FALSE TRUE LOVERS

A collection of British love songs about love, adapted and sung by Shirley Elizabeth Collins of Sussex, England, with guitar and five string banjo accompaniment by John Hasted, Ralph Rinzler, Guy Carawan and Miss Collins.

With notes by Alan Lomax.
I Drew My Ship
The Irish Boy
The Spermwhale Fishery
Dennis O'Reilly
My Bonny Miner Lad
Just as the Tide Was Flowing
Bobby Shaftoe
Richie Story
The Unquiet Grave
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The False True Love
The Foggy Dew
Mowing the Barley
Scarborough Fair
The Cruel Mother
The Bonny Cuckoo
The Queen of May
Died for Love

FALSE TRUE LOVERS

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

Library of Congress Catalogue Card No. R-60-332

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632 Broadway, NYC, USA 10012

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Introduction by Alan Lomax...

In the British-American song tradition folk singers generally... reach their prime between the ages of thirty-five and fifty and often continue to sing extremely well into their seventies. This is a generalization which applies, with some exceptions of course, to most of the areas I know in North America and Europe. If it is true... and in so vast and complex a field as folk-song, generalization is difficult... the explanation may turn out to be something like the following.

On the whole our "big tunes" are of a contemplative, restrained and somewhat melancholy character. The songs themselves, are usually serious, often tragic in content. Normally the singer functions as a bard, a story-teller, performing in solo for his silent audience. Thus his authority as a person plays an important part in his effectiveness with his audience. His success as a story-teller, of course, depends in part upon his mature understanding of the events he is narrating. As a musician, his art is largely the product of the skill and taste with which he decorates the solo melody in various rather subtle traditional ways.

In Celtic-speaking Ireland, when a singer has full command of these traditional techniques of ornamenting tunes, they may he has "blas". The equivalent expression in English would be singing style, but that does not quite express the whole of the idea contained in the Irish word. Actually we here are close to the central mystery of the singing in the Western European solo tradition. "Blas" does not stand for just musicianship, but for the manner in which the singer varies the tune in slight but metrically and emotionally significant ways from stanza to stanza, but without obtruding his personal expression too blazingly... it refers to subtle tempo changes which accumulate lines of varying length... it has to do with the way in which certain phrases are emphasized or given color by changes in vocal inflection... and all of these things are ways of linking the verse to the tune and require talent, practice and taste on the part of the singer.

The authority of a singer is, therefore, summed up for the Irish in the term "blas", and, ultimately, it seems to me, this authority depends upon his emotional maturity and upon his grasp of the content of the songs he sings and the subtle hidden currents of emotion in these songs. In most cases, therefore, since so many of these songs are tragic and, in their way, art of a high order, a singer weathered by time and buffeted by the disappointments and tragedies which are normal to life, can more effectively realize this inner content. Eh "blas" lag... though his voice may lose its youthful freshness. Thus it is to be expected that singers in our culture would come to full possession of their powers as they reached their maturity.

"Maturity" is, of course, a vague term, which implies loss as well as gain. Nothing is more haunting than to hear a young girl, as yet untouched by years, singing one of the big and songs, brood romantically over the sorrowful tale, almost seeming to yearn to have the experiences, herself. This, it seems to me, is part of the pleasure I have in listening to Shirley Collins sing.

But there is more to this matter. A young person, growing up within a folk culture acquires his "blas", as he learns his songs. His manner of singing is an integral part of the whole folk-tune, and this is precisely what most city singers of folk songs lack and can acquire only after years of study and practice. In both the folk and city environments, however, singers ripen at different ages, depending on their talent and upon their sympathy with the material, itself. But I should think it would be comforting to anyone interested in the art of folk-singing to reflect that, all things being equal, he need not fear the roughening effect of time on his vocal chords as nearly so much as the pop singer or the art singer in our culture. His "blas", or his stylistic grasp of the folk songs he loves will gradually improve, as he grows older. If he is faithful to the canons of folk-singing and does not give in to the temptations to sing in either the "classical" or the "pop" styles.

