Brown Collection, Volume II, pp. 61-3;

SIDE IV, Band 2: EDWARD (Child #13)

The high esteem in which Child held this ballad is stated in his introductory notes: "Edward...has ever been regarded as one of the noblest and most sterling specimens of the popular ballad. "Such praise is certainly deserved, for the ballad, employing throughout a simple dialogue device, builds to a climactic emotional peak perhaps unsurpassed in any other Child ballad.

"Edward" is known throughout the Northern European countries, the dialogue form being maintained in every instance. Since Child's time most reported texts do not implicate the mother in the crime, which in almost every case is fratricide (rather than patricide as in the Child B text). In his full length study of the ballad ("Edward and Sven I Rosengard", Chicago, 1931), Archer Taylor concludes that the fratricide factor relates recent findings to the earliest British texts, from which the Scandinavian forms of the ballad stem.

The excellence of the ballad has resulted in an attack being made upon its traditional character by a number of scholars who point out that Percy's version (Child A text) is most assuredly a conscious art rather than folk creation. The wide appearance of this sterling ballad from authentic oral tradition in recent years should serve to answer the critics; Percy's text notwithstanding, the ballad is certainly a gem of tradition.

The ballad has been collected rather frequently in America. Until recently it had been unreported in Britain for over a Century; two excellent versions have been collected in Aberdeenshire in the past few years and an English version from Hampshire was reported in 1938.

Jean Ritchie's version, learned from her sisters Patty, Edna, Una and May (who first learned it at the Hindman Settlement school), is similar to most versions collected in the Southern Appalachians, differing only in the omission of any reason being stated for the commission of the crime, which would normally appear after stanza 3.

For additional texts and information, see:

Child, Volume I, p. 167 ff; Coffin, pp. 45-46;

Bronson, Volume I, pp. 237-247;
 Sharp, Volume I, pp. 46-53; Brown Collection,
 Volume II, p. 41-44;
 Davis, PP. 61-67; Flanders, Volume I,
 pp. 208-212.

SIDE IV, Band 3: GENTLE FAIR JENNY (Child #277)

This ballad, titled by Child "The Wife Wrapt in Wether's Skin", appears to have been derived from the traditional tale of "The Wife Lapped in Morrel's Skin", dating from the 16th century or earlier. Child summarizes the story as follows: "Robin has married a wife of too high kin to bake, or brew, wash or wring. He strips off a wether's skin and lays it on her back, or prins her in it. He dares not beat her for her proud kin, but he may beat the wether's skin, and does. This makes an ill wife good." American versions of the ballad usually follow this form, though in some texts (as in the case of Jean Ritchie's version) the high born wife has been replaced by a lazy wife, and the wether skin rationalization for the beating has been discarded.

Long a favorite in both Britain and America, the ballad has been subject to interesting speculation concerning its various refrains. The refrain line "gentle fair Jenny, fair Rose Marie" may derive from the old plant burden "juniper, gentian and Rosemary". It has been suggested that in some early form of the ballad the wife suffered from evil spirits and that the plant burden was designed as a charm against demons; the plant burden remained after the wife's trouble was rationalized to her being of too high kin or laziness.

Jean Ritchie's version, corresponding most closely to Coffin's story type C, was learned from her sisters who first learned it at either Hindman Settlement School or the Pine Mountain Settlement School.

For additional texts and information, see:

Child, Volume V, pp. 104 ff.; Coffin, pp. 92-94;
 Dean-Smith, p. 102
 (under title "Rugleton's Daughter of Iero");
 Sharp, Volume I, pp. 271-274;
 Greig & Keith, pp. 218-220; Brown Collection,
 Volume II, 185-187;
 Davis, pp. 305-315.

SIDE IV, Band 4: LORD RANDALL (Child #12)

One of the mostly widely circulated of popular ballads, "Lord Randall" or its foreign analogues is well known throughout Europe, having been reported from both the Northern countries and Italy as well as in Eastern Europe. The ballad story remains fairly constant: treachery is revealed by means of a dialogue between a mother and her son, the ballad ending with the son bequeathing various items to his relative and poisoner.

