

THE FOLK SONGS OF BRITAIN

COLLECTED AND EDITED BY

PETER KENNEDY AND ALAN LOMAX

*A
Soldier's
Life for Me*

VOLUME EIGHT



CAEDMON RECORDS, INC.
NEW YORK

1. *A reekie hoose an' a running-oot pan,
Three little bairns an' a wife to ban,
Three beats o' the drum, it'll rid ye o' them a' —
So, list, bonny laddie, and come awa'*

CHORUS:

*I'm over the mountain, over the Main,
Through Gibraltar, France and Spain;
Victoria commanded by land an' sea —
O, list, bonny laddie, and come wi' me.*

2. *If ye happen for to ha'e a sweethairt wi' bairn,
You may weel rid your han' o' that old spun-yarn,
You needna pay a farthin' accordin' unto la',
But list, bonny laddie, and run awa'.*

CHORUS:

3. *O, plooman laddie, the danger you're in,
For your owsn may care an your owsn may rin,
An' the farmer'll grudge to pay your penny fee —
So list, bonny laddie, and come wi' me.*

CHORUS:

2. SWANSEA BARRACKS

Phil Tanner, Llangennith, Glamorgan, S. Wales.

BBC Sound Archive, May, 1949.

The singer is here more interesting than the song. Phil Tanner, without whose presence no party or wedding in his part of Wales would have been complete, was a great block of a man with a huge leonine head atop a chest like a barrel. He and Burl Ives might have been members of the same family so alike are they in physique, temperament and style. He possessed a ringing Welsh tenor, a marvelous use of embellishment, a dramatic sense of shifting rhythm, a command of all the modes, and, best of all, a crystalline delivery. In this early recording on Victor, made at the suggestion of Percy Grainger, we hear perhaps the finest singing style of anyone found in England. Here Tanner sings a come-all-ye which bears many traces of Irish composition. Indeed, we found a parody of the song in the Sam Henry collection, (*Songs of the People*, no. 612), coming from County Antrim:

*It was on the first of January last, I was going to Butler's Fair,
I spied this pretty fair maid, she was combing down her hair,
And as I gazed upon her, my heart with joy did fill,
She's the blooming Rose of Antrim, the flower of Corby Mill.*

*I've travelled this country o'er and o'er and part of Scotland, too,
I've travelled England far and near, believe me, friends, it's true,
I've travelled Ireland o'er and o'er, crossed many a hollow and hill,
But an equal yet I ne'er could get, the Flower of Corby Mill.*

Swansea Barracks



*'Twas down by Swansea Barracks I alone one morning strayed,
A-viewing of the soldiers, o I saw a pretty maid,
Her hair it was as black as jet in ringlets hanging down,
She was a blooming rose of South Wales and a lass of Swansea Town.*

CHORUS OMITTED

2. I said: "My pretty fair maid, what make you wander here?"
She said: "Kind sir, I'm watching for my bonny soldier dear;
Eight years ago he left me, when to Bermuda he was bound,
And he vowed he would prove faithful to the lass of Swansea Town."

CHORUS:

Her hair it was as black as jet, in ringlets hanging down —
Search the universe all over and her equal can't be found,
She was a blooming rose of South Wales and a lass of Swansea Town."

3. I said: "My pretty fair maid, sad news I have to tell;
Your lover was my comrade and in the battle fell;
A cannon-ball made him to fall and gave him his death-wound
And he begged me to protect the blooming lass of Swansea Town."

CHORUS OMITTED

4. Then on the ground in agonies, this pretty maid did fall
Saying: "I never shall rest, till in my breast there strikes a cannon-ball,
Eight years ago, he left me, when to Bermuda he was bound,
And he vowed he would prove faithful to the lass of Swansea Town."

CHORUS

3. THE DYING SOLDIER

Mary Doran, Waterford, Eire.

BBC Sound Archive, (Peter Kennedy and Sean O'Boyle), August, 1952.

Mary Doran, a typicalinker balladeer, performs a brief lyrical fragment of the widely known ballad, "The Unfortunate Rake." In America the cause of the protagonist's death is attributed, not to syphilis, but to some incident of violence; however most British versions retain the older theme and frequently portray an unfortunate girl in the last stages of the disease, as in this Hampshire variant:

*As I was a-walking down by the seaside,
As I was a-walking there one day,
O who should I spy but my own dearest Mary
Wrapped up in some flannel some hot summer's day.*

*"O mother, o mother, come sit you down by me,
Come sit you down by me and pity my case;
It's of a young officer I was lately deserted,
See how he has brought me to shame and disgrace."*

*"O daughter, o daughter, why didn't you tell me?
Why did you not tell me we'd took it in time?
"It's young pill o cosha, the pill o' white margery,
But now I'm a young girl cut down in my prime."*

*"O doctor, o doctor, come wash up your bottles,
Come wash up your bottles and wipe them quite dry,
My bones they are aching, and my poor heart's a-breaking
And I in a deep solemn fashion must die."*

James Reeves points out that *cosha* is probably colocynt, a drug once extensively used for feminine ailments, and that *white margery* means mercury, an old remedy for syphilis. In Great Britain, the ballad victim is often a sailor who breathes his last outside the Royal Albion (the hospital at Bath), but, in America, the St. James Hospital (Dublin) is most frequently the scene of the dying man's last request. Sharpe reports from Virginia a ballad that begins, "I went down by St. James Hospital one morning. . . ." and the famous New Orleans' jazz song commences "I went down by St. James Infirmary, my baby there she lay." On a recent LP issued by Folkways under the title of "The Unfortunate Rake," Kenneth Goldstein has assembled a multitude of versions of the ballad running all the way from the famous cowboy ballad, "The Streets of Laredo," to ballads of dying lumberjacks, miners, union organizers, and even college students.

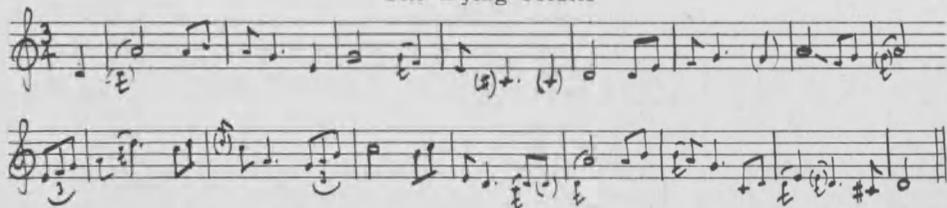
Ms. Collection at Cecil Sharpe House, collected by George Gardiner in 1906.

Alan Lomax, *Folk Songs of North America*, 384-5, Doubleday, 1960.

Index to songs in *The Journal of the English Folk Song and Dance Society*. (St. James Infirmary)

H. M. Beldin, *Ballads and Songs, Missouri*, (392) Univ. of Mo. Press, Columbia, Mo., 1940.

The Dying Soldier



1. *When I was in horse-back, wasn't I pretty?
When I was in horse-back, wasn't I gay?
O, but wasn't I pretty, when I enter Cork City
When I met with me downfall on the 14th of May?*
2. *Six jolly soldiers to carry my coffin
Six jolly soldiers to march by my side
And let each jolly soldier take a bunch of red roses
And them for to smell them as we go along*
3. *Play the pipes only, play the drum slowly
Play up the dead march as we go along
Will you bring me to Tipperary, and l'ave me down easy
I am the young soldier that never did wrong*

4. WILLIE O'REILLY

Robert Cinnamond, Belfast, N. Ireland.

recorded by Sean O'Boyle, August, 1955.

