

FOLKWAYS RECORDS FD 5331

NORTH CAROLINA MOUNTAIN FOLKSONGS AND BALLADS / ARTUS MOSER

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TRADITIONAL ENGLISH AND SCOTTISH
"CHILD BALLADS"
STILL BEING SUNG IN WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA

NORTH CAROLINA MOUNTAIN FOLKSONGS AND BALLADS

sung by **ARTUS MOSER**

Introduction

All the songs in this collection are still circulating within the past few years in various sections of the Appalachians and more especially in western North Carolina. They represent the classical and traditional ballads and folksongs of English and Scottish development or origin and are known by the scholars as the Child Ballads, after the nineteenth century scholar and collector who first assembled and edited the authoritative collection of folk ballads: Professor Francis James Child of Harvard University.

He had a vast and historic knowledge of folklore and folk balladry, overcoming even barriers of different languages to secure his classics and to compare and evaluate them and to attempt to derive their sources. Not only that, he ranged down through the centuries with great familiarity in order to find traces or versions of what he considered priceless gems of literature -- and many of them were just that. After the most painstaking and thorough research, extending over a period of some twenty years (from 1882-1898), during which he sought to recover every ballad of value, he came to the conclusion that despite the many versions and variants which he was able to collect (more than 1000), there were in reality only a mere handful of the authentic and original ballads of all the vast store that once existed. Now, only this handful, some 305 traditional specimens still remain alive, some of which were still sung in remote parts of England and Scotland or elsewhere in the English speaking world.

What would have been his delighted amusement to learn -- a fact that has been discovered only within our own 20th century -- that many of these same ballads -- fully a third of them -- that he traveled abroad to search for in libraries, museums, scrap books, were still being sung by the people here in the Southern Appalachians and in other sections of our country.

The fact has been more than amply demonstrated in the many fine collections that have been made not only in the Appalachians but in practically every state in the Union. Scores of Professor Child's antique and rare ballads have been collected on records and tape from the singers themselves; and some of these songs have been of better quality and more complete than those collected by the Professor.

Today there has been a great revival or renaissance of these songs, especially in America. Scores of the ancient ballads are being sung by

college students and other young people, and mainly by the scholarly and the sophisticated. The young people, among whom the ballads existed for centuries, and which in certain isolated places are still sung by them, had tended for a long time to regard them as "old-foggy", but that is not true any longer. Professor Child was totally unaware during his lifetime, up to 1890, at least, when he was assembling his great collection (it ran into five huge volumes) that there were any extant ballads of any significance to be found in the United States. Certainly more people in America were still singing these ballads than could be found in England or Scotland; and what a collection he might have made and what genuine, authentic tunes and versions, and what interesting people he might have met, and what interesting scenes he might have visited, had he only looked about him with a little more curiosity. He might have enriched his own scholarly ineptitude and brought old Harvard a bit closer to the Appalachians in more ways than one. And so the Professor grieved that he had not lived when he might have heard these songs sung by the native singers.

Biographical Sketch of Artus Monroe Moser

A man of many talents and many activities, Artus Monroe Moser has had a lifelong interest in folksongs. He was born September 14, 1894 in Catawba County of west-central North Carolina. His father and mother, of German and Scottish background respectively, moved in 1896 with their growing family to the Swannanoa Valley in the mountainous region of western North Carolina. His elementary schooling was disultory and to some degree fragmentary. When the family moved to the Vanderbilt Estate, where his father was a forester, he attended Biltmore High School, graduating in 1917 as president of the class.

Since folk music was so natural to his surroundings, Moser gave little thought to it as he completed his elementary and high school years. Afterwards, when he attended the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, he gained new insight into the meaning of folklore and the need to preserve this important heritage. As he entered the teaching profession after receiving his degree, he began collecting and recording the folksongs of the region. At the University of Tennessee at Knoxville and in Lincoln Memorial University at Harrogate, Tennessee, he collected many ballads from his students. After several years of teaching in these institutions, he returned home and continued his work at the branch of the University of N.C. at Asheville, where he began collecting folksongs for the Archive of Folklore of the Library of Congress. His students from the rural areas, and many from the urbans as well, furnished him with much material. His best songs

and other forms of folklore, however, were supplied by their parents and grandparents. Mr. Moser was soon visiting and interviewing them. Professor Moser was asked to contribute to the Archive and he responded by providing about 150 variants of folklore. Because of the importance of his work, he was furnished with new recording equipment, and was later called to Washington by Duncan Emrich, Chief of the Music Division of the Library to be congratulated by him and other specialists on the splendid contribution he had made. Several albums of his work were issued by the Archive and edited by Mr. Emrich and made available for distribution. His accomplishment led to a recording contract with Folkways Records, where he recorded many of his famous collections in an album, entitled "NORTH CAROLINA FOLK BALLADS".