An Italian counterpart, "L'Avvelenato", was first reported in print early in the 17th century; the earliest English-language text appearing at the end of the 18th century. Still very much alive in oral tradition in both Britain and America, it has been subjected to much study, mostly concerning the name of the hero, which varies greatly from version to version. In America, the hero's noble title is frequently dropped and replaced with a common first name.

Its great popularity, almost totally unaided by songster or broadside printings, is undoubtedly due to the art and compactness of the ballad; as Coffin has commented (in Flanders, p. 175): "With its incremental repetition, its dialogue and testament, and its popularity, it makes the model folk song."

Jean's version, learned from her Uncle Jason, is similar to many of the versions collected in the Southern Appalachians.

For additional texts and information, see:

Child, Volume I, p. 151 ff.; Coffin, pp. 42-45;
 Dean-Smith, p. 85;
 Greig & Keith, pp. 13-15; Ord, p. 458; Bronson,
 Volume I, pp. 191-236;
 Brown Collection, Volume II, pp. 39-41; Davis,
 pp. 51-60;
 Flanders, Volume I, pp. 175-207.

SIDE IV, Band 5: LITTLE MUSGRAVE (Child #81)

The earliest appearance in print of this ancient ballad was in Beaumont and Fletcher's "Knight of the Burning Pestle" (ca. 1611). It appears to have been published rather frequently in 17th and 18th century England in various drolleries and on broadsides, and though popular in British tradition in the 19th century, it has not been reported in England or Scotland in this century.

In America, however, the ballad has frequently been reported from every section of the country in a tradition which has had little or no recourse to print. Phillips Barry was of the opinion that the American texts of this ballad, being more vivid and incisive than Child's British versions, were probably older and that the ballad has been sung in this country for over 300 years.

American variants show certain traits in common with each other which either do not appear or appear only rarely in British variants. The lady is never as aggressive in English texts as in American. The expression "they cost me deep in the purse" (when the lord is telling of his two swords) appears only in one of Child's texts, though it appears almost universally in American texts (it is not found in Jean Ritchie's version). The attempt to bribe the page and the suggestion of a past affair between the bedmates appear nowhere in America though found frequently in Child's texts.

Jean's version, learned from her Uncle Jason, appears to be a fascinating Kentucky reworking of one of the oldest British texts for it follows Child's A text (from two 17th century English drolleries) very closely. Even the odd place name "Bucklesfordberry" is retained in the Kentucky text nearly 300 years after it first turns up in Britain! But there is no doubt about the traditional nature of Uncle Jason's text, for almost every line contains changes, emendations and additions of a vital oral tradition.

For additional texts and information, see:

Child, Volume II, p. 242 ff.; Coffin, pp. 84-86;
 Sharp, Volume I, pp. 161-182;
 Brown Collection, Volume II, pp. 101-111;
 Davis, pp. 170-181.

SIDE I, Band 1: THE UNQUIET GRAVE
(Child #73)

The wind doth blow today, my love,
With a few small drops of rain,
I never had but one true love
And she in the cold grave has lain.

I will do much for my true love
As any young man may
I'll sit and mourn all on her grave
For a twelve month and a day.

The twelve months and a day being up
The dead began to speak
Oh who is this sits on my grave
And will not let me sleep

It is I my love sits on your grave
And will not let you sleep
I crave one kiss from your cold sweet
lips
And that is all I seek.

You crave one kiss from my clay cold
lips
My breath smells earthly strong,
If you had one kiss from my cold clay
lips
Your time would not be long.

Down in yonder's garden green
Love, where we used to walk
The fairest flower that ever bloomed
Is withered to a stalk.

The stalk is withered dry my love
So must our hearts decay
So make yourself content my love
Till God calls you away.

SIDE I, Band 2: LITTLE DEVILS
(Child #278)

There was an old man, he lived near
hell, (Whistle)
He had a little farm and upon it did
dwell,
Sing hi oh rattle ding day.

Oh the devil come to him one day at
his plough,
There's one in your family I have
to have now.

