[Percy, Child]

Ballads Reliques

Early English Ballads

Hermes Nye
with Guitar

carlis '57

FA 2305

Folkways Records & Service Corp., New York

FOLKWAYS RECORDS Album No. FW 928

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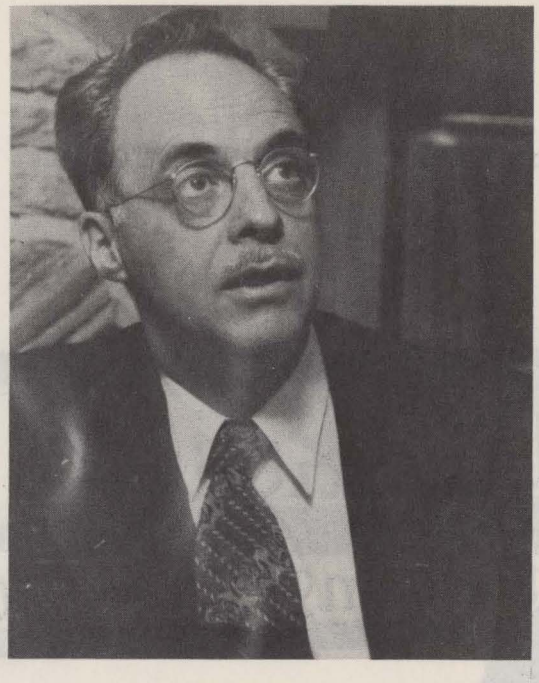

Hermes Nye, who has recorded Anglo-American Ballads (FP 37) and Ballads of the Civil War (FP 5004) for Folkways Records (see notes accompanying these albums for additional data on Mr. Nye) is a lawyer by trade, lives in Dallas, Texas (where he is associated with a large music store) with his wife and son, and is a devoted folk singer and collector. "I have a sneaking fondness for the English things from Percy and Child", he says, "especially when I can find Texas versions."

Introduction

Nearly all these songs are from "English and Scottish Ballads", published by Professor Francis James Child of Harvard around and after 1860, or from the "Reliques of Ancient English Poetry; consisting of Old Heroic Ballads, Songs, and Other Pieces of Our Earlier Poets; Together With Some Few of Later Date", published by Thomas Percy, Lord Bishop of Dromore, before the time of the American Revolution. Both these books, together with the work of Robert Burns and Sir Walter Scott, and such men as Ritson, Motherwell and Finlay, more than a hundred years ago, laid the foundation for all modern ballad and folk song collections. The singer who does not know at least a few of Child's things is as lost as the tenor who does not know I Pagliacci. Percy, and even Child, however, did not have too sharp an eye to distinguish a folk song from a scholarly or literary production, and Percy especially didn't seem to care very much one way or the other. And, there were no tape recorders, more is the pity. Child, as a professor of literature (he was a Chaucer man, originally), cared nothing for the tunes, and these have had to be dredged out here and there. The best books I have seen on the tunes are Ballads of Britain, by John Goss, Editor, The Bodley Head Press, 1937, and, for the Robin Hood tunes, a superbly produced "Song of Robin Hood", Anne Malcolmson, Editor, Houghton Mifflin, 1947.

These commentaries, are themselves part of a tradition. At least the Scottish, Irish and Icelandic bards, if not others, used to sing their songs and then add a sort of Milton Cross prose commentary; this explanation, or urskyring as the Icelanders had it, was always the same, in traditional form, and handed down from one minstrel to the other. These of mine are not traditional, and probably will not be handed down, but here they are, all the same.

ROBIN HOOD'S GOLDEN PRIZE (Child 147) and
DEATH OF ROBIN HOOD (Child 120)

"Hear undernead this laitl stean
Laiz Robert Earl of Huntington;
Nea arrir ber as he sae geud
An pipl kauld im Robin Hood;
Sich utlawz as hi an is men
Wil England nibir si agen.
Obiit 24 Kal. Decembris, 1247."

In spite of that touching epitaph on a stone near Kirklees Nunnery in Yorkshire, and the hearsay testimony of the monk in Piers Plowman.

("I kan noght parfitly my pater-noster
As the preest it syngeth,
But I kan rymes of Robyn Hood,
And Randolf eal of Chestre)

--we will have to say that Robin, like Sir Patrick Spens, is a folk hero, for the mythologies, but not for the history books. Most of the Robin Hood songs run to sixty or even a hundred verses. This was when there was nothing to do but to listen to the lute, and the minstrel singing the sun down the sky in the courtyard of an afternoon; and likely before the Statute of Elizabeth of 1597 classed "minstrels, wandering abroad," with "rogues, vagabonds, and sturdy beggars", and made them all liable to a booking on vagrancy wherever encountered.

ROB ROY (Child 225)

"Oh, well like I to ride in a mist,
And shoot in a northern win';
And far better a lady to steal,
That's come of a noble kin."

So says Young Hastings the Groom, in another song. Or, in still another:

"The highlandmen hae a' cum down,
They've a' come down almost,
They've stowen away the bonny lass,
The Lady of Arngosk."

Child says "This sort of kidnapping seems to have been the commonest occurence in the world in Scotland;" adding, that Rob and his brother James pulled the snatch on Jane Kay, heiress of Edinbelly, in Sterlingshire, but were rounded up soon afterward. James broke out of the iron, but Rob was executed in February, 1753. I was glad to hear that; he seems cold and vicious, and totally unrelated to Lochinvar. Robert Burns had this one in his folk-song bag, and probably loved it for personal as well as literary reasons.