Though Mr. Moser has presented many public performances of his songs and gave many lectures on the folk ballads, he still considers himself mainly as a collector. He says: "I do not consider myself as a virtuoso on the dulcimer, but I can recall literally hundreds of the tunes as they were sung to me, or I remember them from my recordings. I enjoy singing these -- these strange modal tunes, with their often sad or tragic-al words. My family also enjoys singing them, and when we are all assembled at home, we make up quite a lively group of performers."

Mr. Moser was married in 1929 to Mabel Eula Young of Salisbury, North Carolina. They are the parents of three children; Dorothea Joan, a college music teacher; Artus M. Jr., M.D., a practicing physician in Asheville, N.C.; and Janette Irene, a special in literary research in a college in California. All are musically inclined and all enjoy singing and playing stringed instruments. They all have a lot of fun, singing and playing together when they all assemble at their home at intervals.

Notes

1. THE BLUE BELLS OF SCOTLAND

The origin of this song is unknown. It was being sung near the end of the eighteenth century. It was first sung by the famous London actress, Mrs. Dorothea or Dorothy Jordan (1762-1816). Her real name was Bland, and she was an exuberant and charming personality, taking a leading part in many plays. In the mountains of western North Carolina, where many of the highland Scotch settled, this song has always been a favorite, especially among the young people. I derived this version from a copy supplied by Brenda Robertson of Hazeville High School in Clay County, N.C.

THE BLUE BELLS OF SCOTLAND

O, where, tell me where has your highland laddie gone?
O, where, tell me where has your highland laddie gone?

He's gone to fight the foe of King
George upon the throne,
And it's O in my heart, how I wish
him safe at home.

O, where, tell me where, did your
highland laddie dwell?
O, where, tell me where, did your
highland laddie dwell?
He dwelt in merry Scotland where
blooms the sweet bluebell,
And it's O in my heart that I love
my laddie well.

O, what, tell me what does your high-
land laddie wear?
O, what, tell me what does your high-
land laddie wear?
A cap with lofty plume and on his
breast a plaid,
And it's O in my heart how I love
my highland lad.

O, what, tell me what if your highland
lad be slain?
O, what, tell me what if your highland
lad be slain?
O, No-True love will be his guard and
bring him safe again,
And it's O my heart would break if my
highland lad were slain.

Notes

2. PRETTY SARO

This song is probably a variant
of the "Wagoner's Lad", which came as
a broadside from England. It was im-
mediately accepted and adapted to local
conditions by the early settlers in
the Southern Appalachians, where the
different versions of the song have
always been a traditional favorite.
It has thrown off numerous variations,
of which the most popular is "Old
Smoky". Here then can be observed
the process of an old ballad losing
its story element and becoming a
lyric.

Using virtually the same tune
as the above song of the "Wagoner's
Lad", this version of "Pretty Saro",
which was probably of local origin,
sets forth the feelings and con-
ditions of some of the late emigrants
to the mountains. I have recorded
many variants from the fiddlers,
banjo pickers, and others, who seem
to value this song very highly.

PRETTY SARO

Traditional in Western N.C., probably
of local origin

When I came to this country in 1829,
I saw many lovers, but I did not see
mine.

I looked all around me and saw I was
alone,
And me a poor stranger and a long
ways from home.

It's not this long journey I'm dread-
ing to go,
Nor leaving my country, for the debts
that I owe.

There's nothing to pester, nor trouble
my mind,
Like leaving pretty Saro, my darling
behind.

My love she won't have me, as I under-
stand;
She wants a free-holder and I have no
land.

But I can maintain her with silver
and gold,
And as many pretty fine things as my
love's house can hold.

I wish I were a poet and could write
a fine hand;
I'd write my love a letter that she
could understand.

I would send it by the waters when
the islands overflow;
And think of pretty Saro wherever I
go.

I wish I were a dove and had wings
and could fly;
About my love's dwelling this night
I'd draw high.
(Straight to my love's bosom this
night I would fly)

And in her pretty arms all night I
would lie;
And I'd love pretty Saro till the
dawning of day.

At the foot of yonders mountain there
runs a clear stream;
At the foot of yonders mountain there
lives a fair queen.

She's handsome, she's proper and her
ways are complete;
And I know no better pastime than to
be with my sweet.

