AMERICAN-ENGLISH FOLK-SONGS

Collected in the
Southern Appalachians
and Arranged with
Pianoforte Accompaniment

by
CECIL J. SHARP

3

First Series
Price, \$1.50 net

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Teb. 1923.

To Mrs. JOHN C. CAMPBELL

INTRODUCTION

The twelve numbers in this volume have been selected from a Collection of a thousand or more ballads and songs noted down from the lips of folk-singers resident in the Southern Appalachian Mountains. They may be regarded, and for this reason have been chosen, as representative examples of the traditional song bequeathed to the mountain-singers by their immigrant British forefathers. Those interested in these isolated communities are referred to English Folk-Songs from the Southern Appalachians, wherein will also be found an account of the singers and of their songs and of the circumstances in which the latter were collected.

In submitting these songs and ballads to the consideration of musicians, professional and amateur, there is no need to plead for any special indulgence, nor to attempt to disarm criticism, or to temper it, on the ground that they are the product of unlettered, unskilled musicians. Whatever their origin, they stand and must be judged upon their intrinsic merits. That the tunes present to the eye no unusual features, that they lack tonal modulation and, structurally, are built on simple lines; that the literary expression is direct, without circumlocution, the vocabulary confined to the use of ordinary words in everyday use—has no bearing whatever upon the question at issue. Music, poetry—and, for the matter of that, all art—is good or bad, not because it is unsophisticated or ingenious, simple or complex, but because it is, or is not, the true, sincere, ideal expression of human feeling and imagination.

Genuine peasant-songs, taking them in the mass, will always survive this test simply because they are the product of an intuitive, un-selfconscious effort to satisfy an insistent human demand for self-expression. And it is only of the very best and highest human achievements in the sphere of consciously-conceived art that this, with like assurance, can be said.

With one exception, No. 10, all the songs in this volume—or variants of them—have already been printed, unedited and unharmonized.* The tunes, it should, perhaps, be stated, are presented precisely as they were noted down, without any alteration whatsoever. To what extent the words have been changed, the following notes will explain.

*English Folk-Songs from the Southern Appalachians. Olive Dame Campbell and Cecil Sharp (G. P. Putnam's Sons).

NOTES.

No. 1. **Edward.** Sung by Mr. Trotter Gan at Sevierville, Sevier Co., Tenn.

A few minor verbal alterations have been made in the text, including the substitution of "thee" for "you" in the last lines of the first two stanzas—a typical example of the way in which folk-singers will often deliberately disregard rhyme.

For other variants see English Folk-Songs from the Southern Appalachians, No. 7, p. 26.

No. 2. The Two Brothers. Sung by Mrs. Margaret Dunagan at St. Helen's, Lee Co., Ky.

Text practically unaltered.

For other variants see English Folk-Songs from the Southern Appalachians, No. 11, p. 33.

No. 3. Young Hunting. Tune sung by Mrs. Margaret Dunagan at St. Helen's, Lee Co., Ky.; words sung by Mrs. Carter of Beattyville, Lee Co., Ky.

Words unchanged.

For other variants see English Folk-Songs from the Southern Appalachians, No. 15, p. 47.

No. 4. The False Knight upon the Road. Sung by Mrs. T. G. Coates at Flag Pond, Unicoi Co., Tenn.

See English Folk-Songs from the Southern Appalachians, No. 1, p. 1.

No. 5. The Cruel Brother. Sung by Mrs. Hester House at Hot Springs, Madison Co., N. C. Two stanzas have been omitted.

See English Folk-Songs from the Southern Appalachians, No. 5, p. 20.

No. 6. The Wife Wrapt in Wether's Skin. Sung by Mrs. Margaret Dunagan at St. Helen's, Lee Co., Ky.

Stanzas 5, 7 and 8, and the first line of stanza 6, have been taken from other versions.

For other variants see English Folk-Songs from the Southern Appalachians, No. 33, p. 137.