As I write this I am listening to the most recent recordings of Muddy Waters, the blues singer. I found Muddy seventeen years ago in Mississippi and recorded him for the Library of Congress. He is still working with the same stylistic material he used at that time, and, considering that he has lived and sung since then in the world of the commercial blues in Chicago, his style has remained remarkably intact. His voice has coarsened, he has "improved" his accent and this has erased some of his earlier sublety; he has also learned to work with a band so that his phrasing and his vocalizing are more cut and dried than formerly; yet on the whole he has gained as a singer. He is in complete command of the blues today, and can do whatever he chooses to do in coloring the melodic line to match the flow of the text.

Jean Ritchie, a singer with another folk background, has also stuck to her native Kentucky style and seems to me to sing with more authority and with finer "blas" than when I first worked with her ten years ago. Peggy Seeger, who learned her songs from field recordings when she was a child, has a clear idea of how she wishes to sing and despite the fact that her voice is very small, and that she has never lived the life of the "folk", steadily improves as a singer with every year. An even more remarkable case is that of Jack Elliott, who was born and raised in Brooklyn. Most of his songs are derivative of his own creating a "style of his own", as Jack was content for many years to sing Woody Guthrie's songs exactly as Woody sang them. To many people Jack seemed for a time just a pale carbon copy of Woody. But somewhere in this process, Jack learned the language of the blues and the last time I heard him was able to lend his own "blas", composed of elements from a wide range of Southern white and Negro styles to many kinds of songs. Furthermore, everything seemed relaxed and natural as it came from Jack, and I felt sure, as I listened, that he would continue to grow in stature as a singer of folk songs.

It is in this sense, especially, that I find Miss Collins an important figure in the English folk song scene. Her problems are quite different from those of most American singers, as the English folk song "blas" has been in decay for generations. Although it has been possible to find single ballad singers here and there in Southern England, few communities exist where the tradition is intact and where there remains a clear-cut "blas" which can serve as the model for a singer of this generation. The majority of contemporary country singers tend to be so people with broken voices and with only a trace of the magic that touched Sharp when he went collecting in Southern England two generations ago.

Shirley had the good fortune to grow up in a "famly of rural working-class intellectuals. Her grandfather, Fred Ball, was a landscape gardener.
at Telham in Sussex, who went the rounds of the country pubs on Saturday, singing folksy songs, not paid for the privilege, but because he was proud of the musical heritage of his peasant ancestors. His two brothers formed an impromptu pub orchestra of piccolo, tin whistle, accordion, spoons and trey tray and stomped and jangled out the old marching tunes and reels. Then on Sunday morning the Balls gathered in the loft of the Telham church where they formed the ‘chole of the church choir. Christmas times, the whole family, including the children, were expected to know a full bookful of traditional carols. Shirley remembers, during World War II, when the Nazi bombers were coming over the English coast and bursting Hastings where she grew up, that her Grandam Ball would sing her to sleep in the air-raid shelter with the old ballads of love and parting.

In school, of course, Shirley learned the Cecil Sharp songs of Southern England, which have for many years been the basis of the musical education of the young people of Britain. But to her they made a different meaning than to many young girls. First of all, they had the same quality as the traditional songs of her grandparents, and she felt free to apply her family-acquired style to them. Thus there are many songs in Shirley’s repertoire, which, though based in Sharp’s arranged versions, are clear-cut folk variants, with the style reappealed and the song combined again and again so sure and sure that, is within the emotional and musical canons of the Sussex style.

Many of her relatives and close family friends are painters and writers, with a strong bias toward regional subjects and a passionate desire to celebrate the character of the Southern English working class. From them Shirley acquired a fierce pride in the music she had inherited. Singing is truly, performing it with the artistry of her folk speech, as she desires passionately to do. For her, the soft landscape of Southern England, the slurred accent of Southern speech are utterly charming and delightful. When she sings, she is visualizing her identity with the Southern English countryside and its culture. As her family has never had money, she was raised poor and felt, in the way that only a young girl feels it, the harshness of reality and the tormenting bite of poverty as they fall upon the hearts of the young women of Sussex, the makers and the heroes of many of these songs.