Notes

3. A BED OF PRIMROSES

This song I recorded from the
singing of Marcus Martin, a noted
folk musician -- a fiddle player and
a maker of violins -- from Cullasaga
in Macon County in the Great Smoky
Mountain region; but he moved with
his large family to the Swannanoa
Valley to work in the blanket factory
in the town of Swannanoa, where he
has resided for many years. Many of
his fine fiddle tunes and ballads were
recorded by me for the Archive of
American Folksongs of the Library of
Congress, along with this ballad, in
1945-47. He learned this song from
his parents and neighbors when he
was very young; tall, gallant and
handsome, at this writing he is well
past ninety. . . He has a large,
splendid family of boys (men now),
all of whom are talented in some
artistic work and especially in music,
and as folk craftsmen.

The Daniel O'Connell mentioned
as the hero in the song was an Irish
political leader, who lived from 1775-
1847. He was instrumental in bringing
about the Emancipation Act of 1829.
He urged the repeal of the Union with
Great Britain and worked to solve the
land Irish question. Other titles to
this song are "The Irish Dream Song",
and "The Irish Dream". Good texts
are found in West Virginia, Michigan,
and a few other states. The piece is
common in English broadsides. Cox
has good versions in the "Folk-Songs
of the South", pp. 442-444.

A BED OF PRIMROSES

One evening late as I was rambling
On the banks of a clear purling stream;
I took my seat on a bed of primroses,
And quickly fell into a dream.

I dreamed I saw a fair female;
Her features I'd never seen before,
As she sighed for the wrongs of her
country,
As she strayed along Erin's green
shore.

She resembled the goddess of freedom,
And liberty was the mantle she wore;
It was trimmed with the roses of
Shamrock,
That grew along Erin's green shore.

Then quickly I addressed this fair
female;
My true jewel, come tell me your
name.

Said she to me, you are a stranger,
Or also I would have asked you the
same.

I'm the daughter of Daniel O'Connell,
Just lately from England come o'er;
I've come to awaken my breathern,
That slumber on Erin's green shore.

In the triumph of joy I awakened,
And found that it all was a dream.
This beautiful fair female fled from
me,
And I longed to be slumbering again.

May the heavens be her guardian angel,
If I never see her anymore;
May the sunbeams of fair freedom
shine on her,
As she strays along Erin's green
shore.

Notes

4. GET UP AND BAR THE DOOR

This ballad has been taken over
by my family and made a North Carolina
ballad by virtue of the fact that we
found a tune in some obscure source
and we took the standard version as
given in the Scottish and English
texts and modernized them for our
purpose. As a result it sings rather
well and is certainly usable. I
derived this particular text from the
Scottish version because so many
times it seemed to fit so well the
mountain log home in western North
Carolina, with which I am familiar.
The mountain people barred the door
instead of locking it, since locks
at first were not available. The
long rifle was also just above the
door, loaded and ready for action
in case of danger or attack.

The mountain husband was "lord
of his castle" and always felt that
he should have the last word when it
came to managing the domestic affairs
as well as those of his farm and
business. He was often inclined to
dominate his wife, but she soon saw
to it that he didn't carry this too
far, and she often asserted her in-
dependence, as in this case of who
should get up and bar the door, es-
pecially since she was busy and he
was "just sitting there."

GET UP AND BAR THE DOOR

It fell about the Martinmas time,
And a gay time it was then, O,
When our good wife had puddings to
make,
And she boiled them in a pan, O.

The wind so cold blew north and
south;
And blew into the floor, O,
Says our good man to our good wife,
Get up and bar the door, O.

My hand is in my mixing bowl,
Good man as you may see, O;
If it shouldn't be barred this
hundred years,
It'll not be barred by me, O.

They made a paction 'twixt them two,
They made it firm and sure, O;
That whoever should speak the very
first word,
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 fire nor candle light, O.

Now whether this be a rich man's
house,
Or whether it be a poor, O;
But never a word would one of them
speak,
For barring of the door, O.

And first they ate the white pudding;
And then they ate the brown, O;
Though much they good wife thought
to herself,
Yet never a work she spake, O.

Then says the one unto the other,
Here, man, take you my knife, O;
And you shave off the old man's
beard,
While I kiss the good wife, O.

But there's no warm water in the
house,
What then shall we do now, O?
What ails it with the pudding brew,
That boils into the pan, O?

O up then and started our good man,
And an angry man was he, O;

Will you kiss my wife before my face,
And scaled me with that pudding brew?

Then up and started our good wife,
Gave three skips on the floor, O;
Good man you've spoken the very first
word,
Get up and bar the door, O.