No. 7. Come all you fair and tender ladies. Sung by Mrs. Rosie Hensley at Carmen, Madison Co., N. C.

See English Folk-Songs from the Southern Appalachians, No. 65 A, p. 220.

No. 8. The False Young Man. Sung by Mr. T. Jeff Stockton at Flag Pond, Unicoi Co., Tenn.

See English Folk-Songs from the Southern Appalachians, No. 94 A, p. 269.

No. 9. The Dear Companion. Sung by Mrs. Rosie Hensley at Carmen, Madison Co., N. C. See English Folk-Songs from the Southern Appalachians, No. 58, p. 204.

No. 10. The Riddle Song. Sung by Mrs. Wilson at Pineville, Bell Co., Ky.

Words unaltered.

No. 11. Now Once I did Court. Sung by Mr. T. Jeff Stockton at Flag Pond, Unicoi Co., Tenn.

Text collated with other versions.

See English Folk-Songs from the Southern Appalachian Mountains, No. 57 B, p. 201.

No. 12. The Rejected Lover. Sung by Mr. Wesley Batten at Mount Fair, Albemarle Co., Va.

Text collated with other versions.

See English Folk-Songs from the Southern Appalachians, No. 56 C, p. 199.

CONTENTS

BALLADS:	Page
1. Edward [Tennessee]	3
2. The Two Brothers [Kentucky]	9
3. Young Hunting [Kentucky]	16
THE FALSE KNIGHT UPON THE ROAD [Tennessee]	20
5. THE CRUEL BROTHER [North Carolina]	23
6. THE WIFE WRAPT IN WETHER'S SKIN [Kentucky]	28
SONGS:	
7- Come All Ye Fair and Tender Ladies [North Carolina]	33
-8. THE FALSE YOUNG MAN [Tennessee]	37
9. THE DEAR COMPANION [North Carolina]	41
-10. THE RIDDLE SONG [Kentucky]	45
TI. Now Once I Did Court [Tennessee]	4 9
THE REJECTED LOVER [Virginia]	54
[vii]	

AMERICAN-ENGLISH FOLK-SONGS

EDWARD

How came this blood on your shirt sleeve?

O, dear love, tell me.

It is the blood of the old grey horse
That ploughed that field for me, me, me,
That ploughed that field for me.

It does look too pale for the old grey horse
That ploughed that field for thee, thee,
That ploughed that field for thee.

How came this blood on your shirt sleeve?

O, dear love, tell me.

It is the blood of the old greyhound

That traced that fox for me, me, me,

That traced that fox for me.

It does look too pale for the old greyhound

That traced that fox for thee, thee, thee,

That traced that fox for thee.

How came this blood on your shirt sleeve?
O, dear love, tell me.
It is the blood of my brother-in-law
That went away with me, me,
That went away with me.

And it's what did you fall out about?

O, dear love, tell me.

About a little bit of bush

That soon would have made a tree, tree, tree,

That soon would have made a tree.

And it's what will you do now, my love?

O, dear love, tell me.

I'll set my foot in yonders ship

And I'll sail across the sea, sea,

And I'll sail across the sea.

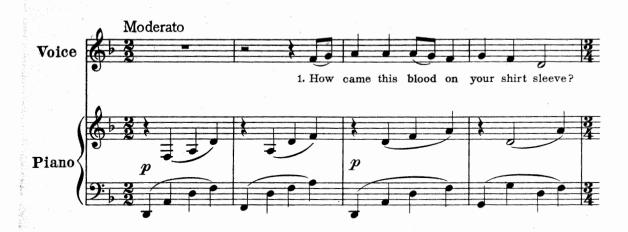
And it's when will you come back, my love?

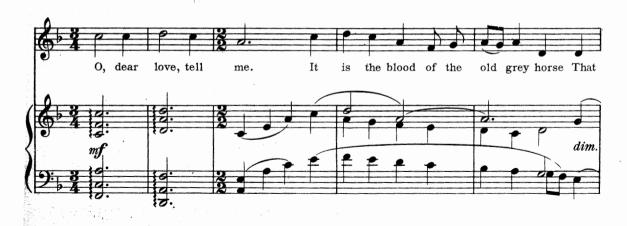
O, dear love, tell me.