QUEEN ELEANOR'S CONFESSION (Child 156)

This device, of the unfortunate confession, is found all over Italy, in the old stories. Bandello got it from Boccaccio or vice versa, and La Fontaine picked it up along the road. The Queen Eleanor in question is hard to pin down in history; the most likely bet is that she was Eleanor of Aquitaine, wife of Louis VII of France. This sprightly queen was caught necking in the arbor with a handsome infidel, and during the Second Crusade at that; after the divorce she married Henry II of England. At this time she was of certain age as the French say, and he was just out of high school and beginning to ask for the family car at night. She had two or three sons, ostensibly by Henry, and then stirred them up to revolt against their old man. Small wonder, then, that she died before him, and with a guilt complex to boot.

CLERK SAUNDERS (Child 69) and
SWEET WILLIAM'S GHOST (Child 77)

There has been a great deal of sparring among the collectors, as to whether these two are not part of the same ballad. Some variants, as the folk lorists say, of "Clerk Saunders", have a Part Second, beginning,

"The clinking bell gaed through the town,
To carry the dead corse to the clay;
And Clerk Saunders stood at May Margaret's window
I wot, an hour before the day."

This chicken-or-egg argument is interesting, but futile I personally believe the Second Part was tacked on, and was originally a separate ballad on the familiar ghost-lover theme. Child says that the Swedes and Danes also have this ballad, where "it is the uncontrolled grief of his mistresses that calls the lover from his grave." This last is a very widely held folk belief.

Lord Thomas and Fair Elinor (Child 73)

Sartre says that to ask advice, is to make a choice: Therefore, you do not need, nor do you really seek, advice (just confirmation). Lord Thomas bears away the palm for undue submissiveness, (to his mother), undue rashness (to his bride, with that crack at the wedding feast, about the little finger), and undue hostility (towards his bride's head, when he stove it against the wall, the sort of thing only a beastly rotter would do). There is a version called "Lord Thomas and Fair Annet", in which he shows a little spirit, and argues with his brother (but not his mother, mind you), after receiving the sort of advice he knew he would get;

"The nut-browne bride has oxen, brother,
The nut-browne bride has kye;
I wad ye marrie the nut-browne bride,
And cast fair Annet bye."

Lord Thomas, with at least a spark of manhood replies:

"Her oxen may dye i' the house, billie,
And her kye into the byre,
And I sall hae nothing to mysell,
Bot a fat fadge by the fyre."

His sister, apparently the only one of these characters with eyes in her head, has better advice, which of course is promptly waved aside by the Lord Thomas, Fatuous Forrester and the chaser of more than the king's deer;

"Ise rede ye tak fair Annet, Thomas,
And let the browne bride alane;
Lest ye sould sign, and say Alace,
What is this we brought hame?"

His sister also knew a fat fadge when she saw one.

Binnorie; or The Cruel Sister (Child 10)

This jealousy of a younger sister, by an older (and somehow always plainer) sister, must be rooted down in the subconscious -- this tale is known all over Europe, and probably all over the world. Another old chestnut appears, in the harp made out of the dead girl's hair: In one version, the harper

"--laid the harp upon a stane
And straight it began to play alane."

Sir Walter Scott collected this, and probably had enough integrity not to add to it, although we can never be sure about those old boys. The refrain, as you might expect, runs all the way from the "bonnie dams o' Binnorie", to "Hey wi' the rose and the lindie, O", to "Bonny St. Johnstone stands on Tay". Oh yes; still another title is "The Cruel Mother", as if you hadn't suspected all along.

The Three Ravens, or the Twa Corbies (Child 26) and
The Lament of the Border Widow (Child 47)

In all these ballads of mourning, the same figures drift onto the stage. The slain knight (always unjustly done to death), the mourning widow; usually the faithful hounds and hawks; and, at the end, the vow to grieve the rest of a weary life away. The Border Widow, was in reality, probably the wife of Cockburne of Henderland, a hijacker who was hanged by James V over the gate of his own tower. Most border lairds of the Debatable Land were robbers first and barons later anyway. A Happy-Ending lament, appears

in "The Famous Flower of Serving Men"; after the death and burial, the widow gets herself up as a serving-man to the king; an old retainer hears her singing while the king is at the hunt; the king returns, hears about it, and marries his fair cup-bearer. Oxydol has no exclusive patent on soap operas, it would appear.

Whittingham Fair (Child 2)

The setting of impossible tasks for a lover to perform is a stock-in-trade of true-loves since the world began. When shall you and I meet again; when will you be true; when will your love come again to me? Everybody knows the answers: "When cockle shells turn silver bells"; "When autumn leaves turn green again"; or even, "When rocks melt wi' the sun."

SIR PATRICK SPENS (Child 58)

"The bard, be sure, was weather-wise, who framed The Grand Old Ballad of 'Sir Patrick Spens'," says Coleridge. We can see that it is both old and grand, since it was written about Alexander III of Scotland, "The Last of the Kings of Peace", (1241-1285), and his daughter Margaret. These storms, and the ships of long ago, finally caused James III to step in and cause to be enacted a law, "That there be na schip frauched out of the realm with any staple gudes, fra the feast of Simons day and Jude, unto the feast of the purification of our Lady, called Candlemess." Sir Patrick himself is as legendary as Paul Bunyan, or the Seven Champions of Christendom. No one will be surprised, in later variants of the piece, to find not Sir Patrick, but Sir Andrew Wood, of Edward IV's time, as the skeely skipper.