Notes

5. GENTLE FAIR JENNY ("The Wife Wrapt in Weather's Skin")

The text and tune of this ballad came from the famous Ritchie family of Kentucky, the words and music being communicated to me as the first recorder of Jean Ritchie at the Renfro Folk Festival in 1941. I was collecting then for the Archive of Folklore of the Library of Congress, and she sang several other ballads and folk songs for me which she has since made famous in her albums and collections.

Very few texts of this ballad are to be found in North Carolina. But the ballad is found here as well as in practically all the other states. Most of the texts are short, and all show considerable minor variations; and I have taken the liberty of combining some of the stanzas into the version I sing here from the original singing of Ritchie.

The story told often in fragmentary form is the usual one of the unruly wife reformed by a mock beating, responsibility for which the husband escapes by wrapping his wife in a sheep's skin and beating the skin. It seems to have had some of the same effect as if the real thing had been administered, or I would say even better. I am still somewhat doubtful of its efficacy at any rate.

The refrains vary both in Great Britain and in North America. The "Gentle Fair Jenny" refrain, known in New England and the Appalachians, has apparently given not only the title to the ballad, but a name to the wife; it is, however, a rationalization of an old herb refrain, "Juniper, gentian, and rosemary", supposedly a list of magical plants that serve as a refrain for other ballads. (See the "Elfin Knight", Child No. 2 in this series.)

GENTLE FAIR JENNIE ("The Wife Wrapped in Weather's Skin") Child No. 277

I married me a wife and took her home,
Gentle fair Jennie, fair Rosie Marie;
But I oftimes wished I had let her
alone,
As the dew flies over the green valley.

All in the kitchen she would not use,
Gentle fair Jennie, fair Rosie Marie;
For fear of spilling her new cloth
shoes;
As the dew flies over the green valley.

First day at noon I came in from the
plow;
Gentle fair Jennie, etc.
My dearest wife, is my dinner ready
now?
As the dew flies, etc.

There's a little piece of corn bread
lying on the shelf;
Gentle fair Jennie, etc.
If you want any more you can cook it
yourself,
As the dew flies, etc.

Second day at noon I came in from the
plow;
Gentle fair Jennie, etc.
My dearest little wife, is my dinner
ready now?
As the dew flies over, etc.

I am not your servant, I am not your
slave,
Gentle fair Jennie, etc.
This was the answer the young wife

gave,
As the dew flies over, etc.

I took my knife and went out to the
barn,
Gentle fair Jennie, etc.
And I cut me a hickory as long as my
arm,
As the dew flies, etc.

Then I went out to my sheep pen,
Gentle fair Jennie, etc.
And soon had off an old sheep's skin,
As the dew flies, etc.

I placed it around my young wife's
back,
Gentle fair Jennie, etc.
And made my hickory go whickety-
whack,
As the dew flies, etc.

I'll tell my father and all my kin,
Gentle fair Jennie, etc.
That you whupped me with that hickory
limb,
As the dew flies over the green
valley.

You can tell your father and all
your kin,
Gentle fair Jennie, etc.
That I was only tanning my old
weather's shin,
As the dew flies, etc.

Third day at noon I came in from the
plow,
Gentle fair Jennie, etc.
My dearest little wife, is my dinner
ready now?
As the dew flies over the green
valley.

She flew about, the table was spread,
Gentle fair Jennie, etc.
And, yes sir, and no sir, was all that
she said,
As the dew flies over the green
valley.

Notes

6. HOW THE SQUIRE COURTED NANCY

The western North Carolina version of this ballad is presented as a "comical fancy", but it is far from that in its traditional setting in Great Britain. Indeed, in the versions given by Professor Child, under the title of "glasserion", No. 67, it is told as a most unfortunate tragedy. The plot and the sequel are entirely different from this text. The tragedy takes place because of the princely character of the young man and his ability as a harper (a folk musician). According to the B version in Professor Child's noted collection, the name of the harper was Glenkindie, and he was invited on a special occasion to harp for the king, as he had become "the very best that ever harped a string". He is invited one cold winter night to visit the king's castle and sing and play for the evening's entertainment. As the evening wained the guests all fell asleep or retired, with the exception of one fair young lady who seemed to never tire or to enjoy enough of his performance.

"He has taken his harm into
his hand,
And harped them all to sleep,
Except it was the young countess,
That love did awaken keep."

He played on, however, to please
the lady. Finally she tells him that
she will reward him with a robe of
"fine cloth". The countess is much
effected by his playing, and finally
she says:

"When the day is dawning,
And the cocks are crowing,
It's you may come to my bower door,
And streak (stretch) yourself by
my side."

But she cautions him to tell Gib
(Jack), his serving man, nothing about
his plans.