When the sun sets into yonders sycamore tree,
And that will never be, be,
And that will never be.

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Edward







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THE TWO BROTHERS

O brother, can you play at ball, Or can you toss the stone? I am too little, I am too young, O brother, let me alone.

His brother took his little penknife Which was both keen and sharp; He put a deep and deathly wound And pierced him to the heart.

O brother, take my holland shirt, And rip it from gore to gore; You tie it around my bleeding wound, And it will bleed no more.

His brother took his holland shirt,
And ripped it from gore to gore;
He tied it around his bleeding wound,
But still it bled the more.

O brother, take me on your back, Carry me to Chesley town; You dig me a deep and large, wide grave And lay me there so sound.

You put my bible at my head, My psalter at my feet, My bow and arrow at my side, And sounder I will sleep.

His brother took him on his back, And carried him to Chesley town; He dug him a deep and large, wide grave, And laid him there so sound.

He put his bible at his head,
His psalter at his feet,
His bow and arrow at his side,
So sounder he will sleep.

O brother, as you go home at night, And my mother asks for me; You'll tell I'm along with some schoolboys, So merry I'll come home.

And if my true love asks for me,
The truth to her you'll tell;
You'll tell I'm dead and in grave laid
And buried in Chesley town

With my bible at my head, My psalter at my feet, My bow and arrow at my side, And sounder I will sleep.

And as his brother went home at night,
His mother asked for him.
He told he's along with some schoolboys,
So merry he'll come home.

And when his true love asked for him, The truth to her he told; He told he was dead and in grave laid And buried in Chesley town

With his bible at his head,
His psalter at his feet,
His bow and arrow at his side,
So sounder he will sleep.

And then his true love put on small hoppers
And tied them with silver strings;
Went hopping all over her true lover's grave
A twelvemonth and a day.

She hopped the red fish out of the sea,
The small birds out of their nests;
She hopped her true love out of his grave,
So he can see no rest.

Go home, go home, you rambling reed, Don't weep nor mourn for me; For if you do for twelve long years, No more you'll see of me.

The Two Brothers













YOUNG HUNTING

Light you down, light you down, love Henry, she said, And stay all night with me; For I have a bed and a fireside too, And a candle a-burning bright.

I won't get down, nor I can't get down And stay all night with thee, For that little girl in the old Declarn Would think so hard of me.

But he slided down from his saddle skirts
For to kiss her snowy white cheek.
She had a sharp knife in her hand,
And she plunged it in him deep.

I will get down and I can get down
And stay all night with thee,
For there's no little girl in the old Declarn
That I love any better than thee.

Must I ride to the East, must I ride to the West, Or anywhere under the sun, To get some good and clever doctor For to cure this wounded man?

Neither ride to the East, neither ride to the West, Nor nowhere under the sun, For there's no man but God's own hand Can cure this wounded man.

28253

She took him by the long, yellow locks And also round the feet; She plunged him in that doleful well, Some sixty fathoms deep.

And as she turned round to go home, She heard some pretty bird sing: Go home, go home, you cruel girl, Lament and mourn for him.

Fly down, fly down, pretty parrot, she said, Fly down and go home with me. Your cage shall be decked with beads of gold, And hung in the willow tree.

I won't fly down, nor I can't fly down, And I won't go home with thee, For you have murdered your own true love, And you might murder me.

I wish I had my little bow-ben, And had it with a string; I'd surely shoot that cruel bird That sits on the briers and sings.

I wish you had your little bow-ben And had it with a string; I'd surely fly from vine to vine; You could always hear me sing.

