

***"Ballads and Songs of the Upper  
Hudson Valley"***

sung by

**SARA CLEVELAND**

of Brant Lake, New York

Recorded by Sandy Paton

Notes by Kenneth S. Goldstein

**FSA-33**



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## A NOTE FROM THE COLLECTOR

The thrill of finding a truly great traditional singer comes but rarely to the collector, and when it is enhanced by the recovery of a Child ballad which has never before been reported in North America (Child 52 - *The King's Tochter Lady Jean* - Side 1, Band 2), the excitement is intense. Because it was just such an occasion, I shall never forget the first evening that my wife, Caroline, and I spent in Sara Cleveland's home in Hudson Falls, New York.

As is the custom in north country homes, we sat at the kitchen table with Sara and her family (parlors are for formal visits only), leafing through the several large notebooks of song texts which Sara had carefully written out over the years, asking if she could remember the melody of first one ballad and then another. Without hesitation, and without reference to the written texts, Sara sang for us all evening, and we barely made a scratch on the surface of her vast repertoire of traditional songs. Indeed, Sara's is the most extensive repertoire of any traditional singer I have ever recorded.

Shortly after we began recording Sara's songs, Caroline and I were invited to sing in Philadelphia. We took Sara with us in order to have her meet Kenneth Goldstein, the scholar who had done more than anyone else to encourage me in my efforts to collect folklore materials over the past ten years or more, and to have him hear her sing. Recently, Sara returned to spend a month with the Goldsteins; during this time she recorded well over two hundred songs for Ken, most of which will be included in his depth-study of this remarkable singer and her songs, now scheduled for publication by Folklore Associates.

To be perfectly honest, the credit for discovering Sara should not go to me, but to her son, Jim Cleveland, with whom she now lives in Brank Lake, New York. Jim became interested in folksong some time ago and often visited Lena Spencer's *Café Lena* in Saratoga Springs. From the various artists appearing there, Jim quickly learned enough about traditional music to recognize the importance of his mother's songs. One night he spoke of her to Bob Beers, who suggested that he get in touch with me. Jim made a tape of his mother's singing and gave it to Lawrence Older, the Adirondack singer and fiddler I had recorded earlier for Folk-Legacy (FSA-15). When Lawrence played the tape for me, I found it difficult to believe that the singer

was a woman of nearly sixty years, for the voice could easily have been that of a woman half that age. On our way home from that visit with the Olders, we stopped by to meet Sara. Thus began what would turn out to be several years of periodic recording sessions and an extremely close friendship with the entire Cleveland family. Usually we would record at our home in Huntington, Vermont, where Sara would spend weekends with us; at other times we would record in her living room. The tapes from which this record was produced were all recorded during a three day visit to Brant Lake which I made in early December, 1966. They represent but a few of the thirty-seven tapes I have recorded of Sara's singing.

Sandy Paton  
Sharon, Connecticut  
April, 1968

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#### SARA CLEVELAND

SARA CLEVELAND's family background comes close to being a typical one for a New England traditional singer. Her father and paternal grandfather, both named Jerimiah Creedon, as well as her paternal grandmother, Honnora Linehan, were born in Ireland and lived in Cork before coming to the United States in 1873. Her maternal grandparents, Robert Wiggins and Mary Ellen Henry, came to America from northern Ireland in 1840. Sara's mother, Sarah Wiggins, was born in this country in 1866. Both sides of the family are reported to have been excellent singers with large repertoires of ballads and songs.

Sarah Wiggins and Jerimiah Creedon (Sara Cleveland's parents) were married in 1903. The marriage was her father's second, and though Sara was the only child resulting from this union, she joined a large family with eight half-brothers and -sisters from her father's first marriage. She was greeted as its youngest member on New Year's Day, 1905, in Hartford, New York, and given the name Sara Jane Creedon. In 1922 she married Everett Cleveland, and a year later gave birth to the first of her two children, Jim (Robert James); his brother Billy (Everett William) came along two years later. Both sons have fine voices and like to sing, a trait apparently inherited from Sara, for, as she describes it, "The guy I married couldn't carry a tune in a basket."

The socialization process which made Sara the singer she is today began early. As the youngest member of the family, she had considerable attention directed toward her from other members of the family, as well as from relatives, friends and neighbors. Included in this loving attention was the frequent singing of the many songs and ballads, old world and native American, which they knew. Occasionally such singing took on a more formal instructional character, with specific songs being repeated to her until she had learned the texts and tunes to the satisfaction of her mentors.

Though texts and tunes are not infrequently learned consciously in the manner indicated, traditional singing style is absorbed and learned at a far less conscious level. When, however, Sara strayed from the straight path and attempted to sing in some more popular style, she was brought up sharply and in no uncertain terms by her mother:

"When I was about ten I was washing dishes and singing her song *To Wear a Green Willow*. The day before I'd been up to my cousin and listening to her sing. She put a lot of extra notes and things in her songs. I thought it was lovely, and I was singing *The Green Willow* with all the trimmings, too. Well, Ma came into the kitchen and asked me who I heard singing like that. When I told her Rachel, she told me: 'Well, maybe her songs sound all right that way, but if you are going to sing my songs, you can sing them the way they should be sung or else you can shut up!' I never forgot, and you know when I hear somebody murdering some old song, I know what she meant."

Sara's taxonomy for the songs and ballads she knows are based on the sources from which they came into her repertoire. The terminology she employs appears to stem from the technical gobbledygook she has heard used by various folklorists, ballad scholars and collectors who have sought her out as one of the finest New England traditional singers since her discovery by Sandy Paton several years ago. Of the more than 400 songs in her repertoire which she has typed out in her personal 'ballad book,' approximately half are what she calls "old traditional songs," with the others referred to as "new folk songs." Among the former she includes those songs and ballads which she learned from her family and neighbors, mostly before 1950; the latter group includes those selections learned from her many friends in the popular folkmusic scene of recent years (many of whom have come to her as a source for new additions to their own repertoires), from recordings of folk singers and singers of folk songs, and from books. A list of those songs which Sara identifies as the "old traditional songs" in her repertoire is included at the end of this introductory note.