This is one of the many songs upon the *aísling* theme — the encounter between a young man and a woman of other-worldly beauty in a romantic, rustic setting. Here, two other common song themes complicated the lyrical vision: first, the story of the testing of a faithful girl by her unrecognized soldier-lover; second, the subtheme of Waterloo and the Napoleonic wars, the focus of so many experiences of young men of Ireland in the early 1800's. The poverty-stricken Irish countryside was then happy hunting ground for the recruiting sergeant; but, although Irish lads made fine fighting men, they marched against Napoleon with mixed feelings. To the poor and oppressed people of Ireland and Europe, Napoleon at first appeared to be the great liberator. The present song is only a fragment. Peter Kennedy provides missing elements from a text taken down from Jim O'Neill in County Armagh:

*As I went a-walking one morning in tune
To view the fair fields and the meadows in bloom,
I spied a pretty fair maid, she appeared like a queen
With her costly fine robes and her mantle so green,*

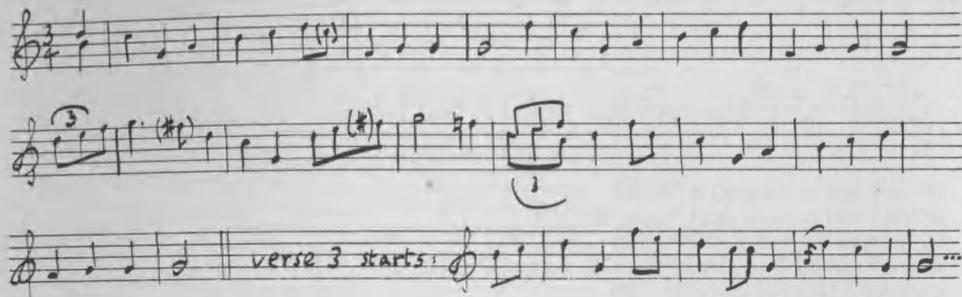
*Said I: "My pretty fair maid, won't you come with me?
We'll both join in wedlock and married we'll be.
I will dress you in rich attires, you'll appear like a queen
With your costly fine robes and your mantle so green."*

*Said she: "Now, my young man, I must be excused,
For I'll wed with no man so you must be refused
To the greenwoods I'll wander to shun all men's views
For the boy I loved dearly lies in famed Waterloo."*

*"Well, since you will not marry me, won't you tell your loves name?
 And as I was in that battle I might know the same."
 "Draw near to my garment, for it's there can be seen
 His name is embroidered on my mantle of green."*

Sam Henry's collection. *Songs of the People*, No. 76.
 Laws, p. 222.

Willie O'Reilly



1. *Young Willie O'Reilly, he appeared in my view,
 He was my chief comrade in famed Waterloo;
 If you look on his shoulder, it is there you'll behold
 His name and his surname in letters of gold*
2. *He fought for three days to the fourth afternoon,
 He received his death summons on the 18th of June,
 And when he was dying, I heard the last cry,
 "Had you been here, lovely Nancy, contented I'd die."*
3. *"O it's Nancy, lovely Nancy, it was me won your heart
 In your father's garden that day we did part."
 Through the green woods I'll wander and I'll show them your view
 Since the lad I love dearly died in famed Waterloo*

5. THE BANKS OF THE NILE

Sidney Richards, Curry Rivel, Somerset, England.
 recorded by Peter Kennedy.

Again we have the scene of the lovers' parting as the young man leaves to fight a colonial war in Egypt. The girl proposes that she dress in soldier's clothes and follow her sweetheart but he refuses in stilted language quite in contrast to the gayer tone of the 18th century variants: "your delicate constitution will not withstand the unwholesome soil/Nor the sun declinment on the banks of the Nile."

In an Irish version of the song there is a William's reply to Nancy's verse 4 followed by Nancy's curse on the war.

*"O Nancy, lovely Nancy, that's a thing that can't be so,
 Our Colonel he gave orders that no women there can go,
 We must forsake our old sweethearts, likewise our native soil,
 And fight the blacks and negroes on the Banks of the Nile."*

*"My curse attend the war and the hour that it began,
 For it has robbed our counterie of many a gallant man,
 It took from us our old sweethearts, protectors of our soil,
 And their blood does steep the grass that's deep on the Banks of the River Nile."*

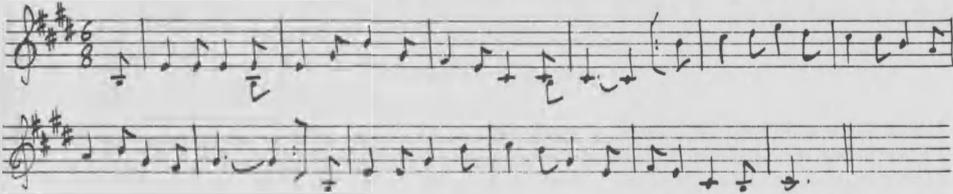
In a Scots version of the song, which still mentions Portsmouth in the first verse, there is a reference to Sir Ralph Abercrombie who commanded the British expedition to Egypt in 1801. Although the French were defeated, Abercrombie, like General Wolfe at Quebec, was wounded at the very moment of victory.

*Let a hundred days be darkened and let maidens give a sigh
It would melt the very elements to hear the wounded cry,
Let a hundred days be brightened and let maidens give a smile,
But remember Abercrombie on the Banks of the Nile."*

John Ord: *Bothy Songs and Ballads* (Gardner, Paisley 1930)

Gavin Greig: *Folk Songs of the North-East* (Buchan Observer, Peterhead 1909) XXV & XXVII.
Laws, 206.

The Banks of The Nile



1. "Farwell, my dearest Nancy, farewell, I must away,
I hear the drums a-beating and no longer I can stay,
For we're orders out of Portsmouth Town and for many a long mile
For to fight the blacks and heathens on the banks of the Nile.
2. "I'll cut off my curly locks and along with you I'll go,
I'll dress meself in velveteen and go and see Egypt, too,
I'll fight and bear thy banners well, kind fortune upon thee smile,
And we'll comfort one another on the banks of the Nile.
3. "O your waist it is too slender, love, and your waist it is too small,
I'm afraid that you won't answer me, if I should on you call,
Your delicate constitution will not stand the unwholesome soil (sile),
Nor the dark, nor the sun definement on the banks of the Nile."
4. "O Willie, dearest, William, don't leave me here to mourn,
You'll make me curse and rue the day for whenever I'd been born,
For the parting of my own true love and the parting of me life—
Now stay at home, dear William, and I will be thee wife.
5. "O now the war is over and back I'll then return
Until my wife and family I'll leave behind to mourn
We'll call them in around, me boys, and there's an end of toil,
And no more we'll go a-roving on the banks of the Nile."

6. THE BONNET O' BLUE

Jean Matthew, Longside, Aberdeenshire, Scotland.
BBC Sound Archive (Seamus Ennis), July, 1952.

This romantic and patriotic tale of a young girl's love for a soldier has been published in Scots, Irish, and English collections — the earliest printing being Logan's *Peddlers Pack*, 1869. The opening line in a majority of the versions seems to locate the song in Yorkshire and this holds true, even for the present version, although, from its text, the song would appear to be of Scottish origin.

Ford's *Vagabond Songs*, Gardner, Paisley, 1904.

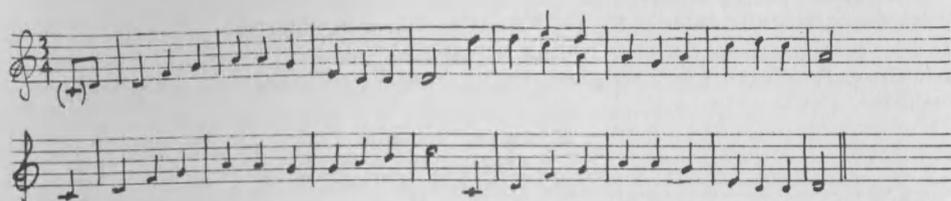
Frank Kidson, *Traditional Tunes*, Oxford, 1891, "The Bonny Scotch Lad."

Halliwell, *Yorkshire Anthology*, 1851.

Ingliden, *Ballads and Songs of Yorkshire*, 1860.

Sam Henry Collection, No. 644.

The Bonnet O' Blue



1. *It was down in Woolwich, a town in Yorkshire,
I lived at my ease and was free from all care,
I lived in great splendour, had sweethearts anew,
Till struck with a lad in his bonnet o' blue.*
2. *His cheeks were like roses, his eyes were like sloes,
He's handsome and proper where'er that he goes,
Likewise he's good-natured and comely to view,
Right well he becomes his fine bonnet o' blue.*
3. *'Twas a regiment of soldiers, as now you shall know,
From Scotland to Queenstown abroad for to go,
But there's one amongst them I wish I'd ne'er know,
He's a fine Scottish lad wi' his bonnet o' blue.*
4. (OMITTED) *'Twas early next morning I rose out of bed,
I called on Sally, she's my dressing maid,
"Come dress me as quick, as your twa hands can do,
And I'll go and see the lad wi' his bonnet o' blue."*
5. (OMITTED) *So quickly she dressed me, so quickly I came
To mingle with them and to hear my love's name —
Charlie Stewart that they ca'd him, I felt it was true,
A prince o' that name wore a bonnet o' blue.*
6. *When I came to the regiment, it was on parade,
I stood with great pleasure to hear what was said;
Charlie Stewart that they ca'd him I felt it was true,
He's a fine Scottish lad wi' his bonnet o' blue*
7. *My love he marched by wi' his gun in his hand,
I strove to speak to him, but he would nae stand,
I strove to speak to him, but away quick he flew,
Away wi' my hairt an' that bonnet o' blue.*
8. (OMITTED) *I said: "Wait a wee, laddie, an' I'll buy your discharge,
Free you frae the regiment and set you at large,
If you will be promised to be constant and true
An' neer put a stain on your bonnet o' blue.*
9. (OMITTED) *He says: "My wee lassie, you'll buy my discharge,
Free me frae the regiment and set me at large,
But a' your kind of offers I'm oblig-ed to you,
But I'll ne'er put a stain on my bonnet o' blue.*
10. *"I've a lass o' my ain in my ain counterie
And I'll never forsake her for her poverty,
To the lass that I lo'e I will always prove true,
But ne'er put a stain on my bonnet o' blue.*
11. *"I'll send for a limner from London to Hull
And have my love's portrait taken out in the fu',
And in my bed-chamber each morning I'll view
That fine Scottish lad wi' his bonnet o' blue."*

7. THE RECRUITING SONG

William Rew, Sidbury, Devon, England.
recorded by Peter Kennedy, October, 1954.