The Outlandish Knight (Child 4)

Sometimes called "May Colvin", "The False Sir John", or "The Water O' Wearie's Well", this one goes back to the days of superstition and elf knights. These rascals were at their business at all hours, and unless you knew the charm, would whisk you away with never a speir at your leave-O. Outlandish likely means foreign, or from the sticks, rather than uncouth; still, anyone who tries to drownd a young chick who has just heisted her old man's leather and broken out his hot rod, is uncouth enough, it would seem. The pretty parrot is one of that long line of talking birds that ranges up and down all balladry, carrying messages to loved ones in the clink, reproaching maidens who have just done in their true-loves with penknives, and decorating the scenery generally.

"Then up an spoke a little yaller bird,
Settin' on yonders pine;
'Too bad, too bad, Love Hennery', says he,
"Too bad you had to die.'"

or

"But weel's me on ye, my gay goss-hawk,
Ye can baith speak and flee;
Ye sall carry a letter to my love,
Bring an answer back to me."

If you are up that way, you can still see False Sir John's Leap, near Carlton Castle, on the coast of Carrick. Or so they tell me.

The Queen's Maries (Child 173)

Some say all this happened in Scotland at the time of Mary Stuart; others, at the court of Czar Peter the Great, and still others, at the court of the King of France. The maiden sent to the gallows for the death of her unwanted child is a common ballad theme, and at least one stanza lives to our time, probably carried forward in the grand tradition.

Charles Giteau, the assassin of President Garfield, says of his parents,

"Oh little did they think while in my youthful bloom
That on this bitter scaffold I'd meet my fatal doom."

Get Up and Bar the Door (Child 275)

The song in this form, comes down to us from 1776, but it must be older than that. It has the stamp of age on it, for all that we are told that the auld man's name was Johnie Blunt, who lived on Crawford Moor, in Georgian times.

Lizzie Lindsay (Child 226)

Probably the most popular of the Scottish ballads, this song has the age-old motif of the Prince or Lord in disquise, and of young love which counts not the cost.

Almost all the scottish collectors have this one, including Kinloch and Aytoun. Sometimes it crops up as "Donald of the Isles", or "The Laird of Kingussie".

Glenlogie (Child 238)

Taken down, says Buchan the Scottish collector, from "the recitation of the amiable daughter of a clergyman in the North". "Jeanie" was the daughter of Baron Meldrum and Laird of Bethelnie in Aberdeenshire, and Glenlogie was Sir George Gordon of Glenlogie. All this back in 1562. Jeanie saw him riding through the streets of Banchory, and fell in love with him, but he would hae none o' it, whereupon she fell into a fever. "Her father's chaplain, no doubt bred at the court of Cupid," says the editor of Ancient Ballads, undertook the correspondence, and was more successful. She was afterwards married to Sir George, the object of her wishes, in her fifteenth year." No wonder the clergyman's daughter, amiable or not, but probably aged about fifteen, knew her piece so well.

Waly, Waly, But Love Be Bonny

Surely one of the finest ballads ever sung, this is known all over the English-speaking world in one form or another. Like "Greensleeves" its tune is found in half a dozen other songs, and many of its verses are scattered up and down in other pieces like raisens in a fruit cake. Given the chance dating of the 17th century, it suffered a pretty ending later in the 19th, and was the worst for it. In this later version, known as "Lord Jamie Douglas", the sweet wife has been slandered by a fause Blackwood (an ill death may he dee); Laird Jamie finds him out and calls back at the castle gate;

"O come away, my lady fair,
Come away, now alang with me;
For I have hanged fause Blackwood
At the very place where he told the lie."

Thomas the Rhymer (Child 37)

Thomas of Ercildoune was his true name; he was known as a poet but first of all as a seer and prophet. He was carried off to Fairyland by the Queen of the Fairies, where he got all his lore. He was then allowed to come back to earth, to spread the good word among his Scottish countrymen; he was to go back to Fairyland, however, whenever the Queen called him. One day as he was birling at the wine, (the red, red wine, the wine but and the beer) a hart and a hind wandered down the village street. Thomas left his birling, followed them into the forest and has not been seen to this day. Those who doubt the story may go to Ercildoune and see, not the Eildon Tree, now long since cut down, but the Eildon Tree Stone which stood close by, and Bogle Burn (Goblin Brook) where the Queen appeared.

King O' Luve (Child 89)

This is probably part of a longer piece called "Fause Foodrage", which begins:

"King Easter wooed her for her lands,
King Wester for her fee,
King Honour for her comely face,
And for her fair bodie."

Coost kevils means to cast lots, they say.

He's tane three locks o' her yellow hair,
And with them strung his harp sae fair.

The first time he did play and sing,
Was 'Farewell to my father, the king.'

The lasten tune that he played them,
Was 'Woe to my sister, fair Helen.'

THOMAS RYMER (Child 37)

True Thomas lay on Huntlie bank,
A ferlie he spied wi' his ee,
And there he saw a lady bright,
Come ridin' down by the Eildon Tree.

True Thomas, he pulled up his cap,
And louted low down to his knee:
'All hail, thou mighty Queen of Heaven!
For thy peer on earth I never did see.'