For the last seven years, Shirley has lived in London, feeling, as many young Britshers do today, that to sing traditional ballads is the finest of the art. She has learned several hundred songs by ear from the collections of Sharp, both English and American, but has brought to each one of them, her own individual creative vision, as much as an inherited style of singing, which has enriched them all. Finally, she has tackled, virtually alone and trusting only in her own sure instincts, the difficult task of arranging accompaniments for her repertoire.

Instrumental accompaniment has not been part of the Southern English folk scene for centuries. Indeed, one might say that the American mountaineer with his banjo, rediscovered an accompanying technique for the ancient modal tradition of Britain. I think Shirley’s instinct was right in deciding to try to set her Southern English melodies to American five-string banjo accompaniment. Her teacher, that remarkable banjo-playing playwright, John Basted, has a generous heart, a genuine love of the real thing and a good banjo technique, but a much less sure way of dealing with these gentle and rather placid English songs, than has Miss Collins.

Thus Shirley has been working on her own and in her own way for the last three or four years. During the whole time I knew her her command of her songs and her grasp of singing style grew sureer. And that is all the more remarkable, in that she was slowly picking her way back across almost a century, finding for herself the traditional heart of England and making it alive again, but in an increasingly tasteful folk manner. This album captures something of what she had learned how to do by the end of 1957. At that time she still needed her more technically accomplished friends to help her on the accompaniments. Today, I understand, she has found her own arrangements for almost everything she sings—a major musical accomplishment. What comes through, however, is sincerity, purity of instinct and a tremendous delicacy of feeling. Here one occasionally has that rarest of musical experiences—hearing a young girl singing alone in the house or garden, dreaming of love. This is a quality which Shirley is bound to lose, as time passes, but, I feel, she is fully upon the right road and that by the time she has reached the half-century mark, she will sing with that ‘great ‘blues’ of Texas Gladden, an Aunt Molly Jackson, or an Elizabeth Cotten.

Notes on the songs by S. Collins and A. Lumax

SIDE I, Band 1: I DREW MY SHIP

(Stockoe-Collins) was collected and published by John Stockoe in SONGS AND BALLADS OF NORTHERN ENGLAND with no source mentioned. Though it is similar in form and content to many other ballads or dawn serenades, we have not been able to find another song to which this is precisely akin. The listener who cares to compare the recorded version with that published by Stockoe will see how Miss Collins has breathed life back into the print and made something lovely and alive out of an unimpressive folk fragment.

I drew my ship into the harbour,
I drew it up where my true love lay.
I drew it close by into her window
To listen what my love did say.

"Who's there that knocks loud at my window?
Who knocks so loud and would come in?
"It is my true love, who loves you dearly,
Then rise, dear love, and let him in."

Then slowly, slowly got she up,
And slowly, slowly came she down,
But before she got her door unlocked,
Her true love had both come and gone.

He's brisk and braw, he's far away,
He's far beyond you raging main,
Where bright eyes glancing, and fishers dancing
Have made him quite forget his own.

SIDE I, Band 2: THE IRISH BOY

(Collins) Though we have found nothing quite like it in print, this song is clearly a fragment of one of the many ballads of Irish immigration so common in the 19th century. The tune resembles Margaret Barry’s Mattie So Green, but the song is a folk creation of Shirley Collins.

His name I love to mention, in Ireland he was born,
I once loved him dearly, but alas now he’s gone;
Still in all my dear dreaming, there’s none I can see.
For I still love the young man who said he loved me.

He went to America, he sailed on the sea,
And the face of my true love I no longer can see.
Still in all my dear dreaming, there’s none I can find,
For I might have been married to the man who was mine.

SIDE I, Band 3: THE Spermwhale Fishery

(Coll. and arr. by A. Lloyd) is a variant of the widely-sung broadside ballad, The Spermwhale Fishery, which was published in 1776 in Herd’s Ancient and Modern Scottish Songs as well as in the Roxburghe broadside collection. A. Lloyd printed this Lancashire variant in The Singing Englishman, and it is surely one of the most beautiful of the love songs of the sea.

Last night I was a married
And on my carriage bed,
There came a loud sea-captain
And stood at my bed-head.
"Arise, arise, you married man,
And come along with me
To the cold, cold coast of Greenland
To the spermwhale fishery."