The raw, grating voice of William Rew of Devon suits this brashly comic account of army life as seen by an Irish recruit. The mention of Vinegar Hill would seem to attach this version of the song to the period of the Irish rising in 1798, when Wexford was defeated at Vinegar Hill near Enniscorthy on the 21st day of June. We have omitted the following four excellent stanzas, known to Mr. Rew, from the present recording:

5. *The first thing they gave me it was a red coat
And a wide strap of leather to tie round my throat.
They gave me a queer thing I asked what was that?
They told me it was a cockage for my hat.*
6. *The next thing they gave me, they called it a gun,
With powder and shot and a place for my thumb,
My gun, she spit fire, and she made a great smoke,
She gave my poor shoulder a devil a stroke.*
7. *The next place they send me was down to the sea
On board of a ship that was bound for the Crim-ee,
Three sticks in the middle all covered with sheet
And she walked through the water without any feet.*
8. *When at Balaklava we landed quite sound
Both cold wet and hungry we lay on the ground,
Next morning for action the bugle did call
And we got a hot breakfast of powder and ball.*

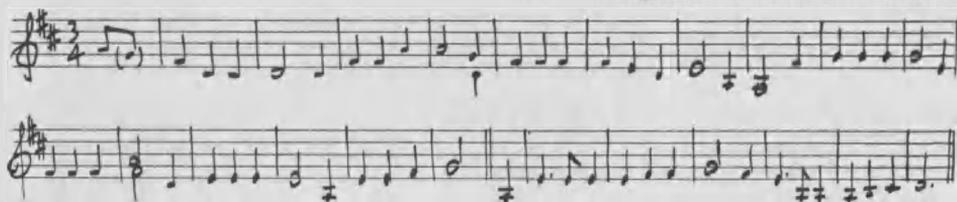
O. Lochlainn, *Irish Street Ballads*, "The Kerry Recruit", Dublin, 1939.

Lomax, *Our Singing Country*, Macmillan, New York 1941.

Sharp, *Folk Songs from the S, Appalachians*, Oxford Univ. Press, London, 1932.

Laws, 132.

The Recruiting Song



1. *O it's about 9 years ago I went digging of the land
With my brogues on my feet and my spade in me hand,
When I thought it a pity such a fine youth as I
Should be here staying at home digging turf for the fire,
Singing. Fal-the-dal-laddy-i-o (2).*
2. *So I off with my brogues and shook hands with me spade
And went to the Fair like a daring young blade,
A sergeant came by, he asked me to list
"Pray, sergeant," said I, "Would you lay me your fist?"*
3. *For he gave me a shilling and says he's got no more,
But when I went to the quarters I should have a score,
"Quarters," said I, "Pray, Sergeant, good-bye,
I never saw such quarters, no, not I."*
4. *So the next day to exercise to drill I was sent
There by my soul, I was made to repent, —
"Shoulder arms, eyes right, wheel around, stand at ease —
(Line missing)*

9. *For I been in many wars and had very good luck,
At Vinegar Hill and at Balsimarch,
Where the fire, it was so thick, and the shots, they were so hot,
That I couldn't fire my gun for fear of being shot.*
10. *OMITTED For it's now the war is over and I am home again,
You may all say what you like but I'll say it again,
I've seen 9 years of glory but I'm glad it was not 10,
And I am home digging murphies again.*

8. WILLIAM TAYLOR

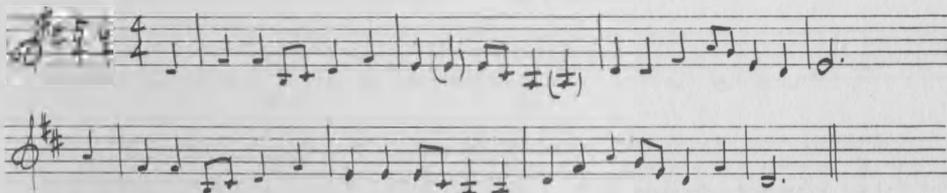
Harold Covill, March, Cambridgeshire, England.
recorded by Peter Kennedy, February, 1962.

This is the most vigorous form of the story about the girl who follows her soldier-lover to the wars. When she discovers that she has been betrayed, her gallant new friend, the captain, gives her a pistol with which she summarily executes her faithless lover. The song has been found commonly in the New World and in all parts of Great Britain. It was a popular item for the broadside and song book press, appearing under the imprint of Catnach. In one Isle of Man variant, a happy ending has been added:

*So the captain he forgave her
For all the bravery she had done;
Now she is the captain's lady
And lives on the Isle of man.*

- Percy Grainger, *Folk Song Journal*, No. 12, 1908.
Universal Songster, Vol. 1, p. 69, 1825.
Dean Arristie, *Traditional Ballad Airs*.
Gavin Greig, *Folk Songs of the North East*, No. 101.
Lucy Broadwood, in *Petrie Collection* 745.
Laws, p. 208.

William Taylor



1. *Bold William Taylor, he's enlisted
And for a soldier he has gone,
He's gone and left his own dear Susan
All for to fret and all for to mourn.*
2. *Now Susan's parents, they did prevent it,
Which filled her heart with grief and woe,
She dressed herself up in man-like uniform
And for a soldier she did go.*
3. *Now on the next day morning she was exercising,
Exercising among with the rest,
With her silver chains hanging down her waistcoat,
Which did betray her lily-white breast.*
4. *OMITTED Now the next day morning she was exercising
The captain asked her how came she there?
"O sire, I'm searching for one of your soldiers
And one of them I love so dear."*
5. *"But if you rise early on the next day morning,
A little before the break of day,
There you will see bold William Taylor,
A-marching with his lady gay."*

6. Now she rose early on the next day morning,
Always after the break of day,
And there she saw her bold William Taylor,
A-marching with his lady gay.
7. She quickly ordered a brace of pistols
And they were brought at her command,
And there she shot bold William Taylor,
Likewise his bride on his left arm.

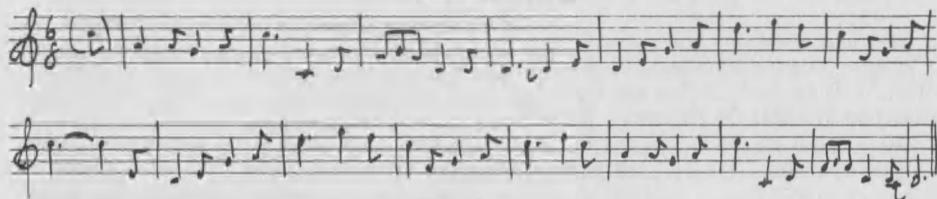
9. JOHNNY HARTE

Mrs. Maguire, Belfast, N. Ireland.
recorded by Sean O'Boyle.

Another popular ballad probably of Irish origin, this ballad, like so many 19th century come—all-ye's, is the story of a common man's rise in fortune. His honesty and forthrightness bring him to the notice of some upper-class person, who give him a position and helps him to make a good marriage. This was a favorite theme of the 18th and 19th century ballad press, of Charles Dickens (in *David Copperfield*, *Great Expectations*, etc.) as well as many other 19th century novelists.

Colm O, Lochlainn, *Irish Street Ballads*, No. 88, p. 174, Three Candles Press, Dublin, 1939.
Sam Henry's Collection, No. 106.