'O no, O no, Thomas,' she said,
'That name does not belong to me;
I am but the queen of fair Elfland,
That am hither come to visit thee.

'O harp and carp, Thomas,' she said,
'Harp and carp along wi me,
And if ye dare to kiss my lips,
Sure of your body will I be.'

'Betide me weal, betide me woe,
That weird shall never daunton me;'
Syne he has kissed her rosy lips,
All underneath the Eildon Tree.

'And see ye not that bonny road,
That winds about the fernie brae?
That is the road to fair Elfland,
Where thou and I this night maun gae.

Syne they came on to a garden green,
And she pulled an apple from a tree:
'Take this for thy wages, True Thomas,
It will give the tongue that never can lie.'

He has gotten a coat of the even cloth,
And a pair of shoes of a velvet green,
And till seven years were gone and past
True Thomas on earth was never seen.

SIR PATRICK SPENS (Child 58)

The king sits in Dunfermline town,
A-drinkin' the blood-red wine:
'O where will I get me a skeely skipper,
To sail this new ship of mine?' O

Up and spake an elder knight,
A-sat at the king's right knee:
'Sir Patrick Spens is the best sailor
That sails upon the sea.' O

The king has written a braid letter,
And sealed it with his hand,
And a-sent it to Sir Patrick Spens,
Was a-walkin' on the strand. O

The first word that Sir Patrick read,
A loud, loud laugh laughed he;
But the next word that Sir Patrick read
The soft tear blind his ee. O

'To Noroway, to Noroway,
To Noroway over the foam;
The king's daughter of Noroway,
'Tis thou must bring her home. O

'O who is this has done this deed,
And told the king of me,
To send us out at this time of the year
To sail upon the sea? O

'Make ready, make ready, my merry men all,
My good ship sails the morn:'
'Now, ever alack! my master dear,
I fear a deadly storm! O

'I saw the new moon late yestreen,
With the old moon in her arm;
And if we gang to sea, master,
I fear we'll come to harm. O

They hadna sailed a league, a league,
A league but barely three,
When the lift grew dark, and the wind blew loud,
And gurly grew the sea. O

O loath, loath were our good Scotch lairds
To wet their cork-heeled shoon;
But long ere all the play was played,
Their hats, they float aboon. O

And lang, lang may the maidens sit,
With their gold combs in their hair,
A-waiting for their own dear loves,
For them they'll see na mair. O

Half hour, half hour to Aberdour,
It is fifty fathoms deep,
And their lies good Sir Patrick Spens,
With the Scotch lairds at his feet. O

QUEEN ELEANOR'S CONFESSION (Child 156)

Queen Eleanor was a sick woman,
And sick just like to die,
And she has sent for two friars of France,
To come to her speedilie.

The king called down his nobles all,
By one, by two by three:
'Earl Marshall, I'll go and shrive the Queen,
And thou shalt wend with me.'

'O you'll put on a gray-friar's gown,
And I'll put on another,
And we will away to fair London town,
Like friars both together.'

'O no, O no, my liege, my king,
Such things can never be;
For if the Queen hears word of this,
Hanged she'll cause me to be.'

'I swear by the sun, I swear by the moon,
And by the stars so high,
And by my sceptre and my crown,
The Earl Marshall shall not die.'

When that they came to fair London town,
And came into Whitehall,
The bells did ring, and the quiristers sing,
And the torches did light them all.

And when they came before the Queen,
They kneeled down on their knee:
'What matter, what matter, our gracious queen,
You've sent so speedilie?'

'O, if you are two friars of France,
It's you that I wished to see;

But if you are two English lords,
You shall hang on the gallows tree.'

'O we are not two English lords,
But two friars of France we be,
And we sang the Song of Solomon,
As we came o'er the sea.'

'Oh, the first vile sin I did commit
Tell it I will to thee;
I fell in love with the Earl Marshall,
As he brought me o'er the sea.'

'Oh, that was a great sin,' quoth the King,
'But pardoned it must be;'
'Amen! Amen!' said the Earl Marshall,
With a heavy heart spake he.

'Oh, the next sin that I did commit
Tell it I will to thee;
I poisoned a lady of noble blood,
For the sake of King Henry.'

'Oh, that was a great sin,' said the King,
'But pardoned it shall be;
'Amen! Amen!' said the Earl Marshall,
And a frightened man was he.

'Oh, the next sin that I ever did
Tell it I will to thee;
I have kept strong poison this seven long year,
To poison King Henry.'

'Oh, that was a great sin,' said the King,
'But pardoned it must be;'
'Amen! Amen!' said the Earl Marshall,
And a frightened man was he.

'O don't you see two little boys,
Playing at the football?
O yonder is the Earl Marshall's son,
And I like him the best of all.'

'O don't you see yon other little boy,
Playing at the football?
O that one is King Henry's son,
And I like him worst of all.

'His head is like a black bull's head,
His feet are like a bear;'
'What matter! what matter!' cried the King,
He's my son, and only heir.'

The King plucked off his friar's gown,
And stood in his scarlet so red;
The Queen she turned herself in bed,
And cried that she was betrayed.

The King looked o'er his left shoulder,
And a grim look looked he;
'Earl Marshall,' he said, 'but for my oath,
Thou hadst swung on the gallows-tree.'

CLERK SAUNDERS (Child 69)

Clark Sanders and May Margaret
Walked ower yon garden green,
And sad and heavy was the love,
That fell there twa between.