Now Greenland is a dreadful place,
A place that’s never green.
It’s a wild inhabitation
For a lover to be in.
Where the keen winds blow and the whale-fish go,
And daylight’s seldom seen.
And the cold, cold coast of Greenland
Lies between my love and me.
No shoes nor stockings I'll put on
Nor comb go in my hair;
No hay lamp or candlelight
Burns in my chamber bare.
Nor shall I lie with any young man
Until the day a鸡m.
Now the cold, cold coast of Greenland
Parted my love and me.

SIDE I, Band 4: DENNIS O'HEILLY
(Coll. and arr. by Waters and Collins)
An is an instance of the speed with which folk
songs are traveling nowadays. It began
its life as one of the many songs of the Irish
immigrants to Australia. Mister Goodwin of
Leichhardt, New South Wales, picked it up on
the Neambec River of N.S.W. and, when he was
73, sang it for Cecil English and John Meredith.
For then it passed into the repertoire of Edgar
Waters, the Australian ballad collector, who
brought it to England and taught it to Shirley
Collins. It is a guess that from her record it will
grow into the repertoire of the young folk
singers on this continent.

My name is Denis O'Reilly,
From Dublin town I come,
To travel the wide world over
I crossed the Australian Main.

CHORUS:
Meigh me pack all on my shoulder,
And a blackthorn in my hand,
I'll travel the bush of Australia
Like a true-born Irishman.

When I arrived in Melbourne
The girls all jumped for joy,
Saying one unto another,
"Here comes an Irish boy."

(CHORUS)

"Now daughter, dearest daughter,
What is it you would do?
Now would you marry an Irish man,
A man you never knew?"

"O mother, dear mother,
I'll do the best I can,
I'll travel the wide world over
With that true-born Irishman."

(CHORUS)

SIDE I, Band 5: MY BONNY MINER LAD
(Cosgrove-Lloyd). Anyone who knows the books
and records of Ewan McColl and A.L. Lloyd
realises that folk-song-making did not cease with
the advent of the industrial revolution in Great
Britain. The country people, re-worked their
traditional songs or composed new pieces to tell
of their struggles and to celebrate their camp-
tended lives. Some of these industrial ballads
have been circulating for more than a century,
having been carried in the traditional folk
manner, and rank with the best of the British
song tradition. The oldest and most productive
of the British folk traditions is that of the
miners, of which A.L. Lloyd has made a
superlative collection. One of his informant's
was the Scots miner's wife, daughter of several
generations of miners, Mrs. Cosgrove of
Keltnrove in the Lowlands of Scotland. I had
the pleasure on one occasion of hearing Mrs.
Cosgrove singing it in her own house, as she fixed
a midnight meal, for her men-folks who were
going down on the night shift, and told stories of
strines, disasters and strikes. I can testify that
her style and her point of view are those
of a true folk singer. This song has been collected
in another form among the Scots coal miners of Nova
Scotia.

O bonny's my lad as he walks down the street,
His cap in his hand so sassy and neat;
His teeth white as ivory, his eyes black as sloes,
I love my miner lad, every eye knows.

When I have money he has his part,
And when I've none he has my heart.
He gained it, too, with a true good will,
And I'll confess I love him still.

I'll build him a palace of great renown,
No lords nor kings can ever pull it down,
For the king has his true love, the lord the same,
And I love my miner lad. Who can me blame?

SIDE I, Band 6: JUST AS THE TIDE WAS FLOWING
(…)

One morning in the month of May
When all the birds were singing,
I saw a lovely lady stray
Across the fields at break of day,
And softly sang a roundelay -
"The tide flows in, the tide flows out,
Twice every day returning."

A sailor's wife at home must hide,
She bailed, heavily she sighed,
"He parted from me, me a bride,
Just as the tide was flowing.
The tide flows in, the tide flows out,
Twice every day returning."

SIDE I, Band 7: BOBBY SHAFFTEE
one of the best known British folk songs, is
here sung with vigor and snap as it was when
John Stokes found it in Northern England. In the
North the tune has long been played for
country dancing. What one usually hears is a
sentimentalized, slowed-down rewriting of the
song, from which all the Northern dialect has
been deleted, along with the child which the
girl's friend is carrying against Bobby Shaftoe's
return.