It is interesting to note that all of Sara's repertoire of "old traditional songs" were learned from one or another of ten people. One might expect a far longer list of her sources of repertoire, especially when one considers that Sara's network of relatives, friends and acquaintances was far greater than that of most people. In addition to being a member of a fair-sized family, Sara was the daughter of a construction engineer and the wife of a bridge builder, and a considerable part of her life until her husband's death in 1953 was spent in moving from one part of New England to another several times a year. Each move resulted in the creation of a new network of friends and acquaintances. Sara's repertoire, however, consists of songs learned mainly from those with whom she formed more stable and enduring relationships. She is quick to point out that each of her songs holds important memories of dear and close friends and relatives.

The great majority of Sara's songs and ballads came from her mother, Sarah Wiggins Creedon, most of whose songs trace back to northern Ireland and the singing of her parents. She remembers that her father, Jerrimiah Creedon, had "a very good tenor voice, but he would sing a little too high, and Ma would say, 'There he goes straining his milk again.'" From him Sara learned a number of Irish songs, most dating from the last half of the 19th century. Another major source was her Uncle Bobby (her mother's brother, Robert Wiggins) who died in 1913 when Sara was only eight years old. In those few years her uncle, who worked as a lumber mill worker during the summer months and as a woodsman in the winter, taught her part of his own repertoire of lumbering songs. She recalls that he had no children of his own and always favored her, and that she learned her ABC's from his singing of *The Woodsman's Alphabet*. From her half-brother, Raymond Bain, she learned a number of traditional ballads which he picked up while working for the Immigration Service at Ellis Island. From her half-sister, Mayme Bain Paul, she learned sentimental and homiletic ballads from the turn of the century, while other sentimental pieces were learned from Sam Wiggins, an uncle, and from a Mrs. Endie, an acquaintance from Tonawanda, New York. From a friend of her parents, Dan Canaugh, Sara learned a number of topical and homiletic ballads. Grandma Brown and her daughter Louella, neighbors and close friends, were the main source of the few religious songs in Sara's repertoire, and a few Irish songs were learned from another close friend and neighbor, Barney Hart.

One other source of some of the pieces in Sara's repertoire should be mentioned here. Sara likes to write her own songs and to set tunes to poetry which she and others have found in newspapers and magazines. Consciously or unconsciously, the melodies she employs are based on folk tunes in her repertoire or borrowed from country songs she heard over the Grand Old Opry or from WLS in Chicago. It is not surprising, therefore, that a number of

her own compositions have a country flavor to them.

Not all of Sara's repertoire can be considered part of a vital tradition at the present time. The majority of her songs form a "memory" tradition, rarely sung and then usually from the pages of her "ballad book." Approximately 30 percent of her repertoire consists of songs which she actively sings while doing housework or driving her car, or in the more formal situations of occasional concert and folk festival performances. It is from this active repertoire that she has drawn the songs which are included on this record.

In part we owe our knowledge of the extent of Sara's repertoire to the rather common habit in many families of copying favorite ballads into manuscript song books. In the case of Sara's family songs, the first copies were made by her friend, Grace Whitting, shortly after World War I. Several notebooks were filled with songs sung by her mother and other members of the family. The first of these books was lost during the years, but a number of them are still intact and have been presented to Bruce Buckley for preservation and study in the Folklore Archives of the Graduate American Folk Culture Program at Cooperstown, New York. In 1942, when Sara temporarily misplaced a number of the original books, she renewed the task of writing down her mother's songs and was able to get her to repeat a large number of them, including some of those in the lost first volume.

A cursory examination of Sara Cleveland's repertoire of "old traditional songs" indicates that except for its size, it is the kind we might expect to find in New England. Certainly the Child and British broadside ballads are, for the most part, among those most popular in the maritime States and eastern Canadian Provinces, as well as in the northern lumber woods. However, a part of her repertoire (especially those songs and ballads learned from sources other than her mother, father and Uncle Bobby) appears to indicate that a substantial number of songs came to Sara indirectly through recorded hillbilly tradition. So little repertoire study has been carried out with American folk singers that we are hard pressed to comment on the large number of sentimental songs and homiletic pieces known by Sara. Certainly many traditional singers, North and South, knew many such songs (this contention is supported by my own field work in the Southern Appalachians and New England), but few collectors have considered these worthy of notice and have chosen to publish only those pieces which they considered more traditional. Greater consideration will have to be given to such songs before we can talk about the differences between northern and southern repertoires.

The preservation of these songs in the pages of manuscript song books is only one of the ways in which these songs will be passed on to present and future generations. Today, Sara lives

with one of her sons, Jim (who is an excellent but exceedingly bashful singer), in Brant Lake, New York, where her granddaughter, Colleen, comes under her daily influence. Those of us who have heard Colleen sing her grandmother's ballads can attest that she is a first rate singer who will see to it that Sara's songs are not forgotten. And until some collector comes along a couple of decades from now and 'discovers' Colleen, we are fortunate in having this fine recording of a small sampling of Sara's repertoire sung by Sara herself.

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The list below includes those songs and ballads which comprise Sara Cleveland's repertoire of "old traditional songs," together with those few pieces either entirely composed by her or to which she has set tunes. Where appropriate, Child and Laws ballad numbers have been supplied in parentheses after the titles. Songs for which Sara has supplied a tune are followed by an asterisk (\*); songs for which she has written both words and music are followed by a double asterisk (\*\*). The titles given below are those supplied by the singer.