Johnny Harte



1. It's of a young farmer's daughter who lived in the town of Ross,
She courted a private soldier, whose name was Johnny Harte,
For six long months she courted him, her parents knew it not,
That he was her only darling dressed up in his highland plaid.
2. Said the mother to the daughter, "I'll go distracted mad,
If you marry that private soldier dressed in his ugly plaid,
To marry a private soldier, you know you are undone,
Besides your fortune it is great, so wed some farmer's son."
3. OMITTED "O mother, dear, don't slight my love nor do not run him down,
For many a private soldier has rose to high renown,
And many's the farmer's daughter has followed the fife and drum
And I would not part my soldier lad for any squires son."
4. Early the next morning her mother went to Ross
Unto the Colonel's quarters in hopes to find redress,
She met the Colonel in the Square, to him a purse she dropped,
Saying, I want your honour in private, sir, I have a broken heart,"
5. OMITTED The Colonel, being a noble man, he then began to smile
And kindly he consented with her to step aside,
Saying, "Be quick, my decent woman, for to hear you I'm inclined,
And if I consider your claim is fair I'll have you justified."
6. OMITTED "I have one only daughter, she is a foolish lass,
She's courted by one of your privates whose name is Johnny Harte;
To marry a private soldier is below my child's degree,
If your honour will send him out of Ross, my blessing I'll give to thee."
7. The bugle sounded for parade, young Harte, he did appear,
The Colonel stepped up to him, all in the Barrack Square,
Saying, "If you court this woman's daughter and I to find it out,
I will send you on detachment till the regiment gets the rout."

8. "It's hard enough," young Harte replied, "For courting an Irish lass,
To send me on detachment and leave my love in Ross;
I love this woman's daughter and for me she is inclined,
I would court your honour's daughter, if I could but gain her mind."
9. "Well done, my gallant soldier lad, I like your courage well
And you shall be promoted for those words you boldly tell,
I'll put epaulets on your shoulders and you will be a match
For the richest farmer's daughter that lives in the town of Ross."
10. OMITTED Now this couple married, the Colonel gave consent,
The parents paid her fortune down, it's now they are content,
Young Harte became an officer and his dear his Captain's pride,
And he's one of the richest farmers that lives in the Slaney Side.

10. THE SOLDIER AND THE SAILOR

Arthur Lenox, Aberdeen, Scotland.
recorded by Alan Lomax, July, 1951.

Cecil Sharp, who collected two versions of this song in Somerset, believed it to be a modern adaptation of another ballad, "The Mare and the Foal" which he considered an older song.

*The old clerk in this parish I know very well,
He often do toll the eight o'clock bell
He went to the alehouse and got full pot,
And forgot the old church for to lock-a-lock-lock.*

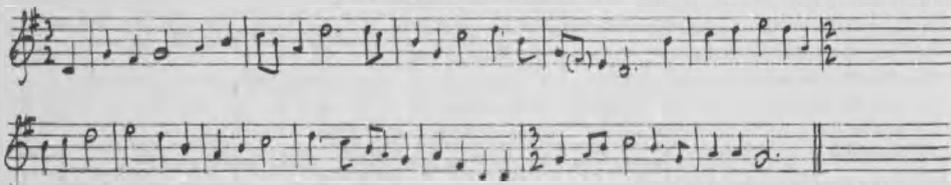
*A mare and a foal they ran in great speed,
The mare from the Bible began for to read,
"Stay," said the foal, "Before you begin
Whatever you pray for I'll answer Amen."*

Then follow verses similar to those of "The Soldier and the Sailor" in which they pray for and condemn millers, bakers, tailors, publicans and butchers.

Another song with a similar "Amen" at the end of each verse is "The Parson and the Clerk" which we have recorded from the Gower folk-singer, Phil Tanner.

Versions of "The Soldier and the Sailor" have been collected in England, Ireland and Scotland, particularly from soliders and students. We give below some of the additional verses sung:

The Soldier and The Sailor



*A sodger and a sailor went walking one day,
Said the sodger to the sailor, "Let's kneel down and pray—*

1. *Now the first thing we'll pray for, we'll pray for some dough;
O Lord, if we had some, how we'd make it go,
If we only had one quid, may we also have ten,
We'll burst the Bank o' England; said the sodger, Amen!"*

CHORUS: *Now Brigadier-Generals, and Corporals, too,
Wi' your hands in your pouches, and nothing to do,
Wi' your hands in your pouches, and nothing to do,
May the Lord look sideways on the blighters, Amen!*

2. *"Now the next thing we'll pray for, we'll pray for some beer;
O Lord, if we had some, it would make us feel queer,
If we only had one pint, may we also have ten,
We'll burst the blinking Brewery, said the sailor, Amen!"*

(CHORUS OMITTED)

3. "Now the next thing we'll pray for, we'll pray for some stuff;
O Lord, if we had some, it wouldn't be enough,
If we only had one piece may we also have ten,
We'll start a Turkish Harem, said the sodger: Amen!"

CHORUS

Here we append extra verses to this widely popular British soldiers' song:

*A soldier and a sailor went walking one day
Said the soldier to the sailor, "Let's kneel down and pray —
And if we have one prayer, may we also have ten."
"May we have a ruddy sermon," said the sailor, "Amen!"*

An alternative to "ruddy sermon" is "bloody litany"!

*"Now the next thing we'll pray for, we'll pray for some beef;
That we may have plenty and eat with relief,
And where we have one pound, may we also have ten,
May we never go hungry, said the sailor, Amen!"*

*"Now the next thing we'll pray for, we'll pray for less rent;
That the landlord and baliffs all down there be sent,
And where they get one hell, may they also get ten,
May the devil double rubble trouble damn them, said the sailor, Amen!"*

*Now the last thing we'll pray for, we'll pray for the Queen;
The finest young lady that's ever been seen,
(And may she live happy and long may she reign).
And where she gets one man, may she also get ten,
May she have a ruddy regiment, said the sailor, Amen!"*

In the Royal Navy they sing a verse: —

*"Now the next thing we'll pray for, we'll pray for a boat;
And we don't care a damn, boys, she'll sink or she'll float,
And where we get one boat, may we also get ten,
May we have a ruddy Navy, said the sailor, Amen!"*

Mrs. Brigid Tunney sang the following Irish verses: —

*And the next thing we'll pray for, we'll pray for John Dillon
That he may make a good speech, whenever he is willing,
And when he makes one speech, that he may make ten,
May he never make a bad speech, said the sailor, Amen!"*

*And the next thing we'll pray for, we'll pray for Parnell;
(And the rest of the verse similar to "Rent" verse above)*

11. BOLD GENERAL WOLFE

Bob Scarce, Blaxhall, Suffolk, England.

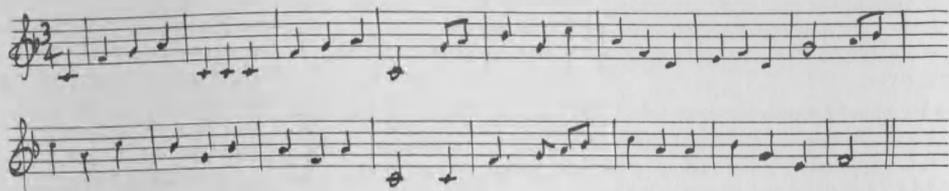
recorded by Alan Lomax and Peter Kennedy, October, 1953.

It is seldom that ballad-makers agree with historians in choosing to honor men who turn the tide of history. An exception is General Wolfe, who led the English forces at the Battle of Quebec and died on the field as his aide d' camp brought him the news of an English victory. Quebec was one of the decisive battles of history. Not only did it gain all of Canada for the British, but it led directly to the defeat of the French in India. The ballad of General Wolfe, who was a handsome and romantic young fellow, has persisted in the memories of old-timers on both sides of the Atlantic; it has been found all through American North East, and here gimlet-faced old Bob Scarce rips into it with the Blaxhall Pub chorus in full cry at his heels.

A. Lomax, *Folk Songs of North America*, p. 42, New York, 1960.

W. R. Mackenzie, *Ballads and Sea Songs from Nova Scotia*, p. 198, Harvard Univ. Press, 1928.

Bold General Wolfe



Chairman: Order, please, ladies and gentlemen. I have much pleasure in calling on my friend, Mr. Bob Scarce, to oblige with a small ditty.

1. *Now, General Wolfe unto his men did say,
"Come, come, my lads, and you'll follow me
To yonder mountains, they look so high,
It's all for your honour (2),
All for your Queen (King) and your counterie,*

*CHORUS (All together, ladies and gentlemen)
To yonder mountains . . .*

2. *"Don't you see the French on yonder hill so high,
While us poor lads in the valleys lay,
You should see them fall like the dew against the sun,
Through smoke and fire (2),
They are falling from our British guns."*
3. *Now the first volley that they gave to us,
That wounded our General in his left breast,
Yonder he sit but he could not stand,
Saying: "Fight you on so boldly (2),
While I have got life, I will give command."*

CHORUS OMITTED

4. *Where are my treasures which they are in gold?
Take them and part them till my blood run cold
Take them and part them, "General Wolfe did say,
"You lads of honour (2),
That 'ave gave the French such a gall-i-ant play.*
5. *(OMITTED) "Now to Old England, if you should return,
You can tell my friends that I am dead and gone;
You can tell my poor mother so tenderly
Not to weep for me (2),
For I died a death as I wished to share.*
6. *(OMITTED) For it's sixteen years since we first began,
That is to fight for a list of the Queen,
Let every commander do as they 'ave done before.
Be a soldier's friend, my boys (2),
And the boys they will fight, fight for evermore."*

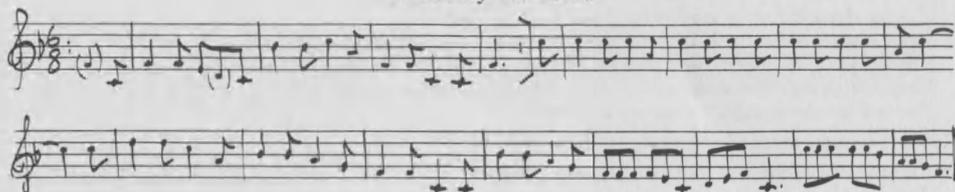
SIDE TWO

1. MUDDLEY BARRACKS

Jumbo Brightwell, Leiston, Suffolk, England.
recorded by Peter Kennedy, July, 1959.