Bobby Shaftoe's gone to sea,
Silver buckles on his knee;
He'll come back and marry me,
Bony Bobby Shaftoe.

Bobby Shaftoe's meat and ake,
He's always dressed so fine and trim,
The lasses they all look at him,
Bony Bobby Shaftoe.

Bobby Shaftoe's getting a bairn,
For to dandle on his arm.
On his arm and on his knee,
Bonnie Bobby Shaftoe.

Bobby Shaftoe's fat and fair,
Combing down his yellow hair,
He's my love for evermore,
Bony Bobby Shaftoe.

Bobby Shaftoe's been to sea,
Silver buckles on his knee,
He's come back and married me,
Bony Bobby Shaftoe.

SIDE I, Band 8: ACHILSE STORY
(or the Earl of Wemyss) (…)

According to his note, the ballad is based in
history. Lillias Fleming, daughter of John, third
earl of Wighton, ran away with and married one of
her father's servants, Richard Storry, and in
1673 she resigned her portion of the family land.
In all but one of the Child versions Lillias
seems satisfied with the choice she has made,
but in that one Richard turns out to be an Earl
in disguise. The present variant comes from Ewan
McColl, who learned it from his Scots father and
from Hughie Graham of Newton Stuart, Galloway,
and added supplementary text from a variant in Gavin
Grieg's collection. Here, where romance is
a field day, we discover that Richard is really
the King of England!

Here's a letter to you, Madam,
Here's a letter to you, Madam,
Here's a letter from the Earl of Wemyss
And it's all in suit of you, Madam.

Say not so to me, Richard
(2)
For I've made a vow, and I swear I'll be true,
To marry none but you, Richard.

Say not so to me, Madam
(2)
For I have neither lands nor rents
For to maintain ye with, Madam.

Now I am going away, Madam,
I'm going away to London town,
My friends they long to see me, Madam.
Then I will go with you, Richard,  
I'll go with you to London Town,  
I'll go across the sea, Richard.

When they went down through London Town,  
Oh but the bells were ringing bonne,  
And many-a one did look at them,  
And little did they think it was Richard's lady.

When they came in at the Parliament Gate,  
The marriage bells were ringing bonne,  
And many a knight, and many a squire  
Stood there to welcome Richard's lady.

When they came in at the Parliament Gate,  
The marriage bells were ringing bonne,  
And many a knight, and many a squire  
Stood there to welcome Richard's lady

So dearly as you loved me, Madam,  
You left your lands and all your rents,  
Your serving-man to go with, Madam.  
But so dearly as I loved you, Madam,  
I left the sceptre and the throne  
And was your waiting man, Madam.

And was your waiting man, Madam,  
Made all your riddles ring, Madam.  
And little did I think that your waiting boy  
Was England's royal king, Madam.

And little did I think that your waiting boy  
Was England's royal king, Madam.

But since it's so ye loved me, Madam,  
You shall be Queen of all England,  
And happy shall ye be, Madam.

SIDE I, Band 9: THE UNKIN'S GRAVE
from Cecil Sharp's English Folk Songs, Novello.
This is one of the classic pieces of English folk song literature. From one point of view it is a feminine fantasy or a wish, perhaps for the death of the lover, perhaps for a way of arranging a night visit by the lover, perhaps for a way of showing how strong her love is, perhaps of a feeling of guilt. Certainly, it is a ghost story designed to delight the imagination of young women. Finally, it shows the survival of ancient and widely distributed primitive beliefs about the treatment of the dead.

The rowdy Irish wake is the only example of the common folk custom of a gathering in which ceremonial banqueting and games were indulged in to show honor to the dead person. The shade was given a great send-off to the other world. Sometimes a special door was cut in the side of the wall so that the coffin could be taken out by that route; and then this hole was walled up so that the ghost could not find his way back into the house again.

In Scotland and Ireland it was believed that excessive grief prevented the dead from resting; that the tears shed by the mourners pierced holes in the corpse. In Persia they held that the tears shed by humanity for their dead flowed into a river in which the dead were floated and drowned. Similar beliefs were held by the Greeks and Romans, and from medieval times throughout Germany and Scandinavia.