After the Ball  
Amazing Grace  
Amber Tresses Tied in Blue  
Andrew Bergine (Child 167)  
Answer to 'Nobody's Darling'  
Bad Companions (Laws E 15)  
Barbara Allen (Child 84)  
Barney, Come Home  
Barney McCoy  
The Battle of Lake Champlain\*  
Before the Daylight in the Morning  
Bendemeer's Stream  
Beyond the Clouds  
Billy the Kid  
The Bird in the Gilded Cage  
Birdy's Dying  
The Blind Child  
Bold Jack Donnahaugh (Laws L 22)  
The Bonny Bon Boy (Child 12)  
The Bonny Laboring Boy (Laws M 14)  
The Boston Burglar (Laws L 16 B)  
The Boy Who Lived Here\*\*  
Brennan on the Moor (Laws L 17)  
Brian O'Lynn  
Bringing Home the Cows\*  
The Brooklyn Theatre Fire  
The Butcher Boy (Laws P 24)  
Busted My Britches (fragment)  
Captain Webster

Come All You Maidens  
 The Constant Farmer's Son (Laws M 33)  
 The Croppy Boy (Laws J 14)  
 The Cruel War is Raging (Laws O 33)  
 The Cuckoo  
 The Cuckoo's Nest  
 Danny Boy  
 Darling Little Joe  
 Don't You Marry the Brant Lake Boys  
 Down by the Weeping Willow (Laws F 1)  
 Drake's Drums\*  
 The Dying Drummer's Sweetheart\*  
 Empty is the Cradle  
 Erin's Green Shore (Laws Q 27)  
 Every Rose Grows Merry in Time (Child 2)  
 Fair Fanny Moore (Laws O 38)  
 Farther Along  
 The Foggy, Foggy Dew (Laws O 3)  
 Four Thousand Years Ago  
 Froggie Went A-Courting  
 A Gay Spanish Maid (Laws K 16)  
 The Georgia Volunteer\*  
 The Girl I Left Behind Me  
 Give an Honest Irish Lad a Chance  
 Going for a Pardon  
 Going to Leave the Old Home, Jim  
 The Golden Glove (Laws N 20)  
 The Golden Vanity (Child 286)  
 The Great Milwaukee Fire (Laws G 15)  
 The Green Beds (Laws K 36)  
 The Greenwood Sidie (Child 20)  
 Hear the Nightingales Sing (Laws P 14)  
 The Hell Bound Train  
 Henry Green (Laws F 14)  
 Her Little Boy in Blue  
 The Hill of Benefee  
 Ray's Parody on 'Home Sweet Home'  
 The House Carpenter (Child 243)  
 I Know that She is Waiting  
 I Served Seven Long Years in State's Prison  
 I Won't Have to Cross Jordan Alone  
 I'll Be All Smiles Tonight  
 I'll Take You Home Again, Kathleen  
 I'm Tying the Leaves  
 In the Baggage Coach Ahead  
 In Bonny Scotland (Laws N 2)  
 The Irishman's Shanty (fragment)  
 It's a Letter from My Sweetheart  
 Jack of all Trades  
 Jack the Jolly Tar (Laws K 40)  
 The Jam on Gerry's Rock (Laws C 1)

James Bird (Laws E 1)  
 James MacDonald (Laws P 38)  
 Jesse James (Laws E 1)  
 Johnny of Hazel Green (Child 293)  
 Johnny's History Lesson\*  
 Just a Handful of Earth from Mother's Grave  
 Just Across the Bridge of Gold  
 Just As the Sun Went Down  
 Just Plain Folks  
 Kenny Waggoner (Laws E 7)  
 Kitty of Coleraine  
 Kitty Wells  
 The Lake of Coolfin (Laws Q 33)  
 The Last Great Charge (Laws A 17)  
 Lather and Shave (Laws Q 15)  
 The Letter Edged in Black  
 Life's Railway to Heaven  
 Little Old Log Cabin In the Lane  
 Little Rosewood Casket  
 The Little Temple Boy\*  
 Liza Dear (Laws G 21)  
 Lorena  
 Mad Carew\*  
 The Magpie's Nest  
 The Maid of the Sweet Brown Knowe (Laws P 7)  
 The Maiden's Lament  
 The Mantle So Green (Laws N 38)  
 Many, Many Years Ago  
 Marrow Bones (Laws Q 2)  
 Mary Across the Wild Moor (Laws P 21)  
 May I Sleep In Your Barn Tonight, Mister  
 The Mermaid (Child 289)  
 The Mines of Irvingdale (Laws G 6)  
 Molly Bawn (Laws O 36)  
 Molly Malone  
 The Moon Behind the Hill  
 Moorlock Mary  
 Mushadorrinanon (Laws J 8)  
 My Boy Willie (Laws K 12)  
 My Dad's Dinner Pail  
 My Pretty Quadroon  
 Neddie's Visit\*  
 Ninety and Nine  
 Nobody's Darling But Mine  
 O'Donnald Abu  
 The Old Maid and the Burglar (Laws H 23)  
 The Old Oak Tree (Laws P 37)  
 Old Rosin the Beau  
 The Old Rugged Cross  
 The Old Wooden Rocker  
 On Board *The Nightingale* (Laws M 37)

One and a Few  
 Only a Tramp  
 Only a Violet  
 Over There  
 The Pardon of Sidna Allen  
 A Picture No Artist Can Paint  
 Poor Little Joe  
 The Pretty Girl Milking Her Cow  
 Pretty Polly (Laws P 36 B)  
 Put My Little Shoes Away  
 Queen Jane (Child 52)  
 Queenstown Warning (Laws H 14)  
 Rineordine (Laws P 15)  
 Ring Down the Curtain  
 Roll Along Silvery Moon  
 The Rose of Tralee  
 Rum-She-Idity  
 She's the Rose of Arranmore  
 The Ship that Never Returned (Laws D 27)  
 The Ship's Carpenter (Laws P 36 A)  
 Sinful to Flirt (Laws G 19)  
 Sister and I\*  
 A Soldier's Letter\*\*  
 The Spanish Cavalier  
 The Star of Logy Bay  
 A Starry Night for a Ramble  
 The State of Arkansas (Laws H 1)  
 The Story in a Stocking\*  
 The Streets of Loredo (Laws B 1)  
 The Tale the Church Bell Told  
 The Tanyard Side (Laws M 28)  
 That's the Song of Songs for Me  
 Three Drowned Sisters (Laws G 23)  
 Three Hunters  
 Three Leaves of Shamrock  
 To Wear a Green Willow (Laws P 31)  
 The Tramp  
 The Turkish Lady (Child 53)  
 Two Little Children  
 Two Orphan Boys of Ireland  
 The Two Sisters (Child 10)  
 Up to Your Neck In Irish Blood (fragment)  
 Utah Carl\* (Laws B 4)  
 The Wexford Lass (Laws P 35)  
 When I Dream of Old Erin  
 When I Was Single  
 When the Honeymoon Was Over  
 When the Ties of Love are Broken  
 When the Work's All Done this Fall (Laws B 3)  
 Where the Moorcocks Crow  
 The Wild Colonial Boy (Laws L 20)