The raw vitality and vulgarity of this recruiting ballad has kept it out of print up to this time, but its obvious popularity is warranted by the numerous times it has turned up in the manuscripts of British collectors. There is no question that this piece belongs to the class of broadside ballads, yet it was not hacked out according to pattern by a starving city poet. On the contrary, it seems to have been rhymed together "under the influence," in some rural pub, its composer or composers stuffing it as full of rich dialect and pungent imagery as a country pudding.

Muddley Barracks



1. *Now when first I came to Turpiton Town,
Why they called me a funny I-Roger;
They axed me over and over again,
If I would go for a soldier,
Why, they axed o'er and o'er again,
If I would collar a shiner,
And when I ask em what mob he was in,
He told me the Muddley Minor.
With your fol-the-lol go fol-the-lol day,
Fol-the-lol-liddle-go laddy-go-wop.*
2. *Now they marched me to Muddley Barracks,
By Christ, they wor' a size, sir,
They stoved me under a damn great shed,
The size of a fisherman's lugger,
They stood me under a damn great stick
To measure my 'eight and size, sir,
Then they cut my 'air so close to my 'ead,
I could hardly wink my eye, sir.*
3. *Now they marched me out for drill next day
To do my duty manual;
By Christ, and worn't I bugged about
By Corporal Smith Emanuel,
It was firsts "Eyes left, then: Eyes Right
Blast it! Hold up your head, sir!"
I durst not say it's never a word
Till I stopped in "The Digger" instead, sir.*
4. *OMITTED Now they marched me off from drill that day
I was hungry as a hound, sir.
But I dursn't touch a piece of grub
Till the old officer been round, sir;
They served it up in battered pans,
Yes, everyone had a platter,
Then they dished us up a bloody great bun
And under it two fat taters.*
5. *Now I wish that I was home again,
A-following' the bloody old plough, sir,
Or I wish that I was home again,
Yes, feeding on taters and mutton,
With a rusty old knife and a thumping great bun,
And, by Christ, wouldnt I cut 'em!*

2. HANDSOME POLLY, O

Thomas Moran, Mohill, County Leitrim, Eire.
BBC Sound Archive (Seamus Ennis), December, 1954.

This tale of the love-lorn captain still enjoys widespread popularity in the English-speaking world. American folkkniks found it in Cecil Sharpe's *English Folk Song of the S. Appalachians* under the title of "Pretty Katie-o" and made it known to the entire American college audience. In Scotland, it is generally sung as "The Bonnie Lass of Fyvie" to the air "Kelvin Grove." Thomas Moore used the tune to set the words to his "Evelyn's Bower." Ford prints an interesting version called "Bonnie Barbara-o" with an expanded middle part:

O come down the stair, bonnie Barbara-o, (2)
 O come down the stair, and comb back your yellow hair,
 Take your last farewell O' your mammie-o.
 How can I come down the stair, bonnie Sandy-o? (2)
 How can I come down the stair, when I'm locked up in a room
 And a deep draw-well below my window-o.

What would your mammie think, bonnie Barbara-o, (2)

What would your mammie think to hear the guineas clink,
 And the oboes playing on before you-o.

Little would my mammie think, bonny Sandy-o, (2)

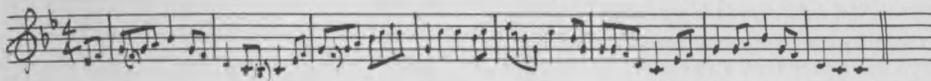
Little would my mammie think, Though she heard the guineas clink,
 If her daughter was following a sodger-o.

Ford, *Vagabond Songs*, Gardner, Paisley, 1904.

Gavin Greig, *Folk Song of the North-East*, Buchan Observer Peterhead, 1909.

Cecil Sharp, *English Folk Songs from the S. Appalachians*, Oxford Univ. Press, London, 1932.

Handsome Polly, O



1. O a regiment of soldiers came to Mohill o, (2)
 And the Captain on parade fell in love with a lady's maid
 And, by name, she was called Handsome Polly o,

CHORUS

And, by name, she was called: Handsome Polly o,
 And the Captain on parade fell in love with a lady's maid
 And, by name, she was called: Handsome Polly o.

2. "Will you enlist in the army, Handsome Polly o,
 Where you'll have a horse to ride and a rifle by your side,
 And a whole band of music out before you o."
3. "Didn't I give you your answer long, long ago? (2)
 That I ne'er intend to roam when to any foreign shore
 Or to marry a poor private in the Army o."
4. O when he'd come in presence of his Captain o, (2)
 Well, he'd make a private stand with his cap and gun in hand
 O when he'd come in presence of his Captain o.
5. O the regiment got the rout into Ivy o, (2)
 And the Captain he fell sick and he died all in a week
 It was all for the love of Handsome Polly o.
6. And the soldiers went to mourn for their Captain o, (2)
 When Polly didn't do, he could have some other view
 There was far better girls out in Ivy o.

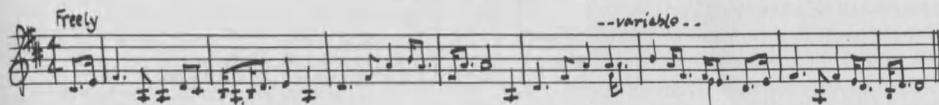
3. THE DEADLY WARS

Jeannie Robertson, Aberdeen, Scotland.

recorded by Alan Lomax, November, 1953.

This lyrical protest against the horror of wars and the degrading life of the soldier has no precise parallel or precedent elsewhere in our collections. Perhaps it is one more case of the remarkable gift of the Scots singers who often depart from stereotypes and look at life freshly, without pretense and with a full heart, as did Burns. The song is beautifully performed by the queen of all traveler singers, Jeannie Robertson.

The Deadly Wars



1. For the deadly wars they are blast and blown
And gentle peace returning,
It left many's a sweet babe fatherless
And many a widow mournin'.
2. I left the line and the tainted field,
Where I'm no lang a lodger,
A humble knapsack, it's a' my will,
I'm a poor but honest sodger.
3. For a lea-light heart was in my breast,
My hands are stained wi' plunder,
And a' for Scottie hame again,
I Cherry Town did wander.
4. OMITTED I thought upon the Banks of Kyle,
I thought my Nancy,
I thought upon the bewitching smile,
That had caught my youthful fancy.

4. McCaffery

Peter Reilly, Cullyhanna, County Armagh, N. Ireland.
recorded by Peter Kennedy and Sean O'Boyle, July, 1952.

The atmosphere of the song and the manner of its delivery reminds one somehow of the muddy horror of *Wozzeck*. According to Ewan McCall and others, it was banned on all British army posts, so strong was feeling about the incident it relates . . . McCaffery, a simple-hearted Irish Liverpool recruit, became the object of petty persecution by one of his officers. Under sentence for some misdemeanor of which he was innocent, McCaffery shot one of his commanding officers. In the ballad he claims that he did not intend to kill the Colonel, but mistook him for the noxious Captain, his persecutor. When McCaffery was tried and summarily executed, he became a "cause-celebre" among his fellow soldiers, who were smarting under the severe discipline and the poor pay of the British service.

Peter Riley, the singer, has spent his life in rural Northern Ireland working as a farm laborer in the good weather and cobbling in the bad.

My house was what is known in Ireland as a ceidlih-house, i.e. neighbors would gather here in the winter evenings, and, while I worked at my last, we would spend the time singing, story-telling and making music with fiddles and tin-whistles. Whenever a ballad singer would come along, I would have him repeat his songs until I learned them. In this way, I collected all of the songs which gave me so much pleasure throughout my life.