"For if you tell Gib, your man,
He'll beguile both you and me."

The beguiling does not take place
in the manner stated in the N.C. ballad.
He goes straight back to his apartments
and tells his waiting man his exact
plans, telling his man to awaken him
about four o'clock when the roosters
in the neighborhood are crowing for
day. He is put to bed, his clothing
being arranged so that he can easily
dress quickly and be off for the
rendevous.

As soon as he is asleep, his
waiting man dons his raiment, and
hastily makes his departure for the
quartes of the countess. He knocks
and is admitted, she thinking he is
the prince (squire). After they have
been together for sometime, he arises,
dresses, and hastens back to the
sleeping quarters of the squire. He
arouses him and assists in dressing
him properly and sees him off. He
arrives, but the countess is sur-
prised and asks him why he has re-
turned. He tells him he left his
bracelet and his cain. He naturally
disclaims any knowledge of the affair,
but they both see through the betrayal
of the interloper, and they of
course know the guilty one. She
commits suicide and he hastens back
to his apartments, calls his waiting
man, cuts his head off at his
shoulders, and then falls upon the
point of the sword himself.

HOW THE SQUIRE COURTED NANCY

1. Come listen awhile and I'll sing
you a comical fancy;
I'll tell you how the squire
courted Nancy.
He courted her on a rainy day,
And agreed all night with her to
stay.

Chorus:

Fol lol diddle dee dol
Fol diddle lee die day.

He courted her on a rainy day
And agreed all night with her to
stay

Fol lol diddle lee dol
Fol diddle lee die day.

2. You'll wrap a string around your
finger;
Just poke one end out at the
window.
When I slip up and pull the
string,
You come down and let me in.

Chorus:

Fol lol diddle lee dol
Fol diddle lee die day.

When I slip up and pull the string
You come down and let me in.

Fol lol diddle lee dol
Fol diddle lee die day.

3. Jack lay concealed all in the
entry;
So darn his eyes if he didn't
venture
So Jack slipped up and pulled
the string,
And she came down and let him
in.

Chorus:

Fol lol diddle lee dol
Fol diddle lee die day.

So Jack slipped up and pulled the
string,
And she came down and let him in.

Fol lol diddle lee dol
Fol diddle lee die day.

4. And back to bed Miss Nancy did
retire;
Thinking she had her little
squire;
But the squire slipped up and
pulled the string,
And the devil's the one that let
him in.

Chorus:
 Fol lol diddle lee dol
 Fol diddle lee die day.
 But the squire slipped up and
 pulled the string
 And the devil's the one that let
 him in.
 Fol lol diddle lee dol
 Fol diddle lee die day.

5. The squire flew back all in a
 passion;
 Cursed all the women in the
 nation;
 Swore there was not one that would
 be true,
 But if she was she's devilish few.

Chorus:
 Fol lol diddle lee dol
 Fol diddle lee die day.
 Swore there was not that would
 be true,
 But if she was she's devilish few.
 Fol lol diddle lee dol;
 Fol diddle lee die day.

6. So early next morning our Miss
 Nancy awakened;
 She found she was so sadly mis-
 taken:
 There lay Jack in checkered
 shirt,
 His face and hands all daubed
 with dirt.

Chorus:
 Fol lol diddle lee dol
 There lay Jack in checkered shirt
 His face and hands all daubed with
 dirt.
 Fol lol diddle lee dol
 Fol diddle lee die day.

7. How came you here, you sassy
 fellow?
 You came to rob me of my pleasure.
 When I slipped up and pulled the
 string,
 You came down and let me in.

Chorus:
 Fol lol diddle lee dol
 Fol diddle lee die day.
 When I slipped up and pulled the
 string,
 You came down and let me in.
 Fol lol diddle lee dol,
 Fol diddle lee die day.

Notes

7. THE CAMBRIC SHIRT
 ("The Elfin Knight")

The ballad of the Cambric Shirt, or "The Elfin Knight", is related to a remarkable group of ballad stories, in which difficult tasks or embarrassing questions and clever answers make for a victory of integrity and smartness. In the particular type to which this ballad belongs, a clever girl wins a husband by her quickness of wit; the man imposes tasks, of which the girl stands acquitted if she can match each of them with another of no less difficulty. But in this case the Elfin Knight is a false knight, acting the part of an interloper or betrayer in order to test the girl's stability and character. The cambric shirt was the equivalent of an engagement ring, in this instance to be presented, as was the custom of knightly and maidenly engaged couples, by the young lady as a symbol of betrothal. She turns the table on the knight, so to speak, putting him on the defensive where, if he will measure up to the qualifications, he "may come and get his cambric shirt", a seamless garment to be worn under his metal armor. I recorded this ballad from the singing of my mother, Mrs. Cordie Elizabeth (King) Moser of Leicester, North Carolina, in 1937. This ballad is rare in the western Carolina mountains, but has been widely collected both in America and Europe. In Professor Child's collection of English and Scottish Popular Ballads it is No. 2, as being among the most ancient in form.