Oh its neither your son nor your
daughter I crave,
It's your old scoldin' wife and It's
her I must have.

So he hobbest her up all on his back,
And like a bold pedlar went a-packin'
his pack.

As they drew near the high gates of
hell,
Said, rake back the coals, boys, and
we'll roast her well.

Oh two little devils come a-rattlin'
their chains,
She hauled back her cudgel and knocked
out their brains.

Two more little devils peeped over
the door,
She hauled back her cudgel killed
ninety-nine more.

Two more little devils peeped over
the wall,
Said, take her back daddy or she'll
kill us all.

So he hobbest her up all on his back,
And like a bold pedlar went a-packin'
her back.

Here's your old scoldin' wife and it's
her I won't have,
She ain't fit for Heaven, she shan't
stay in Hell.

Oh it's seven years goin' and seven
a-comin' back,
She called for the 'baccor she left
in the crack.

Oh the women they are so much better
than men,
When they go to hell they get sent
back again.

SIDE I, Band 3: SWEET WILLIAM AND
LADY MARGARET
(Child #74)

Sweet William arose one May morning
And he dressed himself in blue;
We want you to tell us something
about

That long love between Lady Margaret
and you.

Well I know nothing about Lady
Margaret's love.
And I know that she don't love
me

But tomorrow monin' at eight
o'clock
Lady Margaret my bride shall see,
But tomorrow monin' at eight
o'clock

Lady Margaret my bride shall
see.

Lady Margaret was standin' in her own
hall door

A-combin' down her hair
When who should she spy but sweet
William and his bride
And the lawyers a-riding by.

Oh she threw down her ivory comb
Bound her hair in silk,
And she stepped out of her own
hall door

To never return any more
Yes, she stepped out of her own
hall door
To never return anymore.

Well the day bein' past and the night
a-comin' on

When most all men was asleep
Sweet William a-spied Miss Lady
Margaret's ghost

A-standin' at his own bed feet.
Oh how do you like the bed, she
asked him,

And how do you like the sheet
And how do you like that pretty
fair miss

That's a-layin' in your arms so
asleep.

And how do you like that pretty
fair miss

That's a-layin' in your arms
so asleep.

Very well, very well, do I like the
bed,
Very well do I like the sheet,
But the best one of all is that pretty
fair miss
That's a-standin' at my own bed
feet,
But the best one of all is that
pretty fair miss
That's a-standin' at my own bed
feet.

Well the night bein' past and the day
comin' on
When most all men was at work
Sweet William he said he was troubled
in his head
From a dream that he dreamed last night.
Such dreams, such dreams they are
no good,
Such dreams they are no good,
For I dreamed my hall was filled with
wild swine
And my true love was swimming in
blood
For I dreamed my hall was a-filled
with wild swine
And my true love was swimming in
blood.

He called his merry men to his side
And counted one, two, three,
And the last one of them go ask of my
bride

Lady Margaret I might go and see.
Well he rode and he rode to Miss Lady
Margaret's hall,
Tingled all on the ring
No one was so ready as Lady Margaret's
brother

To rise and welcome him in,
No one was so ready as Lady
Margaret's brother
To rise and welcome him in.

Oh is she in her garden he asked him
Or is she in her hall
Or is she in the upper parlor
amongst those ladies all?

She neither is in her garden he
answered,
She neither is in her hall
But yonder she lies in her cold
coffin
That's a-sitting by the side of the
wall.
But yonder she lies in her cold
coffin
That's a-sitting by the side of the
wall.

Fold down, fold down them milk-white
sheets,
They're made of linen so fine,
Tonight they shall hang o'er my Lady
Margaret's corpse
But tomorrow they shall hang over
mine

Yes, fold down, fold down them
milk white sheets
Made of linen so fine
May I go and kiss them cold clay
lips
For they oftentimes have kissed
mine
May I go and kiss them clay
cold lips
For they oftentimes have kissed
mine.

Well first he kissed her on her lips
And then he kissed her chin,
And then he kissed her clay cold lips
Which crushed his heart within.