McCaffery



1. (OMITTED) *Come all you sad soldiers listen to my sad tale
As I lie in Walton Gaol
My thoughts and feelings no tongue can tell
As home I lie in my condemned cell*
2. *I was scarcely eighteen years of age
When into the Army I did engage
I left the homestead in full content
For to join the Forty Second Regiment*
3. *To Preston Barracks I then did go
To put in some time in that depot
But out of trouble I ne'er was free
Till my Captain took a dislike to me*
4. *As I was standing on guard one day
Some soldier's children came to play
And from my Officer's Quarters my Captain came
And he ordered me to take their parents name*
5. *My officer's orders I had to fulfill
But I done it sterling against my will
I took one name instead of three
For neglect of duty he then charged me*
6. (OMITTED) *Next morning to the Orderly Room I did appear
But the Colonel refused my sad tale to hear
Ten days to Barracks and ten days pay
For doing your duty the opposite way*
7. *Next morning on the Parade Ground I did appear
With a loaded rifle without dread or fear
It was Captain Hamilton that I meant to kill
But I shot me Colonel against my will*
8. *I did the deed, I shed his blood
At the Liverpool Assizes my trial I stood
And the Judge said he: McCaffery
Prepare yourself for the gallows tree*
9. (OMITTED) *I have no father to take my part
Nor I have no mother to break her heart
But I have a friend and a girl is she
Who'd leave down her life for McCaffery*
10. *In Old England this young man died
And in Old Ireland his body lies
And all you young soldiers that pass this way
Say: The Lord have mercy on McCaffery*

5. DRINK OLD ENGLAND DRY

Carol singers, Haxey, Lincolnshire, England.
recorded by Peter Kennedy, January, 1953.

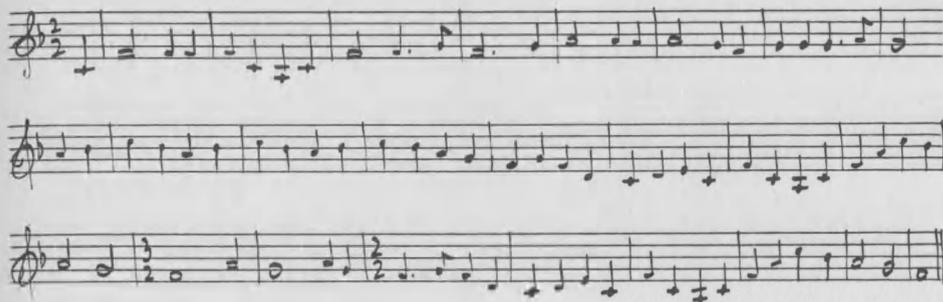
An ancient and curious custom still survives in the village of Haxey, Lincolnshire. In the spring of the year the village men divide themselves into two teams. A cylindrical shaped "ball" of leather, termed the "hood," is tossed into a field, which is usually knee-deep in mud and snow at this season of the year. The two teams fight over its possession until nightfall, whereupon, covered with mud and blood, they repair to the local pub, and drink away the exhaustion of the day. The master of ceremonies at this curious proceeding is a "fool" who makes a comic and salacious speech while he is being well-toasted over a heap of burning straw. The 13 men who assist him in this pagan ceremony are called *Boggens*, and it is these *Boggens* whom you hear singing one of the three songs that they perform every evening during the week prior to the Haxeyhood game. This is a genuinely patriotic folk poem—its dramatic personae always in tune with history. An early 19th century version is concerned with Napoleon and the French. A version collected by Cecil Sharpe is Worcestershire celebrates Lord Raglan, commander of the British troops in the Crimea in 1854. In the 1936 version, the *Boggens* of Haxey sang of

Lord Roberts, a British leader in World War I, only to be replaced in World War II by Sir Winston Churchill. Perhaps the best stanza came from Barrett's *English Folk Songs*, Novello, London, 1891:

*They may come, the frogs of France
But we'll teach them a new dance,
For we'll pepper their jackets most ter-ri-bully,
Afore they'll drink little England dry.*

EFDSS Journal, 1937, p. 128, Anne Gilchrist.

Drink Old England Dry



1. *Now come, me brave boys, as I've told you before
Come drink, me brave boys, and we'll boldly call for more
For the French they've invited us and they say that they will try (2)
They say that they will come and drink old England dry*

CHORUS: *Aye dry, aye dry, me boys, aye dry*
(Repeat last line)

2. *Supposin' we should meet with the Germans by the way
Ten thousand to one we will show them British play
With our swords and our cutlasses we'll fight until we die (2)
Before that they shall come and drink old England dry
(CHORUS OMITTED)*
3. *Then we spake old Churchill of fame and renown
He swears he'll be true to his country and his crown
For the cannons they shall rattle and the bullets they shall fly (2)
Before that they shall come and drink old England dry
(CHORUS OMITTED)*
4. *Then it's drink, me brave boys, as I've told you before
Come drink, me brave boys, till you cannot drink no more
For those French dogs they may boast but their brags are all my eye
They say that they will come and drink old England dry
CHORUS*

6. PRINCE CHARLIE STUART

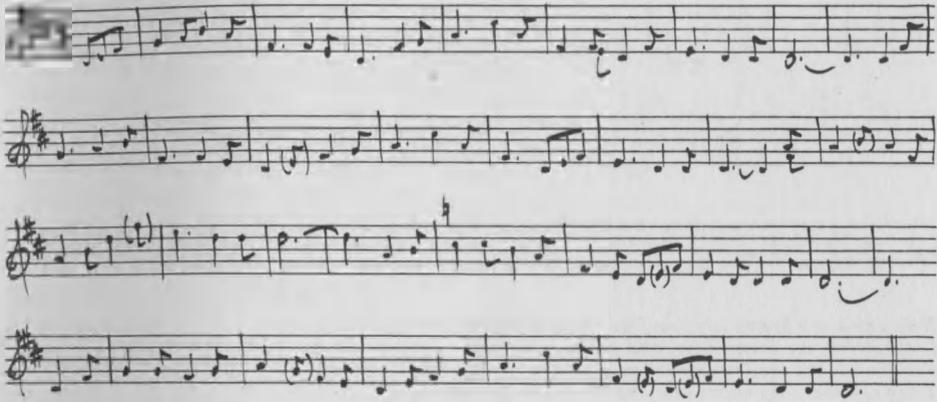
Brigid Tunney, Beleek, County Fermanagh, N. Ireland.
BBC Sound Archive (Peter Kennedy and Sean O'Boyle) July, 1953.

Brigid Tunney, brought up in Rusheen County, Donegal, is surely one of the finest stylists so far recorded in Great Britain. She is almost a match for Elizabeth Cronin and the best of the Gaelic singers in Cork. Born and brought up in a district steeped in folk song, she learned her technique from the peddlars, journeymen, tailors and weavers who brought their songs into Connaught from many parts of Ireland and Scotland as well. Here she gives us two verses of a long Scots narrative about the love of Flora McDonald for Bonnie Prince Charlie and their differences over religious matters. Concerning this, Sean O'Boyle has discovered the following verse:

Now if it be that my love and I be matched
 There is one thing between and betwixt us does stand.
 My Charlie was brought up in the Catholic religion
 And I in the Church of Scotland.
 But if that's all between us, I'll soon let it drop,
 And I'll go with me Charlie and worship on a rock
 And I'll become a member of St. Peter's flock
 So dear was my Charlie to me.

Sam Henry, *Songs of the People*, No. 533, "So Dear Was My Charlie to Me."

Prince Charlie Stuart



1. *If you would see my Charlie at the head of an army,
 He was a gallant sight to behold,
 With his fine tartan hose on his bonny round leg
 And his buckles all of pure shining gold;
 The tartan my love wore was yellow and green silk,
 His lovely skin all under it as white as any milk,
 'Twas no wonder there were thousands of the hielanders killed
 In restoring my Charlie to me.*
2. *My love was six foot two, without stocking or shoe,
 In proportion my true-love was built,
 As I told you before, upon Culloden Moor
 Where the great hieland army was killed;
 Prince Charlie Stuart was my true-lover's name,
 He was a champion of England and a son to King James,
 And so far they have banished him over to Spain.
 And so dear was my Charlie to me.*

7. MY SON TIM

Timothy Walsh, Devonport, England.
 BBC Sound Archive (Cyril Tawney), April, 1960.

This powerful anti-war piece exists in many variants—all of them striking and memorable. It dates from the Napoleonic wars when thousands of young Irishmen became cannon fodder in the long struggle between the English and the French; and it refers to one of the grimmest episodes of Napoleonic conflict, the wars in the Spanish peninsula:

*With his three cock'd hat and his scarlet coat,
 She bid Ted farewell at the dure of the boat,
 Saying: "Farewell, Ted, when I see you again,
 It's mebbe you'll be married to the Queen of Spain."*

Now Mrs. Magra to the Captain said:
 "Have ye just come over from Madrid,
 It's have ye heard tell of my son Ted?
 Is the creature alive or is he dead?"