Young Hunting









The False Knight upon the Road



- O what are you going there for?
 Said the knight in the road.
 For to learn the Word of God,
 Said the child as he stood.
 He stood and he stood,
 And it's well because he stood.
 For to learn the Word of God,
 Said the child as he stood.
- O what have you got there?
 Said the knight in the road.
 I have got my bread and cheese,
 Said the child as he stood.
 He stood and he stood, etc.
- 4. O won't you give me some?

 Said the knight in the road.

 No, ne'er a bite nor crumb,

 Said the child as he stood.

 He stood and he stood, etc.
- 5. O I wish you were on the sands, Said the knight in the road. Yes, and a good staff in my hands, Said the child as he stood. He stood and he stood, etc.
- 6. O I wish you were in the sea, Said the knight in the road. Yes, and a good boat under me, Said the child as he stood. He stood and he stood, etc.
- 7. O I think I hear a bell, Said the knight in the road. Yes, and it's ringing you to hell, Said the child as he stood. He stood and he stood, And it's well because he stood. Yes, and it's ringing you to hell, Said the child as he stood.

THE CRUEL BROTHER

There's three fair maids went out to play at ball; I-o the lily gay

There's three landlords come court them all.

And the rose smells so sweet I know

The first landlord was dressed in blue; He asked his maid if she'd be his true.

The next landlord was dressed in green; He asked his maid if she'd be his queen.

The next landlord was dressed in white; He asked his maid if she'd be his wife.

It's you may ask my old father dear, And you may ask my mother too.

It's I have asked your old father dear, And I have asked your mother too.

Your sister Anne I've asked her not, Your brother John—and I had forgot.

Her old father dear was to lead her to the yard, Her mother too was to lead her to the step.

Her brother John was to help her up; As he holp her up he stabbed her deep.

Go ride me out on that green hill, And lay me down and let me bleed.

Go haul me up on that green hill, And lay me down till I make my will.

It's what will you will to your old father dear? This house and land that I have here.

It's what will you will to your mother too? This bloody clothing that I do wear.

Go tell her to take them to yonders stream, For my heart's blood is in every seam.

It's what will you will to your sister Anne? My new gold ring and my silver fan.

It's what will you will to your brother John? A rope and a gallows for to hang him on.

The Cruel Brother









THE WIFE WRAPT IN WETHER'S SKIN

I married me a wife, I got her home,

For gentle, for Jenny, my rosamaree

But I oftentimes wish I'd let her alone.

As the dew flies over the green valley

When I come in it's from my plough, O now, my kind wife, is my dinner ready now?

There's a piece of bread upon the shelf, If you want any more, you can bake it yourself.

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

Then I went out to my sheep-pen, And soon had off an old wether's skin.

I placed it on my old wife's back, And made my hickory go wickechy whack.

I'll tell my father and all my kin That you have hit me with a hickory limb.

If you do, I'll tell you lied, For I was a-dressing my old wether hide.

Then I come in it's from my plough.
O now, my kind wife, is my dinner ready now?

She flew around, the board was spread, And every word it was 'Yes, sir!' and 'No, sir!'

The Wife Wrapt in Wether's Skin









COME ALL YE FAIR AND TENDER LADIES

Come all ye fair and tender ladies,

Be careful how you court young men;
They're like a star of a summer's morning,
They'll first appear and then they're gone.

They'll tell to you some pleasing story,
They'll declare to you they are your own;
Straightway they'll go and court some other,
And leave you here in tears to mourn.

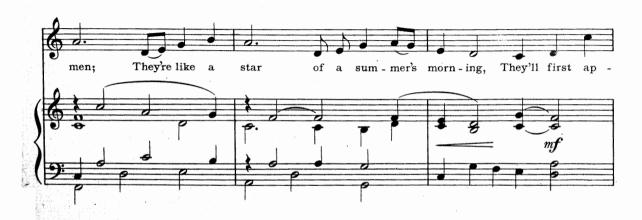
I wish I were some little swallow,
And I had wings and I could fly;
Straight after my true love I would follow,
When they'd be talking I'd be by.