Sharp says that in England a belief was current that if a girl was betrothed to a man, she was pledged to him if he died, and was bound to follow him to the spirit world unless she solved certain riddles, or performed certain tasks, such as fetching water from a desert, blood from a stone, milk from the breast of a virgin...

Cold blows the wind tonight, true love,  
Cold are the drops of rain,  
I never had but one true love,  
And in Greenwood he lies slain.

I'll do as much for my true love,  
As any young girl say.  
I'll sit and mourn all on his grave  
For a twelve-month and a day.

The twelve-month and the day being gone,  
The ghost began to weep.  
"Your salted tears trickle down,  
They wet my winding sheet."

"It's I, my love, sits by your grave  
And will not let you sleep,  
For I crave one kiss of your clay cold lips,  
And that is all I seek."

"O lilly, lilly are my lips.  
My breath comes earthy strong.  
If you have one kiss of my clay cold lips,  
Your time will not be long."

"Come down in yonder garden green  
Love, where we used to walk,  
The fairest flower that ever was seen  
Is withered to the stalk.

"The stalk is withered dry, my love,  
So must our hearts decay;  
Then rest yourself content, my love,  
Till God calls you away.

SIDE II, Band 1: THE SNAPPING SONG
from Cecil Sharp's English Folk Songs for Schools, Novello's, is common in England and in America as well.

My father died and I can't tell how,  
He left me six horses to follow the plough.

Chorus:  
With a win-win-wobble-o,  
Strum-strum-strobbble-o,  
Bubble-o, pretty boy, over the brow.

So I sold the horses and bought a cow,  
But how for to milk her I didn't know how.

So I sold the cow and bought a calf,  
I never make a bargain but I lose the better half.

I sold the calf and bought a cat,  
And the pretty little thing in the chimney corner sat.

I sold the cat and bought a mouse,  
It set fire to its tail and burnt down my house.

SIDE II, Band 2: POOR OLD HORSE
from Cecil Sharp's Folk Songs of England, Novello's, is a landlubber relative of the familiar sea shanty,

Say, old man, your horse will die,  
And I say so and I hope so,  
And if he dies I'll sell his skin,  
Poor old horse.

There can be no doubt that the land-variant, which Sharp found as a part of the hobby-horse dream in Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Yorkshire, is older by far. The hobby horse, an important actor in British springtime ceremonies, is a fantastic and sometimes terrifying mask which covers the entire body of the dancer. The horse-dancer goes the round of the community, often on May Day, alternately dying and being revived by his companions, symbolizing the death of the old year and the renewal of the year, and of the fertility of the earth. These spring-time antics of the hobby-horse, which still amuse tourists in certain remote districts of western England, are a genuine survival of ancient pagan fertility rites.

That a horse-weak dances in Britain on May Day is one more evidence of the importance of the horse-cult, widespread in all Europe thousands of years ago. Therefore, this charming little comic fragment, which Sharp had taught to all the school children in Britain, is a gentle breath of a pagan fertility rite that once upon a time was a compound of magic, religion, comedy and sex.

My clothing was once of a linsey-woolsey fine,  
My mane it was sleek and my body it did shine.  
But now I'm getting old and I'm going to decay,  
My master frowns upon me and thus they all say,  
"Poor Old Horse."

My living was once of the best of corn and hay  
As ever grew in Eng-a-land, and that they all do say.  
But now there's no such comfort as I can find at all.  
I'm forced to nib the short grass that grows against the wall,  
"Poor Old Horse."

SIDE II, Band 3: THE FALSE TRUE LOVE
(from Vol. II, English Folk Songs of the Southern Appalachians, Cecil Sharp) is one of hundreds of examples showing that the British folk song tradition has grown steadily more lyrical in the past two or three hundred years. As the role of the
I think that this is the most beautiful version of the song to be found anywhere. To me, it's the only version that doesn't have a sneer behind it; it's truly tender and loving. But James Reeves, the author of "The Idiom of the People," says, "it has a rough coherence, but surely none of the sublety or the emotional and psychological interest of English versions." - and "it is an example of the hopeless confusion resulting from evident misunderstanding of folkloric symbolism." However, I'm sure for girls everywhere, the Virginia variant wins hands down...