The Woodsman's Alphabet  
The Wreck of the Number Nine (Laws G 26)  
Yellow Papers\*\*  
Young Charlotte (Laws G 17)  
Your Sweetheart Waits For You, Jack (Laws B 24)  
Your Heart Will Break Someday  
Zeb Turney's Gal (Laws E 18)

Kenneth S. Goldstein

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Side I; Band 1. TO WEAR A GREEN WILLOW

The theme of the unfaithful lover who dies of remorse on her wedding night after being reminded of her infidelity by her former true love is relatively uncommon in that large class of ballads which deal with unfaithful lovers. Though its theme is uncommon, the ballad in which it finds its main expression (Laws P 31) has been widely sung throughout the English-speaking world. Known variously as *The Nobleman's Wedding*, *The Faultless Bride*, *The Awful Wedding*, *The Unconstant Lover*, and by other names, it has been collected from tradition in England, Scotland, Ireland, the Canadian Maritimes, and from such widely separated sections of the United States as Maine, Georgia, Missouri, and Utah. The green willow is used in this ballad as a sign of loss or mourning.

Sara learned the ballad from her mother around 1910. When asked to perform at festivals or in concerts, Sara will frequently begin her program with this ballad.

For further information and versions, see:

- G. M. Laws, Jr., *American Balladry from British Broad-sides* (P 31). Philadelphia, 1957. p. 24.
- H. M. Belden, *Ballads and Songs Collected by the Missouri Folklore Society*. Columbia, Mo., 1940. pp. 165-166.
- E. B. Greenleaf and G. Mansfield, *Ballads and Sea Songs from Newfoundland*. Cambridge, Mass., 1933 (reprinted Hatboro, Penna., 1968). pp. 155-156.
- L. A. Hubbard, *Ballads and Songs from Utah*. Salt Lake City, 1961. pp. 47-48.
- K. Peacock, *Songs of the Newfoundland Outports*. 3 vols. Ottawa, 1965. Volume III, pp. 691-697.

Once I was invited to a nobleman's wedding  
By a false lover that proved so unkind  
It causes me now to wear a green willow;  
It causes me now to bear a troubled mind.

Supper was over and everyone seated,  
Every young man sang his true love a song,  
Until it came to the bride's own fond lover;  
The song that he sang to the bride it belonged.

Saying, "How can you lie on another man's pillow  
As long as you have been a sweetheart of mine?  
It causes me now to wear a green willow;  
It causes me now to bear a troubled mind."

The bride she sat at the head of the table;  
Every word she remembered right well,  
Until at last she could bear it no longer  
And down on the floor at the groom's feet she fell.

Saying, "There's one request that I ask as a favor.  
As it is the first one, won't you grant it to me?  
That this first night I may spend with my mother;  
The rest of my life I will spend it with thee."

As it was the first one it was truly granted.  
Sighing and sobbing, she went to her bed.  
Early next morning the groom he arose  
And went there to find that his Mary was dead.

"Oh, Mary, dear Mary, you never have loved me  
With a fond heart as I have loved you,  
May this be a warning to all men and maidens  
To never come between a bride and a groom."

Side I; Band 2.      QUEEN JANE

This is the first report in America of the ballad which Francis James Child included in *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* under the title "The King's Tochter Lady Jean" (Child 52). Of Child's four texts, the two reported by William Motherwell from the south of Scotland end with the incestuous rape resulting in the lady taking her own life or being killed by her brother; the two texts which Child had from Peter Buchan's collection from the northeast of Scotland, as well as the six texts collected in the same area almost a century later by Gavin Greig, are pretty much in agreement in having the lady die of a broken heart. Sara Cleveland's version seems distinct from all the Scottish texts in that the ballad ends with a death wish rather than with the actual demise of the lady. (The last verse is one of those floating lyric verses most commonly found in the song "Died for Love" or "I Wish, I Wish.") Sara's version also tells its tale with a clarity and economy found lacking in earlier texts.

Like most of the older items in her repertoire, Sara reports

this piece was learned originally from her mother before 1910. It was included in a manuscript book of the family songs compiled by her in 1918, but the book was lost a few years later. In 1942, when Sara again started taking down those of her mother's songs which had originally been in the lost volume, she reports having really understood the ballad for the first time; the rape scene (stanza 6) had never been understood by her as a child. Her mother appears not to have regarded the ballad as proper subject matter for social entertaining, as Sara indicates her mother sang it rarely and then only when alone or working around the house.

For additional information and versions, see:

- F. J. Child, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*. 5 vols. Cambridge, Mass., 1882-1898. Volume I, pp. 450-454.  
G. Greig and A. Keith, *Last Leaves of Traditional Ballads and Ballad Airs*. Aberdeen, Scotland, 1925. pp. 38-40.  
B. H. Bronson, *The Traditional Tunes of the Child Ballads*. Princeton, N. J., 1959 - (Three volumes issued to date). Volume I, pp. 407-408.

Queen Jane sat at her window one day  
A-sewing a silken seam;  
She looked out at the merry green woods  
And saw the green nut tree,  
And saw the green nut tree.