Lady Margaret she died as it might
be today,
Sweet William he died to-morrow,
And out of her grave there sprung
a red rose
And out of his a briar,
And out of her grave there
sprang a red rose
And out of his a briar.

They grew and they grew to the steeple
top
They could not grow no higher,
And there they tied a true lover's knot
For all young people to admire.
And there they tied a true lover's
knot
For all young people to admire.

SIDE I, Band 4: THERE LIVED AN OLD
LORD (Child #10)

There lived an old lord by the Northern
Sea,
Bow down
There lived an old lord by the Northern
Sea,
Bow your bend to me,
There lived an old lord by the Northern
Sea,
And he had daughters one, two, three,
I'll be true to my love
If my love be true to me.

A young man came a-courting there,
And he took his choice of the youngest
fair.

He gave this youngest a beaver hat,
The oldest she thought little of that.

He gave this youngest a gay gold ring,
The oldest not one single thing.

Oh sister, oh sister, let's us walk out,
And see those little ships go sailing
about.

As they walked down by the salty brim,
The oldest pushed that youngest in.

Oh sister, oh sister, lend me your hand,
And you shall have my dowry land.

I'll neither lend you my hand nor glove,
But I will have your own true love.

Oh down she sank and away she swam,
Into the miller's dam she ran.

He robbed her of her gay gold ring,
And then he pushed her in again.

The miller was hanged at his own mill-
gate,
The oldest sister was burned at the
stake.

SIDE I, Band 5: THE WIFE OF USHER'S
WELL (Child #79)

There lived a wife at Usher's Well,
And a wealthy wife was she;
She had three strong and stalwart sons
And she sent them o'er the sea.

They hadn't been gone but a week from
her,
But a week and only one;
When word was sent to this wealthy
wife
That her sons were dead and gone.

They hadn't been gone three weeks from
her,
Three weeks and only three,
When word was sent to this wealthy wife
That her sons she'd never see.

She prayed the wind would never cease,
Nor troubles in the flood,
Till her three sons came home to her
In their own flesh and blood.

It feel about the Martinmas time,
When nights are long and dark,
This wife's three sons came home to her
With robes all shining bright.

Blow up the fire my maidens fair,
Bring waters from the well,
For we shall have a merry, merry feast
Since my three sons are well.

Oh it's she has made for them a bed,
She made it large and wide,
And placed her mantle over them all
And sat down at their side.

The cock he chaffed his wings and
crowed
Before the break of day;
The eldest to the youngest said:
It's time we were a-way.

The cock doth crow, the day doth dawn,
The merry birds doth chide,
We shall be missed out of our place
And we must no longer bide.

Lie still, lie still, but a little
while,
Lie still but if we may,
If our mother misses us when she wakes
up
She'll go mad o'er the break of day.

So fare ye well my mother dear,
For we must say goodbye
And thee well the bonny lass
That kindles my mother's fire.

SIDE II, Band 1: CHERRY TREE CAROL
(Child #54)

When Joseph were an old man
And an old man were he,
He courted the Virgin Mary
And the queen of Galilee
He courted the Virgin Mary
And the queen of Galilee.

Joseph and Mary
Out a-walkin' one day
Here is apples and cherries
So fair to behold
Here is apples and cherries
So fair to behold.

Mary spoke to Joseph
And to Joseph said she
Oh go and gather me some cherries
For I am with child
Said go and gather me some cherries
For I am with child.

Joseph flew in angry,
And in angry flew he
Said, let the father of the baby
Gather cherries for you
Said, let the father of the baby
Gather cherries for you.

Then up spoke Lord Jesus
From His mother's womb,
Said, bow low, low cherry tree
Bow low down to the ground
Said, bow low, low cherry tree,
Bow you low down to the ground.

Then the cherry tree bowed low down
Low down to the ground
And Mary gathered cherries
While Joseph stood around
And Mary gathered cherries
While Joseph stood around.

Then Joseph took Mary
All on his right knee
And said, tell me pretty baby
When your birthday will be
Said, tell me, tell me pretty baby
When your birth day will be.

On the sixth day of January
My birthday will be
When the stars in the elements
Doth tremble with glee
When the stars in the elements
Doth tremble with glee.