THE CAMBRIC SHIRT ("The Elfin Knight")

Will you make me a cambric shirt,
 Parsley, sage, rosemary, and thyme,
 Without any needle or seamster's
 work?
 And (then) you shall be a true lover
 of mine.

Will you wash it in yonder's well,
 Parsley, sage, rosemary, and thyme,
 Where there is no water and never has
 been?
 Then you shall be a true lover of
 mine.

Will you dry it on yonder's thorn,
 Parsley, sage, rosemary, and thyme,
 That's never bloomed blossom since
 Adam was born?
 And you shall be a true lover of
 mine.

Now you've asked me questions three,
 Parsley, sage, rosemary, and thyme,
 If you will answer as many for me,
 Then you shall be a true lover of
 mine.

Can you find an acre of land,
 Parsley, sage, rosemary, and thyme,
 Betwixt the salt water and the sea
 sand?
 Then you shall be a true lover of
 mine.

Can you plow it with a ram's horn,
 Parsley, sage, rosemary, and thyme,
 And sow it and plant it all down in
 corn?
 Then you shall be a true lover of
 mine.

Will you reap it with a sickle of
 leather,
 Parsley, sage, rosemary, and thyme,
 And haul it home on a peafowl's
 feather?
 And you shall be a true lover of
 mine.

When you've done and finished your
 work,
 Parsley, sage, rosemary, and thyme,
 Then come and get your cambric shirt,
 And you shall be a true lover of mine.

Notes

8. EDWARD

"Edward" stands near the head of balladry in beauty and power and tragedy. It is, however, not considered very ancient, even though the form and the words make it seem so. This ballad, like the riddle ballads, is a question and answer story between mother and son. The son has killed his brother in this case. It is number 13 in the standard collection of ballads made by Professor James F. Child, and the mother is also implicated. But in the North Carolina versions the mother is never involved, but is herself something of a victim of the tragedy. The tragedy always involves the brother, variously referred to as "my dear brother", "my young brother", etc., but never the father as in some others of the Professor Child collection. Bishop Thomas Percy, English folklorist and churchman, 1729-1811, in his collection of Scottish ballads, Reliques of Ancient English Poetry, found this ballad and a large assortment of others under a bureau at a friend's home, where the servant girl was using sheets of the manuscript to kindle the fire. He rescued it just in time -- and of course several songs had already disappeared in the fire. It was probably at least a hundred years old when the good bishop retrieved it.

I rescued it down at Hot Springs, North Carolina, from the singing of Mrs. Claudia Roberts in 1945. She had learned it when a child in South Carolina. But she and her family had

lived at Hot Springs before going to that state, and she had returned to make her home in North Carolina when I had the privilege of recording this ballad.

EDWARD

How come that blood on your shirt
 sleeve,
 Pray, son, pray tell it unto me?
 It's the blood of the old grayhound
 That ran yon fox for me.

Oh, it is too red for the old gray-
 hound,
 Pray, son pray tell it unto me?
 It's the blood of the old bay horse
 That plowed that field for me.

Oh, it is too red for the old bay
 horse,
 Pray, son, pray tell it unto me?
 It's the blood of my dear brother
 That rode along with me.

Oh, what did you both fall out about,
 Pray, son pray tell it unto me?
 For cutting down a holly bush
 Which might have made a tree.

Oh, what will you do when your
 father comes home,
 Pray, son, pray tell it unto me?
 I'll set my foot on yonder ship
 And sail along the sea.

Oh, what will you do with your
 children three,
 Pray, son, pray tell it unto me?
 I'll leave them all alone with you
 To long remember me.

Oh, what will you do with your house
 and your farm,
 Pray, son pray tell it unto me?
 I'll leave them all alone with you
 To maintain my children three.

Oh, what will you do with your
 pretty little wife,
 Pray, son, pray tell it unto me?
 She may set her foot on yonder ship
 And sail along with me.

Oh, when are you ever coming back,
 Pray, son, pray tell it unto me?
 When the sun and the moon both run
 together,
 Which you know that will never be.