She dropped her thimble at her heel  
And her needle at her toe,  
And away she ran to the merry green woods  
To gather nuts and so,  
To gather nuts and so.

She scarce had reached the merry green woods,  
Scarce had pulled nuts two or three,  
When a proud forester came striding by,  
Saying, "Fair maid, let those be."  
Saying, "Fair maid, let those be."

"Why do you pull the nuts," he said,  
"And why do you break the tree?  
And why do you come to this merry green woods  
Without the leave of me,  
Without the leave of me?"

"Oh, I will pull the nuts," she said,  
"And I will break the tree,  
And I will come to this merry green woods;  
I'll ask no leave of thee,  
I'll ask no leave of thee."

He took her by the middle so small  
And he gently laid her down,  
And when he took what he longed for,  
He raised her from the ground,  
He raised her from the ground.

"Oh, woe to you, proud forester,  
And an ill death may yours be.  
Since I'm the King's youngest daughter," she cried,  
"You will pay for wronging me,  
You will pay for wronging me."

"If you're the King's youngest daughter," he said,  
"Then I'm his eldest son;  
And woe unto this unhappy hour  
And the wrong that I have done,  
And the wrong that I have done.

"The very first time I came from sea,  
Jane, you were unborn;  
And I wish my gallant ship had sunk  
And I'd been left forlorn,  
And I'd been left forlorn.

"The very next time I came from sea  
You were on your nurse's knee;  
And the very next time I came from sea  
You were in this woods with me,  
You were in this woods with me.

"I wish I ne'er had seen your face,  
Or that you had ne'er seen mine;  
That we ne'er had met in this merry green woods  
And this wrong could be undone,  
And this wrong could be undone."

"I wish to God my babe was born  
And on its nurse's knee,  
And, as for me, I was dead and gone  
And the green grass growing over me,  
And the green grass growing over me."

Side I; Band 3. MOLLY BAWN

This haunting ballad (Laws O 36) may be the rationalized and modern telling of an ancient myth in narrative song form. Molly Bawn may have been an enchanted woman who became a swan at the setting of the sun; her unfortunate lover killed her as she changed form. Such a story is known in Gaelic mythology, and Phillips Barry and Cecil Sharp were of the opinion that the English-language ballad was, in all probability, a translation

from a Gaelic original. The theory was given strong support when Lucy Broadwood reported a Gaelic ballad with an apparently identical story from the west highlands of Scotland.

The present ballad did not appear in print until the end of the 18th century, and was published on broadsides both in Britain and America during the 19th century. It has been collected rather frequently in England, Ireland, and America, and is still found in tradition in all three places.

Sara heard the ballad sung rather frequently both by her mother and her uncle, Robert Wiggins (her mother's brother).

For additional information and versions, see:

- G. M. Laws, Jr., *American Balladry from British Broadsides* (O 36). Philadelphia, 1957. pp. 243-244.  
*Journal of the Folk-Song Society*, volume VII, part 1 (1922), pp. 17-21.  
*Bulletin of the Folksong Society of the Northeast*, No. 10 (1935), pp. 12-13.

Come all you young hunters who follow the gun,  
Beware of late shooting by the setting of the sun.  
Jimmy Randall, the squire, was a-fowling in the dark;  
He aimed at his true love and he'er missed his mark.

Being late in the evening when the shower came on,  
She ran under a green bush the shower to shun.  
With her apron around her, he took her for a swan,  
But, Oh, and alas, wasn't she Molly Bawn?

He went to his home and he threw down his gun,  
Crying, "Uncle, dear Uncle, I have shot Molly Bawn.  
I've shot that fair maiden, the pride of my life.  
It was my intention to make her my wife."

"Oh, Jimmy, dear Jimmy, to be sure it is grief,  
But you shall not be punished for the loss of Molly.  
Pray stay you at home till your trial comes on;  
You will not be banished till I lose all I own."

The night before the trial her ghost did appear,  
Saying, "Father, dear Father, Jimmy Randall shall go clear.  
With my apron around me, he took me for a swan,  
But, Oh, and alas, wasn't I Molly Bawn?"

The girls of old England were all very glad  
That the flower of Killarney was shot and killed dead.  
If we gather them together and stand them in a row,  
Molly Bawn will shine among them like a mountain of snow.

This is one of the most widely circulated of all traditional ballads, and it is well known throughout Europe and America in substantially the same form: a dialogue between son and mother ending with the son bequeesting various items to his relatives and death or hell to his poisoner. An Italian analogue, *L'Avvelanato*, was first reported in print in the early 17th century; the earliest English-language text appeared at the end of the 18th century. Child included it in his canon under the title *Lord Randal* (Child 12).

Phillips Barry was convinced that the ballad was the most widely known of all purely traditional ballads, for unlike *Sarabara Allen* (Child 84) and *Lord Thomas and Fair Annet* (Child 73), which were frequently published on broadsides and in songsters, the circulation of *Lord Randal* was entirely oral and independent of print.

In Sara's version, as in many other cases in America, the hero's title has been dropped and replaced by a common first name or a general term of endearment. Also in common with people from other parts of the country, Sara believes "It wasn't really an eel he ate, but some kind of poisonous snake which his wife fed him." The ballad was learned from her mother's singing.

For additional information and versions, see:

- F. J. Child, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*. 5 vols. Cambridge, Mass., 1882-1898. Volume I, pp. 151-166.  
T. P. Coffin, *The British Traditional Ballad in North America*. Philadelphia, revised edition 1963. pp. 36-39.  
B. H. Bronson, *The Traditional Tunes of the Child Ballads*. Princeton, N. J., 1959- (three volumes issued to date). Volume I, pp. 191-225.

"What had you for your dinner,  
My bonny bon boy?  
What had you for your dinner,  
My comfort and joy?"  
"An eel fried in butter,  
Mother; make my bed soon,  
For I'm sick unto my heart  
And I want to lie down."