I courted her all of the winter,
Part of the summer too,
All the harm that I have done,
Was to court a pretty fair miss.

One night she came to my bedside
As I lay fast asleep,
"Oh come to my arms, my pretty miss,
Get out of the foggy dew."

She stayed in my arms till broad daylight,
The sun began to shine,
I turned my back on my own true love,
"Goodbye, my love, I'm done."

Towards the first part of the year
She took pale in the face,
Towards the end part of that year
She grew bigger around the waist.

Along towards the end of the year,
She brought me a son,
"It's now you see as well as I,
What the foggy dew has done."

I loved that girl with all my heart,
Long as I loved my life,
And in the end part of that year
I made her my lawful wife.

I never held it up to her,
Never in my life,
Yet every time the baby cries,
I'd think on the foggy dew.

SIDE II, Band 5: \louin the Barley\n
(from Sharp's English Folk Songs, Novello's),
once called Lawyer Leg, may be a lyricized variant of The Ruffled Knight, in which a clever girl overtakes her would-be seducer and keeps her maidservant. In this Southern English variant, however, the virgin seems to have weared in the chase. Miss Collins learned the song from her mother, and is not sure whether it derives from Sharp or not.

"Where are you going to, my pretty dear,
Where are you going, my braw lad?
"Over the meadows, kind sir," she said,
"To my father mowing the barley."

"Ay, I go with you, my pretty dear,
May I go with you, my bonny?"
"Yes, if you like, kind sir," she said,
"To my father mowing the barley."

The lawyer told a story bold
Together they were going,
Till she quite forgot the barley field
And left her father mowing.

And now she is the lawyer's wife
And dearly the lawyer loves her.
She's living a happy, contented life,
Well into a station above her.

SIDE II, Band 6: \Scarecrow Fair\n
(derived by McDill from Cecil Sharp's English Folk Songs, Novello's) is a fragment of an extremely ancient ballad (Child No. 2, The Elfin Knight), common in all areas of Britain and North America. In the original song a girl hears the far-off blast of the elfin knight's horn and wishes he were in her bed. He straightforward appears, but will not consent to be her lover until she answers a series of riddles. This trait of test-by-riddle is a heritage from remote antiquity. The survival of this ancient piece of folklore is assured by the fact that all the
couples in this song contain gentle, but evocative erotic symbols.

Are you going to Scarborough Fair
Parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme.
Remember me to one who lives there,
For once he was a true love of mine.

REFRAIN:
Tell him to make me a casimir shirt,
Without a seam or needlestitch.
And he shall be a true love of mine.

Tell him to wash it in yonder dry well,
Where water never spread, nor drop of rain fell.
Tell him to hang it on yonder dry thorn,
Which never bore blossom since Adam was born.

O can you find me an acre of land
Between the sea foam and the sea sand?

SIDE II, Band 7: THE CHEERFUL MOTHER
(Coll. and arr. McColl) known throughout Great Britain and North America, reminds us of one of the commonest crimes traditional in our culture—infanticide. In the older forms found in Child (No. 20) the girl kills her three illegitimate babes because she is pleased to marry and wishes to appear at her wedding as a virgin. However, one of the children remains alive and begs a passer-by to take him to the wedding, where he denounces his mother. Thereupon, she is carried off to hell.

The present version comes from Evan McColl, who learned the tune from his mother, Betsy Miller, completing it from the Greg collection. It is common with the women who have trespassed this song over the centuries Miss Collins says, "While I feel sorry for the murdered babes, my deep sympathy lies with the poor mother."

A minister's daughter in the North, By the river and the little grove.
She's fallen in love with her father's clerk,
Down by the greenwood side—lo.

He courted her a year and a day,
Till her the young man did betray.

She leaned her back against a tree,
And there the tear did blind her eye.

She leaned her back against a thorn,
And there two bonny boys she has born.

She's taken out her little pen-knife,
And she has twined them of their life.

She laid them beneath a marble stone,
Thinking to go a maiden home.