Colm O. Lochlain, who printed "Mrs. McGrath" in *Irish Street Ballads*, Dublin, 1939, said that in his day it was known to every true-born Dubliner. In the years 1913 to 1916 it was the most popular marching song of the Irish Volunteers.

My Son Tim

The image shows the musical notation for the song 'My Son Tim'. It consists of five staves of music in 2/2 time. The first staff is labeled 'verse 1'. The second staff is labeled 'Chorus'. The third staff is labeled 'verse 2 begins:'. The fourth staff is labeled 'verse 3 begins:'. The fifth staff is labeled 'verse 4 begins:'. The notation includes treble clefs, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and various rhythmic values such as quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes, along with rests and repeat signs.

1. O my son Tim was a bosun's mate,
 He could blow the whistle but he never ran a rate,
 When the thoughts of his mother came into his head,
 You couldn't understand one word he said, —
 With your too-ri-ra, whack fol-the-da,
 Whack fol-the-doodle, fol-the-di-do.
2. Ah, were you lame, or were you blind
 When you left your two fine legs behind?
 An', Oh 'Mohone' you were a silly youth,
 That you didn't run away from the Frenchman's shoot,
3. I was neither drunk or neither blind,
 When I left my two fine pins behind,
 When up came a bloody great cannon-ball,
 Shot away me sea-boots, oilskins and all.
4. And now I'll cross the raging Main
 To the King of France and the Queen of Spain,
 And I'll make them rue the time
 That they shot away the legs of a child of mine.

8. NAPOLEON BUON-IE-PARTE

Robert Cinnamond, Belfast, N. Ireland.
 recorded by Sean O'Boyle, August, 1955.

Robert Cinnamond tells us how he learned this redoubtable ballad:

I first heard it from a little man who had spent many years in the mining areas of England. He was a great admirer of the little Corsican and praised and extolled him to the skies. I stood outside the pub, when a boy, to hear him sing Napoleon. He wore a large pair of hob-nailed boots with toe and heel plates. While he sung he walked back and forth and kicked high and around, which caused people in the road to keep away from him! He would slap his hands and crack his fists.

Not only was the little Corsican to be a fantasy hero for the Walter Mittys of the world, but in his own time, he was regarded as a liberator by the oppressed people of Europe. The country people had suffered bitterly from the Enclosure Acts which deprived them of their common lands. They were being herded into grey mill towns and mines and there forced to work 12 and 16 hours per day for a pittance. The rising labor movement was being repressed with violence. The rulers of England knew that if Napoleon could successfully cross the channel, half the working class population of Great Britain would greet him as their saviour. Thus it was not only the rebellious who delighted in singing romantic songs about dashing General Bonaparte. Indeed, his memory is still green among the folk, not only in Britain, but in North America as well, where Kentucky mountain fiddlers play a wild programatic piece about "Bonyparte Crossing the Rockies."

EFDSS Journal No. 8 — P. 186, 1906.

Napoleon Buon-ie-parté

Freely

The musical score is written on four staves. The first staff is labeled 'verse 1' and the second staff is labeled 'verse 2'. The music is in a single melodic line with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The tempo/mood is indicated as 'Freely'. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

*Attention pay, both young and old,
To these few lines that I unfold
It is the deeds of great Napoleon
I'm going to relate.*

1. *He was a gallant Corsican,
As ever stood on Europe's land,
I'm inclined to sing his praises,
So noble was his heart,
For in every battle manfully
He strove to gain the victorie,
And to the world a terror
Was Napoleon Buon-ic-parté.*
2. *On that fatal June at Waterloo
It caused Napoleon for to rue,
When he saw the tricks of Grouchy
It struck terror to his heart,
For there upon that fatal day
He was forced to yield or run away,
Like a bullock sold in Smithfield
Was Napoleon Buon-ic-parté.*

3. OMITTED *Marie Louise for him wept*
Day or night, she seldom slept,
For she could get no rest
For to suit the heartache in her heart;
"Where is my Emperor? she cried.
"Cursed be the gold that did him bribe.
False Grouchy has betrayed
Bold Napoleon Buon-ic-parte."
4. OMITTED *In the great city of Paris*
They did erect a monument
All for to contain
The ashes of his heart.
And every Frenchman that passes by
Respectfully a tribute pay
To the immortal remembrance
Of Napoleon Buon-ic-parte.

9. THE BONNY BUNCH OF ROSES O

Louise Holmes, Dinedor, Herefordshire, England.
 BBC Sound Archive (Peter Kennedy), October, 1952.

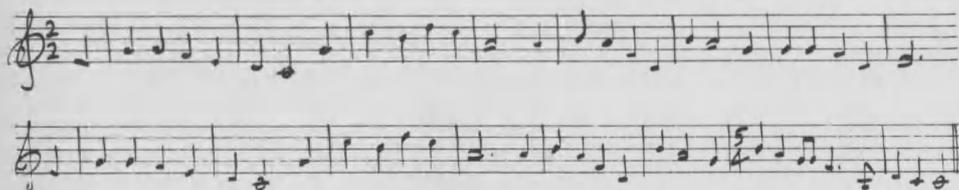
This imaginary conversation between Napoleon's young son and his mother condenses history to such a degree that the result is somewhat confusing. Both Baring-Gould and Anne Gilchrist feel that the original model of this anti-Napoleonic song was an anti-Jacobite piece set to the tune of "The Bonnie Bunch of Rushes." There is a ballad of that title describing an erotic encounter between a young man and a girl in a pleasant country setting.

Baring-Gould, *Songs of the West*.

Anne Gilchrist, *The Journal of the Folk Song Society*, 1906.

Laws, 131.

The Bonny Bunch Of Roses O



1. *By the margins of the ocean*
One morning in the month of June
When the feathered warbling songsters
Their charming notes so sweet did tune
There I espied a female
Who seemed in grief and woe
Conversing with young Napoleon Buonaparte
Concerning the bonny bunch of roses O
2. *O then, said young Napoleon*
As he grasped his mother by the hand
O, mother, do have patience
Till I'm able to command
I will raise a terrible army
And through tremendous dangers go
And in spite of all the universe
I will gain the bonny bunch of roses O

3. OMITTED Now when you saw great Buonaparte
 You fell upon your bended knee
 And begged your father's life of him
 He granted it right manfully
 It was then he raised an army
 And o'er the frozen Alps did go
 He said I'll conquer Moscow
 Then go and buy a bonny bunch of roses O
4. He took three hundred thousand men
 And kings to join his throng
 He was so well provided
 He'd enough to sweep the World along
 Over-powered by driven snow
 Moscow was a-blazing
 And he lost the bonny bunch of roses O
5. OMITTED Now son, ne'er speak so venturesome
 Old-England is the heart of oak
 England, Ireland and Scotland
 Their unity has ne'er been broke
 Now, son, look at your father
 In St. Helen's his body now lays low
 And you'll soon follow after
 So beware of the bonny bunch of roses O
6. OMITTED O mother, adieu for ever
 Now I am on my dying bed
 If I'd lived I should have been clever
 But now I've dropped my youthful head
 And while our bones do moulder
 And weeping willows o'er us grow
 The deeds of bold Napoleon
 Will sting the bonny bunch of roses O

10. NAPOLEON'S DREAM

Sam Larner, Winterton, Norfolk, England.
 BBC Sound Archive (Philip Donellan), March, 1958.

Another Napoleonic broadside ballad sets forth Napoleon's supposedly democratic program.
 One verse not included in this record runs:

*"To Liberty's temple I guided mankind
 And Slavery sought to keep under;
 The fetters of bondmen I oft did unbind,
 Tyrant's treaties I tore them asunder;
 But, beloved France, you yet shall rise,
 The nations around you shall look with surprise
 When freedom to you my descendant supplies, —"
 Such were the words of Napoleon.*

Here Napoleon emerges clearly as a liberator of the downtrodden English laborer.
 Cecil Sharpe, Ms. 610.