"What will you leave your father,  
My bonny bon boy?  
What will you leave your father,  
My comfort and joy?"  
"My house and my lands,  
Mother; make my bed soon,  
For I'm sick unto my heart  
And I want to lie down."

"What will you leave your brother,  
My bonny bon boy?  
What will you leave your brother,  
My comfort and joy?"  
"My horse and my saddle,  
Mother; make my bed soon,  
For I'm sick unto my heart  
And I want to lie down."

"What will you leave your mother,  
My bonny bon boy?  
What will you leave your mother,  
My comfort and joy?"  
"The gates of Heaven open,  
Mother; make my bed soon,  
For I'm sick unto my heart  
And I want to lie down."

"What will you leave your wife,  
My bonny bon boy?  
What will you leave your wife,  
My comfort and joy?"  
"The gates of Hell wide open,  
Mother; make my bed soon,  
For I'm sick unto my heart  
And I want to lie down."

Side I; Band 5. EVERY ROSE GROWS MERRY IN TIME

One of the most widespread of folklore motifs is that of the impossible tasks or riddles. In this ballad, the form it takes is that of a flirtation in which one party sets a series of tasks and the other meets the challenge by setting an equally difficult series. In earlier forms of the ballad, an elf posed the impossible tasks to be performed by a maiden who retains her freedom by devising tasks of no less difficulty which the elf must first do. The refrain "Every rose grows merry in time" is probably a rationalized corruption of "Parsley, sage, rosemary, and thyme," and may have been intended as an incantation or charm against the supernatural suitor as each of the herbs mentioned is believed to have "magical" properties. F. J. Child, in whose canon the ballad is referred to by the title *The Elfin Knight* (Child 2), considered the elf an interloper from another ballad. Modern folk, consistent with their tendency to reject supernatural elements, have made the two combatants mortal enough.

The ballad is widely known throughout the British Isles and America. Sara thinks of the ballad as "a kind of nonsense song" and reports that her mother sang it constantly almost until the day she died at the age of 85.

For additional information and versions, see:

- F. J. Child, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*. 5 vols. Cambridge, Mass., 1882-1898. Volume I, pp. 6-20.  
T. P. Coffin, *The British Traditional Ballad in North America*. Philadelphia, revised edition 1963. pp. 23-24.  
B. H. Bronson, *The Traditional Tunes of the Child Ballads*. Princeton, N. J., 1959- (three volumes issued to date). Volume I, pp. 9-33.

As I was a-walking down by the seashore,  
Every rose grows merry in time,  
I met there a maiden I'd ne'er seen before,  
And I said, "Will you be a true lover of mine?  
If you are to be a true lover of mine,  
Every rose grows merry in time,  
You must make me a shirt without needle or twine,  
And then you will be a true lover of mine.

"You must wash it in an old dry well,  
Every rose grows merry in time,  
Where never a drop of water e'er fell,  
And then you will be a true lover of mine.  
You must dry it on an old buckthorn,  
Every rose grows merry in time,  
That never has blossomed since Adam was born,  
And then you will be a true lover of mine.

"You must iron it with an old flat rock,  
Every rose grows merry in time,  
One ne'er cold nor one ne'er hot,  
And then you will be a true lover of mine."  
"Now, you have asked me questions three,  
Every rose grows merry in time,  
Now, you must do the same thing for me,  
And then I will be a true lover of thine.

"You must buy me an acre of dry land,  
Every rose grows merry in time,  
Between the sea shore and the sea sand,  
And then you will be a true lover of mine.  
You must plow it with an old cow's horn.  
Every rose grows merry in time,  
And sow it all over with one grain of corn,  
And then you will be a true lover of mine.

"You must reap it with a strap of leather,  
Every rose grows merry in time,  
And bind it all up with a peacock feather,  
And then you will be a true lover of mine.  
You must stack it up against the wall,  
Every rose grows merry in time,  
And pick it all up with a cobbler's awl,  
And then you will be a true lover of mine.

"And when you have done and finished your work,  
Every rose grows merry in time,  
Then come to me and I'll make your darn shirt,  
And then I will be a true lover of thine."

Side II; Band 1. COME ALL YOU MAIDENS

Lyric folksongs (those expressing moods and feelings rather than telling stories) are frequently difficult to identify as being one or another specific song as they consist of a number of images or symbols sometimes appearing in one combination and at other times in other combinations. Usually composed of a string of folk commonplaces, they borrow from a stock of floating motifs. Sometimes, however, we find a rather stable combination of three or four of these making up a recognizable unitary song. Such is the case with this song, more commonly known as *Little Sparrow* or *Fair and Tender Ladies*. Beginning with the "Come all ye..." opening, it proceeds to compare inconstant suitors with stars on a summer's morning, tells the maiden's sad story of her mistreatment by a false lover, and then closes with her wishing she were a swallow (or sparrow) so she could fly to him and seek out the reasons for his deluding ways.

The song has been collected widely throughout the Southern Mountains and other parts of the South from Florida to Oklahoma; this, to my knowledge, is the first time it has been reported from a northern traditional singer. Sara learned it from her mother, and comments: "I don't think my mother had a particularly happy life, and she liked to sing sad songs like this."

For additional information and versions, see:

- H. M. Belden, *Ballads and Songs Collected by the Missouri Folk-lore Society*. Columbia, Mo., 1940. pp. 477-478.  
The Frank C. Brown Collection of North Carolina Folklore, Volume III. pp. 290-293.  
A. C. Morris, *Folksongs of Florida*. Gainesville, Fla., 1950. pp. 366-368.  
E. & C. O. Moore, *Ballads and Songs of the Southwest*. Norman, Okla., 1964. pp. 208-209.

Come all you maidens, I pray take warning,  
And be aware how you treat young men;  
They are like the stars in a summer morning:  
Daylight approaching, they are all gone.

They will sit and tell you fine pleasant stories,  
And vow and swear that they love you true,  
But that is all for to ruin your glory,  
And that's the love that they have for you.