'A bed, a bed,' Clark Sanders said,
'A bed for you and me;'
'Fie nay, fie nay,' said May Margaret,
Till ance we married be.'

'For in may come my seven brothers
With torches burnin' bright,
They'll say, We hae but one sister,
And behold, she's wi a knight.'

'Then take the sword from my scabbard,
And slowly lift the pin,
And you may swear and save your oath
You never let Clark Sanders in.'

It was about the midnight hour
When they asleep were laid,
When in and came her seven brothers
Wi torches burnin' red.

Then up and gat the seventh of them,
And ne'er a word spake he,
But he had striped his bright, brown brand
Out through Clark Sanders' fair body.

Clark Sanders lay and sleeped sound,
Albeit the sun begin to shine,
She look a tween her and the wall,
And a dull and drowsy (were) is he.

Then in and came her father dear,
Said: 'Let your mornin' be;
I'll carry the dead corpse to the clay,
And I'll come back and comfort thee.'

'Go comfort well your seven sons,
For comforted will I never be;
I weep 'twas neither knave nor loon,
Was in the bower last night with me.'

LORD THOMAS AND FAIR ELLINOR (Child 73)

Lord Thomas he was a bold forrester,
And a chaser of the king's deer;
Fair Ellinor was a fine woman,
And Lord Thomas he loved her dear.

'Come riddle my riddle, dear mother,' he said,
'And riddle us both as one,
Whether I'll marry Fair Ellinor,
Or bring the brown girl home.'

'The brown girl she has got houses and lands,
Fair Ellinor she has got none;'
'Therefore I charge you on my blessing
To bring the brown girl home.'

And when he came to Fair Ellinor's bower,
He tirled there at the ring;
And who was so ready as Fair Ellinor
To let Lord Thomas in?

'What news, what news, Lord Thomas,' she said,
'What news hast thou brought unto me?'
'I am come to bid thee to my wedding,
And that is bad news to thee.'

"Oh, God forbid, Lord Thomas,' she said,
'That such a thing should be done;
I thought to have been thy own bride myself,
And you to have been the bride's groom.'

She clothed herself in gallant attire,
And her merry men all in green,
And as they rid through every town,
They took her to be some queen.

And when she came to Lord Thomas' gate,
She tirled there at the ring;
And who was so ready as Lord Thomas
To let Fair Ellinor in?

ROBIN HOOD'S GOLDEN PRIZE

Like to a friar, bold Robin Hood
Was dressed in his array;
With hood, gown, beads and crucifix,
He walked upon the way.

He had not gone miles two or three,
But he did chance to spy
Two lusty priests, clad all in black,
Come riding gallantly.

"Benedicete," said Robin Hood,
"Some pity on me take;
Cross you my hand with a silver groat,
For Our dear Ladies Sake.

"I have been wondering all this day,
And nothing could I get;
Not so much as one cup of drink,
Not a bit of bread to eat."

"Now by my faith," the priests replied,
"We never a penny have,
For we this morning have been robbed,
And could no money save."

Then Robin Hood laid hold of them,
And pulled them from their horse;
"O spare us, friar!" the priests cried out,
"On us have some remorse!"

"You said you had no gold," quoth he,
"Wherefore, without delay,
We three will fall down on our knees,
For money we will pray."

The priests they could not him refuse,
But down they knelt with speed;
"Send us, O send us," then quoth they,
"Some money to serve our need."

The priests their hands in their pockets put,
But gold they could find none:
"We'll search ourselves," said Robin Hood,
"Each other, one by one."

Robin took pains to search them both,
He found good store of gold;
Five hundred pieces presently
Upon the grass were told.

"Now here's a brave show," said Robin Hood,
"Such store of gold to see,
And you shall each one have a part,
For you prayed so heartily."

He gave them fifty pounds apiece,
The rest himself did keep;
The priests they dared not speak one word,
But they sighed wondrous deep.

He set them upon their horses then,
Away then they did ride;
To merry greenwood he returned
With great joy, mirth and pride.

SIDE I, Band 2: ROBIN HOOD'S DEATH

When Robin Hood and Little John
Went o'er yon bank of broom,
Said Robin Hood bold to Little John,
"We have shot for many a pound.

"But I can not shoot one shot more,
My broad arrows will not flee;
But I have a cousin lives down below,
Please God, she will bleed me.

"The prioress is my aunt's doctor,
And I am to my kin;
She'll do me no harm," said Robin Hood,
"For all the world to win."

And when he came to Kirkly Hall,
He tirled at the pin,
And none was so ready as the prioress
To let bold Robin in.

She blooded him in a vein of the arm,
And locked him up in the room;
Then did he bleed all the live-long day,
Until the next day at noon.

And first it bled the thick, thick blood,
And afterward the thin,
And then good Robin Hood knew well
Treason there was within.

He thought him of his bugle-horn,
Which hung down at his knee;
He set his horn unto his mouth,
And blew out weak blasts three.

Then Little John, when hearing him,
As he sat under a tree,
"I fear my master is now near dead,
He blows so wearily."

Little John is to Kirkly gone,
As fast as he can hide,
And when he came to Kirkly Hall,
He broke locks two or three.

"But give me a bent bow in my hand,
An arrow I'll let flee;
And where this arrow is taken up,
Shall my grave digged be.

"Lay me a green sod under my head,
And another at my feet;
And lay my bent bow by my side,
Which was my music sweet."

These words they readily granted him,
Which did bold Robin please;
And there they buried bold Robin Hood,
Within the fair Kirklies.