As she looked over her father's wall
She saw her two bonny boys playing ball.

"O bonny boys, if you were mine,
I would dress you in silk so fine."

"O cruel mother, when we were thine,
We didn't see aught of your silk so fine."

"Now bonny boys come tell to me,
What sort of death I'll have to die."

"Seven years a fish in the flood,
And seven years a bird in the wood."

"Seven years a tongue in the warning bell,
And seven years in the flames of hell."

"Welcome, welcome, fish in the flood,
And welcome, welcome bird in the wood."

"Welcome, tongue to the warning bell,
But God keep me from the flames of hell."

SIDE II, Band 8: THE BONNY CUCKOO
(published in the Clarendon Song Book, Oxford University Press and learnt by the Misses Collins in their school choir in Hastings) is perhaps the most charming of the many songs which celebrate the cuckoo, the harbinger of spring and the natural symbol of cuckolds.

My bonny cuckoo, I tell thee true
That through the groves I'll rove with you.
I'll rove with you until the next spring,
And then my cuckoo shall sweetly sing.

The ash and the hazel shall mourning say,
O bonny cuckoo, don't go away.
Don't go away but tarry here,
And make the spring last all the year.
Don't go away but tarry here,
And sing for us throughout the year.

SIDE II, Band 9: THE QUEEN OF MAY
(from Sharpe's English Folk Songs, Novello's) tells the second part of the story introduced by My Bonny Cuckoo. When the cry of the cuckoo echoed through the meadows on the eve of the first of May, the young men and women went out together to gather May blossoms and to make love among the springtime blossoms. So deep-rooted was this pagan fertility practice that Protestant ministers were still unsuccessfully trying to eradicate it late in the 17th century. The feeling still lingers in rural England, especially in the lyric songs. It was a misfortune that prudery was at its height.

At the time Cecil Sharp was collecting and publishing, fifty years ago. In order to be able to introduce his folk-song finds into the school system, he was forced to oversimplify the texts and to transform many innocently erotic but extremely beautiful songs into the pallid, sentimental pieces which finally burned many British folk music. This, I feel sure, is one of the songs Sharp has to censor. What really happened that May Day morning under the oak tree was probably not legalized in the original folk version that Sharp collected. Of course, it is not possible for an American to cast stones in regard to censorship, for today American school text book editors behave far more prudishly than did Sharp, and poor Baring-Gould in the worst years of the same decade.

As I was a-walking to take the fresh air,
The flowers all blooming and gay,
I heard a young damsel so sweetly a-singing,
Her cheeks like the flowers in May.

I said, "Pretty maiden, may I go with you,
Through the flowers to gather some may?"
The maid she replied, "By path it is here,
I pray you pursue your own way."

So she tripped along with her dear little feet,
But I followed, and soon I drew nigh
I called her my pretty, my true love so sweet,
So she took me at last for her dear.

I took the fair maid by the silvery white hand,
On a green mossy bank we sat down;
I gave her a kiss on her sweet rosy lips,
A tree spread its branches around.

Now when we did rise from that sweet mossy grove,
In the meadows we wandered away,
And I sat my true love on a prime rose bank,
And I picked her a handful of May.

The very next morning I made her my bride,
Just after the breaking of day,
The bells they did ring, and the birds they did sing,
As I made her my Queen of sweet May.

SIDE II, Band 10: BIRD FOR LOVE
(From Traditional Tunes, by Frank Kidson arr. Collins) is perhaps the most beautiful of the many variants of this important British folk song, most familiar to us as The Butcher's Boy or There is a Tavern in the Town, or in Woody Guthrie's Hard America. This Northern English variant points to one of the most important differences between British and American love-songs. Typically in the English love song there is an avaricious encounter between a young man and the young woman, and though the girl is often betrayed, she expresses in her song a trace of the real pleasure that she experienced. Even more importantly, she has a baby; and, through her melancholy, there lingers note of procreative joy. Very frequently in these songs the boy returns to carry her when he discovers that she is about to bear him a child. American singers have betrayed girl, censored out the pregnancy theme; and the betrayed girl was left to brood over the tenancy of love and sigh for death to heal her heartbreak.

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