Notes

9. KATTY MOREY

I recorded this ballad from the singing of Mrs. Claudia Roberts, Hot Springs, North Carolina, 1941. She said her father often sang this piece, but that he did not think it proper for her to sing it and she hesitated to sing it. Finally I persuaded her. According to Cecil J. Sharp in his English Folksongs from the Southern Appalachians, p. 331, the tune is a variant of "The Dowie Dens of Yarrow". His text of "Kallie Morey", No. 62, which he collected at Flag Pond, Tennessee, gives a few more details of what really happened than does my text in a few particulars. The first two stanzas throw some light.

Come young, come old, come all
 draw nigh,
 Come listen to my story;
 I'll tell you what a plan I've
 found
 To spoil Miss Katty Morey.

I went unto her father's house,
 Just like a clever fellow,
 I told her that the plums and
 grapes were ripe,
 Yes, they were fine and mellow.

The plot thickens when it is realized that in that age her father probably carried a quiver and bow and arrows or a javalin, which he could use with great skill. It was indeed risky to climb a tree to escape in

this escapade. In climbing the tree in haste, his skin was damaged and his clothes torn, according to Sharp's version.

KATTY MOREY
(or A Clever Fellow)

I went unto her father's house,
Just like a clever fellow --
Tumi-li-teiling-di-0
Tumi-li-teiling-di-0

I took Miss Katty by the hand,
Went sporting off together --
Tumi-li-teiling-di-0
Tumi-li-teiling-di-0

Look away over yonder what I see --
I see that old man coming --
Tumi-li-teiling-di-0
Tumi-li-teiling-di-0

You go and climb up yonder tree,
Until he is by, sir --
Tumi-li-teiling-di-0
Tumi-li-teiling-di-0

I climbed and I climbed till I go
to the top,
Not to be the least expected --
Tumi-li-teiling-di-0
Tumi-li-teiling-di-0

She heeled it out across the field,
And left me half distracted --
Tumi-li-teiling-di-0
Tumi-li-teiling-di-0

Now every time I see Miss Kate,
I always think of climbing --
Tumi-li-teiling-di-0
Tumi-li-teiling-di-0

Notes

10. GREEN GROWS THE LAUREL

This song has been known and sung in the Carolina mountains from the time of the first settlers. I learned this version from my uncle Aanon King of Leicester, N.C., in Buncombe county. It is derived from an old Irish song and was made popular for a time by the Texas cowboys. A colorful fable holds that the Mexican word "gringo", meaning cowboy, was derived from this song. The Mexicans referred to the Americans by the first two words in the title "Green Grow", and pronounced it "Grengo". The mountain people substituted laurel instead of "lilacs", since these were seldom seen or grown here; but the laurel is plentiful. Many of the first settlers left the mountains for Texas and then returned. Among those was David Crockett, who lost his life in the Battle of the Alamo.

GREEN GROWS THE LAUREL

Green grows the laurel, all sparkling
with dew;
I'm lonely, my darling since parting
with you,
But by our next meeting I hope you'll
prove true,
And exchange the green laurel for the
red, white, and blue.

I used to have a sweetheart, but now
I have none,
Since she's gone and left me, I care
not for one.
Since she's gone and left me, con-
tented I'll be;
For she loves another far better
than me.

I passed my love's window both early
and late;
The looks that she gave me, it made
my heart ache.
Oh, the looks that she gave me was
painful to see,
For she loves another one better
than me.

I wrote my love a letter in rosy red
lines;
She sent me an answer all twisted in
twines;
Saying, Keep your love letters and I
will keep mine;
Just you write to your love and I'll
write to mine.

Green grow the laurels, all sparkling
with dew;
I'm lonely, my darling since parting
with you;
But by our next meeting I hope you'll
prove true,
And exchange the green laurel for the
red, white, and blue.

Notes

11. I CALLED BUT NOBODY ANSWERED

This song came out of the Nashville, Tennessee, milieu when the folksingers and musicians began to assemble every Saturday night many years ago at what became known humorously as "The Grand Old Opry" of fifty years ago. It drew from a wide area many of the finest folk musicians of the region, and it became famous for the talent it presented. This song about the mountain man returning to his mountain home after years of absence, perhaps traveling and making his living as a folk musician, or in some of the many other occupations which drew the mountain dweller the rather unprofitable life he had been living to the factory and the urban area. It has been said that you may get the mountain man out of the mountains, but you can seldom get the memory of the mountains out of him. He will find his way back to the family reunion, the community picnic, or the singing or music convention. This song expresses his nostalgia.

I CALLED BUT NOBODY ANSWERED ("My Old Cabin Home")

I wandered again to my old mountain
home,
And I called for the loved ones I
wanted to see;
Then I awaited the voice that would
bid me come in,
But nobody answered me.