WHITTINGHAM FAIR

O, are you going to Whittingham fair?
O, Parsley, sage, rosemary, and thyme.
Remember me to one who lives there;
For once she was a true lover of mine.

Tell her to make me a cambric shirt,
O, parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme,
Without any seam or needlework,
And she shall be a true lover of mine.

Tell her to wash it in yonders well,
Where never spring water or rain ever fell.

Tell her to dry it on yonders thron,
Which never bore blossom since Adam was born.

Now he has asked me questions three,
O, parsley, sage, rosemary, and thyme,
I hope he will answer as many for me.
For once he was a true lover of mine.

Tell him to find me an acre of land,
O, parsley, sage, rosemary, and thyme,
Betwixt the salt water and the sea-sand.
And he shall be a true lover of mine.

Tell him to plough it with an old ram's horn,
And sow it all over with one peppercorn.

Tell him to reap it with a sicle of leather,
And bind it up with a peacock's feather.

When he has done, and finished his work,
O tell him to come, and he'll have his shirt.

AN OUTLANDISH KNIGHT

An outlandish knight came from the north lands,
And he came a-wooing to me;
He told me he'd take me unto the north lands,
And there he would marry me.

"Come fetch me some of your father's gold,
And some of your mother's fee,
And two of the best nags out of the stall,
Where they stand thirty and three."

She mounted her on her milk-white steed,
He on the dapple grey;
They rode till they come to the sea-side,
Three hours before it was day.

"Light off, light off thy milk white steed,
And deliver it unto me;
It's six pretty maidens have I drowned here,
And thou the seventh shall be.

"Pull off, pull off thy Holland smock,
And deliver it unto me;
Methinks it looks too rich and gay
To rot all in the salt sea."

"If I must pull off my Holland smock,
Pray turn thy back unto me;
For it is not fit that such a ruffian
Should a naked woman see."

He turned his back upon her, O,
And bitterly did she weep;
She catched him round the middle so small
And tumbled him into the deep.

"Lie there,lie there, you false-hearted man,
Lie there instead of me;
Six pretty maids have you drowned here,
And the seventh has drowned thee."

She mounted her on her milk-white steed,
And led the dapple grey;
She rold till she come to her father's hall,
Three hours before it was day.

The parrot being in the window so high,
And hearing the lady, did say,
"I fear some ruffian has led you astray,
You have tarried so long away."

"Don't prittle nor prattle, my pretty parrot,
Nor tell no tales of me;
And thy cage shall be made of the glittering gold,
And the perch of the best ivory."

The king being in the chamber so high,
And hearing the parrot, did say,
"What ails you, what ails you, my pretty parrot,
That you prattle so long before day?"

"It's no laughing matter," the parrot did say,
"That so loudly I call to thee,
For the cat has got into the window so high,
I'm afraid he will have me."

"Well turned, well turned, my pretty parrot,
Well turned up for me;
Thy cage shall be built of the glittering gold,
And the perch of the best ivory."

THE THREE RAVENS, or THE TWA CORBIES (Child 26).

There were three ravens sat on a tree,
Down a down, hay down, hay down
There were three ravens sat on a tree,
With a down
There were three ravens sat on a tree,
They were as black as they might be.
With a down derrie, derrie, derrie, down, down.

The one of them said to his mate,
'Where shall we our breakfast take?'

'O, down in yonders field,
There lies a knight slain under his shield.

'His hounds they lie down at his feet,
So well they can their master keep.

'His hawks they fly so eagerly,
There's no fowl dare him come a-nigh.'

O, down there comes a fallow doe,
As great with young as she might go.

She lifted up his bloody head,
And kissed his wounds that were so red.

She got him up upon her back,
And carried him to earthen lake.

She buried him before the prime,
She was dead herself ere even-song time.

O, God send every gentleman,
Such hawks, such hounds, and such a leman.

BINNORIE, or THE CRUEL SISTER (Child 10)

There was twa sisters sat in a bower;
Binno, Binnorie
There came a knight to be their wooer.
By the bonny dams of Binnorie.

He courted the eldest with glove and ring,
But loved the youngest above all thing.

'O sister, come to yon sea strand,
And see our father's ships come to land.'

As the youngest stood upon a stone,
The eldest came and threw her in.

'O sister, take my middle-o,
And you'll get my golden girdle-o.'

'Your cherry cheeks and yellow hair,
Guards me gae a maid for evermair.'

Sometimes she sank and sometimes swam,
Till she came down yon bonny mill-dam.

The miller quickly drew the dam,
And there he found a drowned woman.

You could not see her middle sma,
For golden girdle that was sae bra.

And by there came a harper fine,
That harped unto the king at to-dine.

'Is this your bride?' Fair Ellen she said,
'Methinks she looks wonderous brown;
Thou mightest have had as f air a woman
As ever trod on the ground.'

'Despise her not, 'Fair Ellen,' he said,
'Despise her not now ;unto me;
For better I love thy little finger
Than all of her whole body.'

This brown girl had a little penknife,
That was both long and sharp,
And betwixt the short ribs and the long
Pricked Fair Ellinor to the heart.

Lord Thomas he had a sword by his side
As he walked about the hall;
He cut off his bride's head from her shoulders,
And threw it against the wall.

He set the hilt against the ground,
And the point against his heart;
There was never three lovers that ever met
The sooner they did depart.