SIDE II, Band 2: EDWARD (Child #13)

How came that blood on your shirt
sleeve,
Oh dear love, tell me.
Well it is the blood of the old grey
mare
That ploughed the fields for me, -me,
-me,
That ploughed the fields for me.

It does look too pale for the old grey
mare
That plowed the fields for thee, -thee,
-thee,
That plowed the fields for thee.

How came that blood on your shirt
sleeve,
Oh dear love, tell me.
Oh it is the blood of the old grey
hound
That chased the fox for me, -me, -me,
That chased the fox for me.

It does look too pale for the old grey
hound
That chased the fox for thee, -thee,
-thee,
That chased the fox for thee.

How came that blood on your shirt
sleeve,
Oh dear love, tell me.

Oh it is the blood of my brother-in-
law

That went away with me, -me, -me,
That went away with me.

And it's what will you do now, my love,
Oh dear love, tell me.
I'll set my foot on yonders ship
And I'll sail across the sea, -sea,
-sea,
Sail across the sea.

And it's when will you be back, my
love,
Oh dear love, tell me.
When the moon sinks yonder in the
sycamore tree
And that will never be, -be, -be,
And that will never be.

SIDE II, Band 3: GENTLE FAIR JENNY
(Child #277)

I married me a wife and took her home,
Gentle fair Jenny, fair Rosy Marie,
I oft times wished that I'd let her alone
As the dew flies over the green
valley.

All in my kitchen she would not use,
For fear of spoiling her new cloth
shoes.

First day at noon I come in from the
plow,
My dearest wife is my dinner ready now.

There's a little piece of corn bread
layin' on the shelf,
If you want anymore you can cook it
yourself

Second day at noon I come in from the
plow,
My dearest wife, is my dinner ready now.

Get out of here your dirty thief,
If you want any dinner you can cook it
yourself.

I got my knife and went out to the barn,
I cut me a hickory as long as my arm.

I took my limb and I went back,
Around her back I made it crack.

I'll tell my father and all of my kin,
You whupped me with a hickory limb.

You can tell your father and all your
kin
I whupped you once and I'll whup you
again.

SIDE II, Band 4: LORD RANDALL
(Child #12)

Oh where have you been, Lord Randall my
son,
Oh where have you been, my handsome
young one?
I've been to the wildwood, mother make
my bed soon
For I'm weary with hunting and I fain
would lie down.

Where did you get dinner, Lord Randall
my son,
Where did you get dinner, my handsome
young man?
I dined with my true love, mother make
my bed soon,
For I'm weary with hunting and I fain
would lie down.

What did you eat for your dinner, Lord
Randall my son,
What did you eat for your dinner, my
handsome young man?
I had eels boiled in broth, mother
make my bed soon,

For I'm weary with hunting and I fain
would lie down.

What's become of your bloodhounds, Lord
Randall my son,
What's become of your bloodhounds, my
handsome young man?
Oh they swelled and they died, mother
make my bed soon,
For I'm weary with hunting and I fain
would lie down.

Oh I fear you are poisoned, Lord Randall
my son,
I fear you are poisoned, my handsome
young man.
Oh yes I am poisoned, mother make my
bed soon,
For I'm sick at my heart and I fain
would lie down.

What will you leave your old father,
Lord Randall my son,
What will you leave your father, my
handsome young man?
My castle and land, mother make my bed
soon,
For I'm sick at my heart and I fain
would lie down.

What'll you leave your old mother, Lord
Randall my son,
What'll you leave your old mother, my
handsome young man?
My gold and my silver, mother make my
bed soon,
For I'm sick at my heart and I fain
would lie down.

What'll you leave your own true love,
Lord Randall my son,
What'll you leave your own true love,
my handsome young man?
Oh I'll leave her hell fire, mother
make my bed soon,
For it's now I am dying and I got to
lie down.

SIDE II, Band 5: LITTLE MUSGRAVE
(Child #81)

One day, one day, one fine hollyday,
As many there be in the year,
We all went down to the old church
house
Some glorious words to hear.
We all went down to the old
church house
Some glorious words to hear.