But I am no little swallow,
I have no wings, nor I can't fly,
And after my true love I can't follow,
And when they're talking, I'll sit and cry.
28253

Come all ye fair and tender ladies











THE FALSE YOUNG MAN

Come in, come in, my old true love,
And chat awhile with me,
For it's been three quarters of one long year or more
Since I spoke one word to thee.

I can't come in, nor I shan't sit down,
For I haven't a moment of time.
Since you are engaged with another true love,
Your heart is no more mine.

When your heart was mine, my old true love,
And your head lay on my breast,
You could make me believe by the falling of your arm
That the sun rose up in the West.

There's many a girl can go all round about And hear the small birds sing, And many a girl that stays at home alone And rocks the cradle and spins.

There's many a star that shall jingle in the West, There's many a leaf below, There's many a damn will light upon a man For serving a poor girl so.

The False Young Man







THE DEAR COMPANION

I once did have a dear companion, Indeed I thought his love my own Until a black-eyed girl betrayed me, And then he cares no more for me.

Just go and leave me if you wish to, It will never trouble me, For in your heart you love another And in my grave I'd rather be.

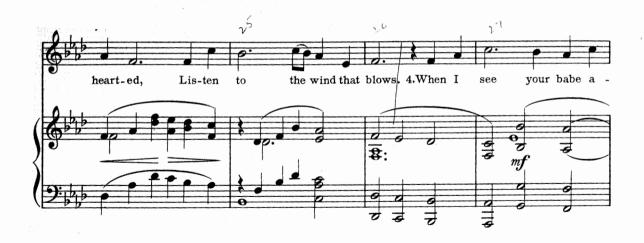
Last night you were sweetly sleeping,
Dreaming in some sweet repose,
While I, a poor girl broken, broken-hearted,
Listen to the wind that blows.

When I see your babe a-laughing,
It makes me think of your sweet face;
But when I see your babe a-crying,
It makes me think of my disgrace.
28253

The Dear Companion











THE RIDDLE SONG

I gave my love a cherry that has no stones, I gave my love a chicken that has no bones, I gave my love a ring that has no end, I gave my love a baby that's no cry-en.

How can there be a cherry that has no stones? How can there be a chicken that has no bones? How can there be a ring that has no end? How can there be a baby that's no cry-en?

A cherry when it's blooming it has no stones, A chicken when it's pipping it has no bones, A ring when it's rolling it has no end, A baby when it's sleeping there's no cry-en.

The Riddle Song







NOW ONCE I DID COURT

Now once I did court a most charming beauty bright; I courted her by day and I courted her by night; I courted her for love and her love I did obtain. I hadn't any reason of love to complain.

But when her old father came this for to know, That I and his daughter together would go, He lock-ed her up and he kept her so severe That I never more got sight of my Molly, my dear.

Then I enlisted, to the wars I did go, To see whether I could forget my love or no. But when I got there with my armour shining bright, On her I plac-ed my whole heart's delight.

Seven long years I served under the king; At the end of seven years I returned home again. And when her mother saw me she wrung her hands and cried:

My daughter dearly loved you and for your sake she died.

My grief, my grief, it is more than I can bear; My true love's in her grave and I wish I were there. Come all you young people and pity poor me, Pity my misfortune and sad misery.

Now Once I Did Court









THE REJECTED LOVER

O once I knew a pretty girl, and I loved her as my life; And I'd freely give my heart and hand to make her my wife, O to make her my wife.

She took me by the hand and she led me to the door,
And she put her arms around me, saying: You can't come any
more,
O you can't come any more.

And I'd not been gone but six months before she did complain, And she wrote me a letter, saying: O do come again, O do come again.

And I wrote her an answer, just for to let her know That no young man would venture where he once could not go, O he once could not go.

Come all you true lovers, take warning by me, And never place your affections on a green growing tree, O a green growing tree.

For the leaves they will wither, and the roots they will decay, And the beauty of a fair maid will soon fade away, O will soon fade away.

28253

The Rejected Lover











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