Now, I myself, I once had a sweetheart,  
 He vowed he loved me as he loved his life,  
 And many's the time he did vow unto me  
 That he would make me his lawful wife.  
 But now my darling's become a rover  
 And of his company I can't obtain;  
 While he is courting some other fair maid,  
 My sighs and tears they are all in vain.

If I had wings like the morning swallow,  
 I would mount up to the air and fly;  
 I would search out this inconstant young man,  
 And where he would be I would be nigh.  
 And where he would be I would be with him,  
 And on his bosom I would fledge my wings,  
 And I would ask him why did he flatter,  
 Or tell so many deluding things.

## Side II; Band 2. THE MAIDEN'S LAMENT

This lyric lament is an interesting combination of two English, *The Sprig of Thyme* and *The Seeds of Love*, which are as frequently found combined as separate. The first four stanzas of Sara Cleveland's text are usually found in *The Sprig of Thyme*, with the remaining four found as part of *The Seeds of Love*.

When asked to explain the herb symbolism found in her song, Sara replied:

"Rue is anything bad or to be regretted; the violet blue is to feel bad or guilty; the red rose is a love token; and thyme, well, that's a girl's honor — her virginity."

Though frequently collected in England from the 17th century on, neither *The Sprig of Thyme* or *The Seeds of Love* appear to have sunk deep roots on this continent. Only occasionally have verses from them turned up in the New World. Sara's text appears to be the longest of the combined form reported from tradition in North America.

For additional information and versions, see:

- M. Dean-Smith, *A Guide to the English Folk Song Collections 1822-1952*. Liverpool, England, 1954. See p. 103 for references to "The Seeds of Love" and pp. 106-107 for references to "The Sprig of Thyme."
- F. Purslow, *Marrow Bones: English Folk Songs from the Hammond and Gardiner MSS*. London, 1965. Text on p. 84, with notes on p. 110.
- J. H. Cox, *Folk-Songs of the South*. Cambridge, Mass., 1925 (reprinted Hatboro, Penna., 1963), pp. 415-416.

V. Randolph, Ozark Folksongs. 4 volumes. Columbia, Mo., 1946-1950.  
Vol. I, pp. 357-358.

Come all you maids, where'er you be,  
Who flourish in your prime,  
Be wise, be 'ware, keep your garden clear,  
Let no man steal your thyme,  
Let no man steal your thyme.

For when your thyme is pulled and gone,  
They care no more for you;  
There is not a place your thyme goes waste,  
But it spreads all o'er with rue,  
It spreads all o'er with rue.

When I was a maid both fair and coy,  
I flourished in my prime,  
Till a proper, tall young man came and  
He stole this heart of mine,  
He stole this heart of mine.

My parents they were angry  
At my being led astray,  
But there's many a dark and cloudy morn  
Brings forth a pleasant day,  
Brings forth a pleasant day.

The gardener's son being standing by,  
Three gifts he gave to me:  
The bitter rue, the violet blue,  
And the red rose it was three,  
And the red rose it was three.

Now, I'll cut off the red rose top,  
And I'll plant on the willow tree,  
That this whole world will plainly see  
How my love slighted me,  
How my love slighted me.

The begotten virgins they must live,  
Although they live in pain,  
And the grass that is mown on yonder hill  
Through time will bloom again,  
Through time will bloom again.

There are fine boats sailing here, my dear,  
And more on the river thine;  
But for me to be held in the arms of my love,  
And for him to be held in mine,  
And for him to be held in mine.

This ballad (Laws N 2), better known as *The Paisley Officer* or *India's Burning Sands*, probably started its life as the production of some hack writer in 19th century Britain. The theme of the lady who disguises herself as a soldier (or sailor) in order to join her lover on the battlefield (or on board ship) was a popular one and it found its way on to numerous broadsides, many of which were passed into widespread oral circulation. For some unexplained reason, though published a number of times on English broadsides (W. R. Walker, Newcastle; Bebbington, Manchester), this ballad has not been reported from tradition in England, but has proven popular in the northern United States and the Canadian Maritimes.

Sara indicates that this ballad, a favorite of both her mother and herself, is perfect for singing while doing housework, such as dusting or doing the dishes.

For additional information and versions, see:

- G. M. Laws, *American Balladry from British Broad-sides* (N 2). Philadelphia, 1957. p. 202.  
W. R. Mackenzie, *Ballads and Sea Songs from Nova Scotia*. Cambridge, 1928 (reprinted Hatboro, Penna. 1963). pp. 143-146.  
E. E. Gardner & G. J. Chickering, *Ballads and Songs of Southern Michigan*. Ann Arbor, Mich., 1939 (reprinted Hatboro, Penna. 1967). pp. 222-224.  
H. H. Flanders, P. Barry, et al., *The New Green Mountain Songster: Traditional Folksongs of Vermont*. New Haven, Conn., 1939 (reprinted Hatboro, Penna. 1967). pp. 19-21.

In bright and bonny Scotland  
Where the bluebells they do grow,  
There lived a fair young maiden  
All in the valley low.  
All day long a-herding sheep  
Upon the banks of Clyde,  
And though her lot and life was low,  
She was the village pride.

Till an officer from Paisley town  
Rode out to fowl one day,  
And he wandered to that lonely spot  
Where Mary's cottage lay.  
And many's the time he came that way  
And did he visit pay,  
Until his fond heart and flattering tongue  
Soon won her heart away.

At last he came to visit her,  
And his face was dark with woe,  
Saying, "Mary, dearest Mary,  
Far from you I must go.  
Our regiment received the route  
And I to duty yield.  
I must forget these lowland glens  
For India's burning fields."

"Oh, Henry, dearest Henry,  
You know you've won my heart;  
So take me as your wedded wife,  
For from you I can't part.  
Though highland glens and lowland fields  
They are my heart's desire,  
It's as your servant I will go,  
Dressed up in man's attire."