Little Musgrave stood by the old
church door,
The priest was at private mass,
But he had more mind of the fair
women
Then he had for Our Lady's grace.
But etc.

The first come was a-clad in green,
The next was a-clad in pall,
And then come in Lord Arnol's wife,
She's the fairest one of them all,
And then etc.

She cast an eye on Little Musgrave,
As bright as the summer sun,
And then bethought this little
Musgrave,
This lady's heart have I won,
Oh then etc.

Quoth she, I have loved thee, Little
Musgrave,
Full long and many a day.
Quoth he, I have loved you, fair
lady,
Yet never one word durst I say,
Quoth he etc.

I have a bower at the Bucklesfordberry,
It's dainty and it's nice,
If you'll go in a-thither, my little
Musgrave,
You can sleep in my arms all night,
If you etc.

I cannot go in a-thither, said little
Musgrave,
I cannot for my life,
For I know by the rings on your little
fingers,
You are Lord Arnol's wife,
For I etc.

But if I am Lord Arnol's wife,
Lord Arnol he is not home,
He is gone unto the academie
Some language for to learn,
He is etc.

Quoth he, I thank you, fair lady,
For this kindness you show to me,
And whether it be to my weal or my woe
This night I will lodge with thee,
And whether etc.

All this was heard by a little footpage,
By his lady's coach as he ran,
Says he, I am my lady's footpage,
I will be Lord Arnol's man,
Says he etc.

Then he cast off his hose and shoes,
Set down his feet and he run,
And where the bridges were broken down,
He smote his breast and he swum,
And where etc.

Awake, awake now, Lord Arnol,
As thou art a man of life,
Little Musgrave is at the Bucklesford-
berry
Along with your wedded wife,
Little Musgrave etc.

If this be true, my little footpage,
This thing thou tellest to me,
Then all the land in the Bucklesford-
berry
I freely will give it to thee,
Then all etc.

But if it be a lie, thou little
footpage,
This thing thou tellest to me,
On the highest tree in the Bucklesford-
berry
It's a-hanged thou shall't be
On the etc.

He called up his merry men all,
Come saddle to me my steed,
This night I am away to the Buckles-
fordberry
For I never had greater need
This night etc.

Some men they whistled and some they
sung,
And some of them did say,
Whenever Lord Arnol's horn doth blow,
Away, Musgrave, away,
Whenever Lord etc.

I think I hear the noisey cock,
I think I hear the jay,
I think I hear Lord Arnol's horn:
Away, Musgrave, away,
I think etc.

Lie still, lie still, my little
Musgrave,
Lie still with me till morn,
Tis but my father's shepherd boy
A-callin' his sheep with his horn,
It is my etc.

He hugged her up all in his arms
And soon they fell asleep,
And when they awoke at ear-lie dawn
Lord Arnol stood at the bedfeet,
And when etc.

Oh how do you like my coverlid,
Oh how do you like my sheet?
Oh how do you like my fair lady
Who lies in your arms so sweet,
Oh how etc.

Oh I like your handsome coverlid,
Likewise your silken sheet,
But best of all your fair lady
Who lies in my arms so sweet,
But best etc.

Arise, arise now, Little Musgrave,
And dress soon as you can;
It shall not be said in my countree
I killed a naked man,
It shall etc.

I cannot arise, said Little Musgrave,
I cannot for my life,
For you have got two broadswords by
your side
And I have got nary a knife,
For you've etc.

I have two swords down by my side,
They both sweet and clear,
You take the best, I'll keep the
worst,
Let's end this matter here,
You take etc.

The first stroke that Little Musgrave
struck,
He wounded Lord Arnol full sore;
The first stroke that Lord Arnol
struck
Musgrave lay dead in his gore,
The first etc.

Then up and spoke this fair lady,
In bed where as she lay,
Although you are dead, my little
Musgrave,
Yet for your sake will I pray,
Although you etc.

Lord Arnol stepped up to the bedside
Whereon these lovers had lain,
He took his sword in his right hand
And split her head in twain,
He took etc.