My love he built me a bonny bower,
And clad it all wi lily flower;
A braver bower ye ne'er did see,
Than my true love he built for me.

There came a man by middle day,
He spied his sport and went away;
And brought the king that very night,
To break my bower and slew my knight.

He slew my knight to me sae dear,
He slew my knight and his gear;
My servants all for life did flee,
And left me in extremity.

I sewed his sheet making my moan;
I watched the corpse myself, alone;
I watched his body night and day,
No living creature came that way.

I took his body on my back,
And whiles I gaed and whiles I sat;
I dig a grave and laid him in,
And him with the sod sae green.

But think na ye my heart was ,
When I laid the mold on his yellow hair;
O think na ye my heart was woe,
When I turned about away to go.

No living man I'll love again,
Since that my lovely knight is slain;
Wi a lock of his yellow hair,
I'll chain my heart for evermair.

MARY HAMILTON (Child 173)

Last nicht there were four Maries,
The nicht there'll be but three;
There was Mary Seton, and Mary Beaton,
And Mary Carmichael, and me.

O little did my mother think,
When first she cradled me,
That I would be sae far frae hame,
And hang on a gallows tree.

They tied a napkin roond my ee
To na let my ee to see;
They nee will tell my father or mother
That I wall all o'er the sea.

And I myself am Mary mild,
The flower o' a the three;
But I hae kilt my bonny wee son,
And well deserve to dee.

But you'll bury me in the auld kirkyard,
Beneath the auld yew tree,
Where we pulled the gowans and ringed the rowans,
My sister and brother and me.

"O WALY, WALY, UP THE BANK"

O waly, waly, up the bank,
And waly, waly down the brae,
And waly, waly yon burnside
Where I and my love want to gae.

I leaned my back unto an oak,
I thought it were a trusty tree;
But first it bowed and then it break,
So my true love did likely me.

The water it is wide, I cannot get o'er,
And neither have I wings to fly;
Give me a boat that will carry two,
And both shall row, my love and I.

O Martinmas wind, when wilt thou blow
And shake the green leaves from the tree?
O gentle death, when wilt thou come,
For of my life I am weary?

'Tis not the frost that freezes fell,
Nor blowing snow's inclemency;
'Tis not so cold that makes me cry,
By my love's heart grown cold to me.

When we came in by Glasgow Town,
We were a comely sight to see;
My love was clad in black velvet,
And I myself in

But had I whispered when I kissed,
That love had been sae ill to win;
I'd lock my heart in the case of gold,
And pinned it wi a silver pin.

And O if my young babe were born
And set upon its nurse's knee,
And I myself were dead and gone,
And the green grass growin' over me.

ROB ROY (Child 225)

Now, Rob Roy's from the Highlands come
Unto our Lowland border,
And he has stolen a lady awa,
To keep'his house in order.

'Come, go with me, my dear,' he said,
'Come, go with me, my honey,
And you shall be my true wedded wife,
I love you best of onie.'

'I will not go with you,' she said,
'Nor will I be your honey:
I neer shall be your true wedded wife,
You love me for my money.'

But he her drew amongst his crew,
She holdin' by her mother;
Wi mournful cries and watery eyes
They parted from each other.

No time they gave her to be dressed
As ladies when they're brides, O,
But hurried her away in haste;
They rowed her in their plaids, O.

They passed away by Drymen Town,
And at Buchanan tarried;
They bought to her a cloak and gown,
Yet she would not be married.

But without consent they joined their hands;
By law ought not to carry;
The priest his zeal it was so hot
On her he would not a-tarry.

'Now you're come to the Highland Hills,
Out of your native clime, lady,
O, never think of goin' back,
But take this for your home, lady.

'O, Rob Roy was my father called,
But McGregor was his name, lady;
In all the country far and near
None his fame did exceed, lady.

'O I'm as bold as any man,
I'm as bold and more, lady;
And everyone that does me wrong
Shall feel my clay more, lady.

'My father he hast stots and ewes,
And he has goats and sheep, lady,
But you and twenty thousand pounds
Makes me a man complete, lady.'

LIZZIE LINDSAY (Child 226)

'Now, will ye gang to the Highlands, Lizzie Lindsay?
Will ye gang to the Highlands wi me?
Will ye gang to the Highlands, Lizzie Lindsay,
My bride and my darlin' to be?'

She turned around on her heel,
And a very loud laugh gave she,
'I'd like to ken where I'm gangin'
And wha I'm going to gang wi.'

'My name is Donald Macdonald,
I'll never think shame nor deny,
My father he is an old shepherd,
My mither she is an old dey.'

Up raise, then, the bonny young lady,
And drew till her stockings and sheen,
And packed up her clothes in fine bundles,
And away wi young Donald she's gane.

When they came near the end of their journey,
To the house of his father's milk-dey,
He said, 'Stay there, Lizzie Lindsay,
Till I tell my mither o thee.'

'Now, make us a supper, dear mither,
The best o your curds and green whey;
And make up a bed of green rashes,
A pillow and a cover in o grey.

'Rise up, rise up, Lizzie Lindsay,
Ye've lain oure lang in the day;
Ye should hae been helpin' my mither
To milk her yews and her kye.'

All tense speak the bonny young lady,
And the saut tear drapt from her eye;
'I wish I had bidden at hame,
I can neither milk yews or kye.'

But when they came to Kincassie
The porter was standin' by:
'Ye're welcome home, Sir Donald,
Ye've been so long away.'