Chorus:

I called and I called, but
nobody answered;
I searched everywhere, but
no one I could see;
Then I knocked on the door as
I oft had before,
But nobody answered me.

My thoughts all turned back to the
long, long ago,
To the scenes of my childhood so
happy and free.
Like the prodigal son, I had wandered
back home,
But nobody answered me.

Then I turned away from that dear
cabin home,
From the place that perhaps never more
would I see;
And as I turned to go, I called then
once more,
But nobody answered me.

Notes

12. LADY MARGARET AND SWEET WILLIAM ("Fair Margaret and Sweet William")

This ballad I collected from the singing of Mrs. Claudia Roberts at Hot Springs, North Carolina, in 1943, for the Library of Congress.

The story of the North Carolina text is this: Sweet William arises and prepares for his wedding day. He

denies that there is anything of moment between Lady Margaret and himself, and says that on the following day Lady Margaret will "see a rich wedding". Lady Margaret sits at her high bower window, and while waiting to see if the couple will really appear at the church, she combs her long golden hair, in some ballads, "with a silver comb". But soon she sees them approaching the church yard. She throws down her comb in her emotion and "throws back her long yellow hair". Then she "comes down" from her high bower window, never to be seen there again. That night the ghost of Lady Margaret appears at the foot of the bed in which William and his bride are sleeping, and she carries on a conversation with him. Next morning he awakens his wife and gets permission to go and visit Lady Margaret. But he does not return.

The version that I sing here is short and ends with a stanza from another ballad. This ballad represents the few instances in the ballads collected in America where a ghost appears in a scene, and the ghost is not usually dwelt upon as the same ballad might be given in England, certainly as it would have been during the Middle Ages when this ballad must have had its beginning.

FAIR MARGARET AND SWEET WILLIAM

Lady Marget* was sitting in her high
bower window,
A-combing back her long yellow hair;
Oh, whom did she see by William and
his bride
Riding by the church yard there?

'Twas back she threw her long flowing
hair,
Threw down her ivory comb;
Oh, let me go bid Sweet Willie adieu,
For no more will I go there.

It was late that night when they all
were asleep;
And his bride lay in his arms;
Lady Marget appeared all dressed in
white,
A-standing at his bed feet.

Oh, how do you like your fine feather
bed;
Oh, how do you like your sheet;
Oh, how do you like that gay young
lady,
That is standing at your bed feet?

Very well do I like my fine feather
bed;
Very well do I like my sheet;
Much better do I like that fair
young lady
That is standing at my bed feet.

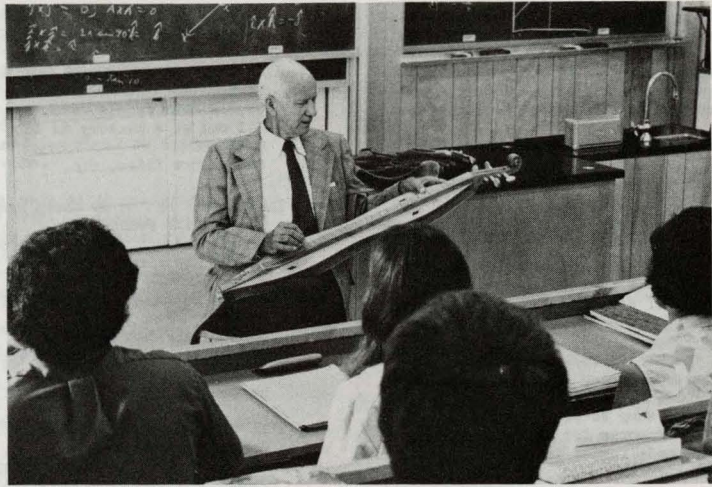
He rose early the next morning;
Went and saddled his milk-white steed;
Oh, let me ride to Lady Marget's
door,
For no more will I go there.

Is Lady Marget a-sitting in her own
bower room;
Or is she in the hall?
Lady Marget is laying in her own
black coffin,
With her face turned to the wall.

Unscrew the coffin, take off the
lid;
Unfold the linen so fine;
And let me kiss those cold pale lips,
For so often they've kissed mine.

Oh, when you see some lonesome doves,
A-flying from pine to pine,
A weeping for their lost true loves
Like I shall weep for mine.

* Just as in some of these songs, extra syllables are added to the words in singing -- in this case syllables are omitted, so that "Margaret" becomes "Marget".



Artus Moser / Swannanoa N.C.



Artus Moser / Swannanoa N.C.

Recreation at W.C.C.