Napoleon's Dream



1. *One night, sad and languid, I went to my bed,
I scarcely declined on my pillow,
When a vision surprising came into my head,
I thought I was crossing the billow.
I dreamed, as my vessel dashed over the deep,
I beheld a huge rock standing scraggy and steep,
That rock where the widows were once known to weep,
O'er the grave of that once-famed Napoleon.*
2. *Now I dreamt, as my vessel drew near to the land,
I beheld, clad in green, a bold figure
With a trumpet of fame he 'eld in his hand,
On his brow there was val-i-our and vigour.
"A stranger," cried he, "Dost thou venture to me
From the land of their sires (Old England) where they boast they are free?
Now a story, a true story, I'll tell unto thee
Concerning that once-famed Napoleon.*
3. *OMITTED "Now remember the years were immortally told
I crossed through the Alps, famed in story,
For the legions of France were the sons of my pride,
I led them to honour and glory.
'Twas on the Plains of Marengo where I tyranny uphurled
My banner, the eagle, was ever unfurled
To the standard of freedom all over the World,
To the signal of fame," cried Napoleon.*
4. *"Now, as a soldier, I've borne both the heat and the cold,
I've marched to the trump and the cymbal,
By the dark deeds of tragedy I have been sold
Though mortals before me did tremble.
You rulers and princes their stations dream
Like scorpions they spat out their venomous seen, and spleen
But as liberty all over the World shall be seen,
As I woke from my dreams," cried Napoleon.*

11. THE FORFAR SOLDIER

Jimmy McBeath, Aberdeen, Scotland.
recorded by Alan Lomax and Hamish Henderson, July, 1951.

Jimmy McBeath, the tramp balladeer of North East Scotland, sings this favorite Scottish recruiting song with his inimitable bar-room twang. The ballad itself, according to Gavin Greig, was written by David Shaw, a weaver-poet of Forfar (1786-1856). When it moved into folk currency, the text was altered and it was sung to many different tunes such as "Johny Ladd", "The Quaker Wife", and "Robin Tamson's Smiddy." Peter Kennedy feels that Shaw's rather

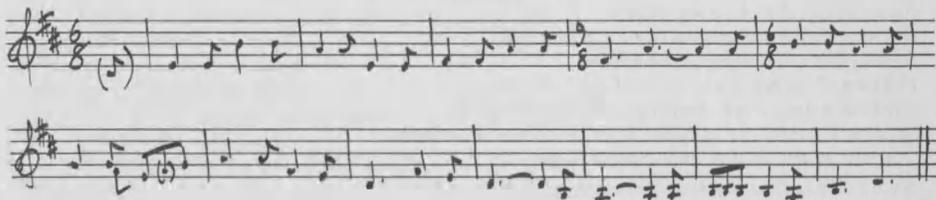
literary production may be derived from the barracks' song with which this side opens. Whether or not this is true, there can hardly be a question that the folk improved David Shaw's original piece as they mull'd it over. Here is the sample of the literary stiffness of the original:

*The bluid cam' bockin' thro' my hose,
An' when I cudna gang, Sir,
I toomed my gun among my foes
An' syne sat doon an' sant, Sir,
At "Scots w'ha hae wi' Wallace bled"
An "Up wi't, Meggy Dick", Sir,
But sune wi' cauld my w'oundit leg
Greww just as still's a stick, Sir.*

Gavin-Greig, *Folk-song of the North-East*, Buchan Observer, Peterhead, 1909.

Robert Ford, *Vagabond Songs*, Gardner, Paisley 1904.

The Forfar Soldier



1. *In Forfar I was born and bred,
In faith I do think shame, sir,
To tell you the sober life I led,
Afore I gaed be-hame, sir.
Hurrah, hurrah -
Wi' my diddy-fan-air-an-i-do*
2. *My father was a weaver poor,
That ever wove the spool, sir,
There wasna beef within the door,
But just a pound of gruel, sir.*
3. *At twelve they sent me to the school
To count the rule of three sir,
A noble thought came in my head,
And a sodger I would be, sir.*
4. *I went in to Forfar Toon
And in the Forfar County,
Enlisted there wi Sairgeant Broon
For fifty pounds o' bounty.*
5. *OMITTED They gave me white mittens to my hands,
And plates to hap my back, sir
And they swore that I was the bravest man
In a' the toon o' Forfar*
6. *Through all the markets in the toon,
They marched me up and doon, sir,
Wi' strip-ed stockings on my legs
And feathers on my croon, sir.*
7. *They werna long they changed ma tune,
They sent me o'er to Spain, sir,
There was forty regiments in a row,
Come a-marching o'er the plain, sir.*
8. *Twa long years we fought within
But o it was in vain, sir,
Until a ball gaed through my leg,
And I up and fired again, sir.*

9. *When the doctor came to view my wounds,
He swore that I'd be lame, sir,
But I got a twa oxters staffs,
And I come limping hame, sir.*
10. *Through a' the hardships I come through,
It would hardly do to mention,
But I've come back to Forfar Toon
To live upon my pension.*

THE FOLKSONGS OF BRITAIN

A Soldier's Life for Me

A Collection of bold songs by and about the Lobsterbacks—their loves, their adventures and their follies. Recorded in the Isles, the Mainland and Ireland by Alan Lomax, Sean O'Boyle, Peter Kennedy, and Seamus Ennis. Edited by Peter Kennedy and Alan Lomax. Musical Notation by Michael Bell.

With the beginning of the 17th century the street singer, chanting the latest news from a printed broadside, which the listener could buy for a copper, replaced the minstrel, the gleeman and the jongleur as the fountainhead of British popular balladry. Certain of the older ballads, dealing with tales of tragedy and romance in terms of universal appeal, survived. But the border ballads, the ballads of courtly intrigue, the ballads of ghosts and fairy figures were swept aside and overwhelmed by a flood of songs which told plain tales of the lives of ordinary Britons, of sailors and servingmaids, of ploughboys and prentices, of married men betrayed and murderers gibbeted. The emphasis now was on topicality, on facts rather than fancies. These broadsides, so-called because they were printed on one side of a sheet of flimsy paper, often were mere reprints of traditional ballads. Some printers sent collectors out into the countryside to write down pieces which were then published broadcast. Others served as recordings and radio programs do today, to popularize the texts of the latest Vauxhall or music hall favorite. Others again were written to tell the story of an execution, a battle or to relate some scandal. Whatever the vein or subject, however, all were formula pieces, which although they might purport to give the facts and to quote the words of the participants, conformed to folk conventions, both in plot structure and in language. A casual look through any broadside collection will convince the reader that, no matter what the circumstances, these songs resemble each other more than they do the actual variety of human interaction. It is notable, too, that those broadside ballads, which did not conform both in phraseology and viewpoint to a few models, never passed into oral circulation.

Although the folk of Britain and America have never doubted that they preferred the everyday themes and characters of broadside ballad to other folk literature, men of letters have been traditionally ambivalent about them. In 1538 Miles Coverdale wrote: "If women, spinninge at the wheles, had none other songs to pass their tyme withall than such as Moses sister songe before them, they wuold be better occupied than with Hey Nonny Nonny, Hey Trolly Lolly and such like fantasies . . ." "A poet should detest a ballad-maker . . ."

William Webbe in his *Discourse of English Poetrie*, 1586, ranted about "the uncountable rabble of rhyming ballad makers and compylers of senseless sonnets, who be most busy to stuffe every stall full of gross devices and unlearned Pamphlets . . . though many such can frame an alehouse song of five or six score verses, hobbling upon some tune such as Robyn Hood or Laluber, yet if these might be accounted poets, surely we shall have whole swarms of poets! . . ." Addison's commendation of the famous *Pills to Purge Melancholy* filled the Rev. Baring-Gould with horror . . . "The fun so commended by the pious and grave Addison is filth of the most revolting description."

Thomas D'rfev answers from his grave, "The Town may damn me for a poet, but they sing my songs for all that." . . . Samuel Pepys, with his flair for the truly popular, made a vast collection of black letter ballads . . . Isaac Walton, celebrating the everyday pleasures of rural life, was moved by the ballads he heard on his country walks . . . "I entered into the next field and a second pleasure entertained me; 'twas the handsome milkmaid, that had cast away all care and sang like a nightingale; her voice was good and the ditty fitted for it . . ." The mother of the milkmaid invites her literary friend . . . "You may sit down on a haycock, and Maudlin shall sit by and sing you the good old song of *The Hunting of Chevy Chase*, or some other good old ballad, for Maudlin hath a notable memory . . ." Of Chevy Chase Sir Phillip Sidney wrote, "I have never heard the old Song of Percy and Douglas, that I found not my Heart more moved than with a trumpet . . ." Later Dr. Johnson spoke of this same ballad as a "master-piece of chill and lifeless imbecility."

Thus the controversy of literary men over the ballad has rambled on. Meantime the people have always been the best judge of what was a good song. As sage Addison remarked, "it is impossible that anything should be universally tasted and approved by the Multitude, tho' they are only the Rabble of a Nation, which hath not in it some peculiar Aptness to please and gratify the Mind of Man . . ." And for centuries, as the yeomen of Britain have, willingly or not, marched off to war, they have sung and loved ballads about the soldier's life. Some of these verses brim over with patriotism, others with bitter irony, but all have given courage to ordinary men, facing adversity. —ALAN LOMAX