It's down then came his auld mither,
With all the keys in her hand,
Sayin', 'Take you these, bonny Lizzie,
All under them's at your command.'

GLENLOGIE, or JEAN O BETHELNIE (Child 238)

'Three score o nobles rade up the king's hall,
But Bonnie Glenlogie's the flower of them all.
Wi his milk-white steed and his bonny black eye,
'Glenlogie, dear meither, Glenlogie for me.'

'Hold your tongue, daughter, you get better than he.'
'O say not so, mither, for that cannot be;
Though Drumley is richer and greater than he,
Yet if I'm on take him I'll certainly die.

'Where will I get a bonny boy to win hose and shoon,
Well gae to Glenlogie and come again soon.'
'O here am I, your bonny boy, to win hose and shoon,
Well gae to Glenlogie and come again soon.'

When you gae to Glenlogie, it was 'wash and go dine;'
'Twas 'wash ye, my pretty boy, wash and go dine.'
'O 'twas ne'er my father's fashion, and it ne'er shall
be mine,
To gar a lady's errand await till I dine.'

'But there is, Glenlogie, a letter to ee,'
The first line that he read, a low smile gae he;
The next line that he read, the tear blinded his eye;
But the last line that he read, he garrd the table flee.

When he came to Glanfeldy's door, small mirth was there,
Bonny Jean's mither was tearin' her hair:
'You're welcome, Glenlogie, you're welcome,' said she,
'You're welcome, Glenlogie, your Jeanie to see.'

Pale and wan was she when Glenlogie gae then,
But red and rosey grew she wheneer he sat down;
She turned away her head, but the smile was in her eye,
'O dinna, fair mither, I'll maybe no die.'

GET UP AND BAR THE DOOR (Child 275)

It fell about the Martinmas time,
And a gay time it was then, O
When our goodwife got puddings to make,
And she's boiled them in the pan. O

The wind so cold blew south and north,
And blew into the floor, O
Quoth our goodman to our goodwife,
'Get up and bar the door.' O

'My hand is in my hussyfskap,
Goodman, as ye may see; O
If it should never be barred this hundred year,
It will ne'er be barred by me.' O

They made the paction twixt them twa,
They made it firm and sure, O
That the first that ever a word should speak,
Should rise and bar the door. O

Then by there came two gentlemen,
At twelve o'clock at night, O
And they could neither see house nor hall,
Nor coal nor candle-light. O

'Now whether is this a rich man's house,
Or whether it is a poor?' O
But never a word was ane o them speak,
For the barrin' of the door. O

So first they ate the white puddings,
And then they ate the black, O
Tho muckle thought the goodwife to herself,
Yet ne'er a word she spake. O

Then said the one unto the other,
'Here, man, take ye my knife; O
Do ye take off the auld man's beard,
And I'll kiss the goodwife.' O

'But there's no water in the house,
And what shall we do then?' O
'What ails ye at the puddin'-broo,
That boils into the pan?' O

O up then started our goodman,
And an angry man was he: O
'Will ye kiss my wife before my eyes,
And scald me with pudding-broo?' O

Then up and started our goodwife,
Gave three skips upon the floor: O
'Goodman, ye have spoke the foremost word,
Get up and bar the door. O

THE LAMENT OF THE BORDER WIDOW
(Proud Lady Margaret - Child 47)

There came a ghost to Margaret's door,
With many a grievous groan;
And aye he tirled at the pin,
But an answer made she none.

'Is that my father, good Philip?
Or is't my brother John?'
Or is't my true love, Willy,
From Scotland new come home?'

'Tis not thy father, good Philip,
Nor yet thy brother, John;
But 'tis thy true love, Willy,
From Scotland new come home.

'O sweet Margaret, O dear Margaret,
I pray thee speak to me,
Give me my faith and troth, Margaret,
As I gave it to thee.'

'Thy faith and troth thouest never get,
Nor yet will I thee lend,
Till aft thou come within my bower
And kiss my cheek and chin.'

'If I should come within thy bower,
I am no earthly man;
And should I kiss thy earthly lips,
Thy days will not be long.'

'My bones are buried in yon kirkyard,
Afar beyond the sea;
And it is but my spirit, Margaret,
That's now speakin' to thee.'

She stretched out her lily-white hand,
And for to do her best:
'Aye, here's your faith and troth, Willy,
God send your soul good rest.'

'Is there any room at your head, Willy,
Or any room at your feet?
Or any room at your side, Willy,
Wherein that I may creep?'

'There's no room at my head, Margaret,
There's no room at my feet;
There's no room at my side, Margaret,
My coffin's made so neat.'

Then up an crew the red, red cock,
And up then crew the grey;
''Tis time, 'tis time, my dear Margaret,
That I was gone away.'

No more the ghost to Margaret said,
But with a grievous groan,
It vanished in the cloud of mist,
And left her all alone.

KING O' LUVE (Fause Foodrage - Child 89)

Eastmuir king, and Wastmuir king,
And king o Luve a' three,
It's they coost kevils them amang,
Aboot a gay lady.

Eastmuir king he won the gold,
And wastmuir king the fee,
But the king o Luve, wi his lands sae broad,
He's won the fair lady.

These twa kings, they made an oath,
That, be it as it may,
They would slay him, king o Luve,
Upon his weddin' day.

Eastmuir king he break his oath,
An sair penance did he;
But Wastmuir king he made it oot,
An an ill death may he die!

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