He dressed her up in soldier's clothes,  
Cut off her golden hair.  
And who would think a soldier's coat  
Could hide a form so rare?  
He took her on to Paisley town,  
And much they wondered there  
At the beautiful and young recruit  
That looked so sweet and fair.

The ladies all admired her  
As they stood on parade,  
But little they thought a soldier's coat  
Could conceal so fair a maid.  
They soon crossed o'er the raging sea,  
And o'er the burning sand.  
No tongue could tell what Mary 'dured  
Through India's trackless land.

But when the day of trial came on  
Upon the battlefield,  
She saw the English troops give way  
And to the Indians yield.  
She saw her true love was cut down,  
A sword had pierced his side.  
But from his post he never flinched,  
But where he stood he died.

She raised him from the bloody ground,  
And in her arms did press;  
And as she strove to close his wound,  
A ball passed through her breast.  
But, as this couple loved in life,  
In death they loved the same;  
And, as their fond heart's blood ran cold,  
It mixed in one red stream.

The theme of family opposition to lovers culminating in the death of one or both sweethearts is a common one both in the Old World and the New. This particular ballad, however, is previously unreported. Local legend has it that it relates a true story. Sara learned it from her mother and her Uncle Bobby (Robert Wiggins) when the family lived in Hudson Falls, New York. The town of Fort Ann mentioned in the opening verse of the ballad was only ten miles away, and this, combined with the fact that a large number of families named Webster lived in the locality, was more than sufficient proof for the local singers that it must have been a true event.

Though I have found no related ballad with the same versification, I believe the ballad is only a localization of an Old World original. The manner of its telling is that of the 19th century British stall ballads, many of which served as models for localized American productions. Whether or not the ballad may eventually be traced to an historical event, it is at least 90 years old, as Sara reports her mother told her that "everybody" sang it when she was a girl around 1875. Sara feels that if it is a true story then it must have happened "a long time ago:"

"I don't really sympathize with the couple because he had to be really stupid to listen to his mother. Nobody in my time would have been dumb enough to listen to their mothers when it came to love and getting married. It must have been when mothers still controlled the purse strings and picked out wives for their children."

*Good people all, from far and near,  
A dreadful story you will hear;  
It is concerning a young man  
Who shot himself in West Fort Ann.*

*He was beloved by all who knew  
The life he lived from boyhood through.  
He gave both parents honor due,  
And now you'll see what love can do.*

*With a young girl he fell in love;  
His mother tried his heart to change.  
She said "My son, let me hear no more  
About this girl for she is poor.*

*"I have another girl in view  
Who'll make a better wife for you.  
I'd rather follow you to your grave  
Than know that this poor girl you'd have."*

"So, Mother, be it as you say."  
And with these words he turned away.  
Straight to his love he then did go,  
His mother's words to let her know.

Said he, "My dear, I can't marry thee;  
My mother's words have ruined me.  
For Mother she has laid her plans,  
And I'll fulfill them, if I can.

"Farewell, farewell, I now must leave.  
Farewell, my darling, but do not grieve.  
No peace on earth can I find here;  
In Heaven I'll wait for you, my dear."

Alas, alas, but all too late,  
We learn of Captain Webster's fate.  
They found him dead on his cabin floor,  
Shot through the heart and wreathed in gore.

A pistol in his hand he held,  
The dreadful story for to tell.  
Without the girl he did adore,  
His life was not worth living more.

Now, mothers all, a warning take,  
And careful be the course you take;  
Of mighty dollars was the one  
That caused the death of this young man.

Side II; Band 5. BEFORE THE DAYLIGHT IN THE MORNING

Though there are numerous complaints-in-song directed by men against the fairer sex, rarely is the complaint about her slovenly habits as protracted as in this piece. Usually the complaints are the rationalizations of bachelor types concerning their single status; the married man is less brave in protesting and when he does it is usually to complain about the manner in which he has been physically manhandled by his spouse, or to cry about his mother-in-law.

The "dirty wife" theme, best exemplified in this lyric complaint, is little known in America. The only previous report of this particular piece, and then only in jumbled and fragmentary form has been from the lower Labrador coast where MacEdward Leach collected it under the title "Dirty Nell" in 1960.

Though the song was known by both her parents, Sara reports having learned it from her father's singing. She believes he sang it to tease her mother.

For an additional text and tune, see:

M. Leach, *Folk Ballads and Songs of the Lower Labrador Coast*.  
Ottawa, 1965. p. 296.

Full eighteen pound pension I have in a year,  
Which causes my wife to drink whisky and beer.  
Her tongue like a cannon doth sound in my ear  
Before the daylight in the morning.

Her praises and beauty I mean to expose;  
She's dirty and filthy with her old snuffy nose.  
She's a shame to all women wherever she goes,  
With her clothes all in tatters a-hanging.

Not a shoe or a stocking I have to my feet;  
My bed is without either blanket or sheet.  
I'm ashamed of myself when I walk on the street.  
Pray, what do you think of my darling?

My shirt without washing it sticks to my back,  
While Nell is out sporting with Paddy or Jack,  
Or running in score for every knick-knack  
While I must pay out my last farthing.

Not a tooth in her head with which she can chew;  
God pity the poor man who's married a shrew.  
Not a shift to her back, either white, black, or blue,  
That ever was hit with the water.

Her hair without combing is matted and rough;  
Her skin is like leather, all crusted and tough.  
And I'm getting tired; I've sure had enough.  
Oh, why did I wed such a darling?

And then when her cronies they come in for tay,  
While I in the corner have nothing to say,  
Or out in the garden a-digging away,  
While Nell in her cups is a-storming.

When in for the leavings I happen to pop,  
While Nell and her gossips are gone to the shop,  
Back-biting their neighbors and swallowing their drops,  
And I must pay out my last farthing.

To finish my ditty, I fervently pray,  
Before she can ever drink whisky or tay,  
That God or the devil will whip her away  
Before the daylight in the morning.