

The Cherry-Tree Carol In Kentucky Mountains

Relics of English Ballads in America—New Phases of the Folksong Movement—Collectors Busily at Work Gathering Tunes and Texts.

By H. E. KREHBIEL.

WHEN, on April 30 of this year, The Tribune printed the words and tunes of several English ballads as they have been handed down orally for generations among the mountaineers of Kentucky, some comment was briefly made on the peculiar success which has attended the efforts to collect these relics of ancient song in the Southern States. An explanation of the phenomenon was found (or, at least sought) in the circumstance that there has been a larger survival of the old English and Scottish ballads in the mountainous regions of Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, Georgia and the Carolinas than elsewhere in the country because of the isolation in which their inhabitants lived. There can be no doubt, however, that much of the success of the Southern collectors is due to their extraordinary zeal, stimulated by the fact that romantic elements have attended their researches which are absent in cities and more populous rural districts. Urban peoples feel little interest in traditions of any kind. Their lives are too full of contemporaneous distraction, diversion and entertainment. Moreover, he who wants folksongs must go after them, and his search must be laboriously and systematically conducted. When Professor Child, of Harvard University, made his monumental collection and still more monumental comparative study he was thrown chiefly upon the manuscript and printed collections which he could find in Europe. He did not have such an admirable agency as the present English Folk-Song Society to help him by collecting songs from the mouths of folksong singers in Great Britain, and for traditional American versions he was thrown wholly upon chance and the interest of a few friends. Had he undertaken a lecture tour of the country and appealed to his hearers to make him the repository of their memories he would have made a richer harvest. Such, at least, has been my experience. Some years ago I talked to a considerable number of clubs, schools and popular audiences between the Atlantic and the Mississippi River on the subject of "Wandering Ballads," and I seldom left a meeting without at least one contribution to my portfolios. Some of the ballads thus collected are now to be given to the readers of The Tribune, along with a few more ballads from the Kentucky mountains, for which I am beholden to Miss Josephine McGill, of Louisville; and with the words I shall print the melodies, since a song without its tune is only half a song.

preserved, and in others the tree is a fig. In Franz M. Böhme's "Alt-deutsches Liederbuch" I find a hymn of the fifteenth century used at the dramatic ceremony in the churches, called Kindelwiegen (a ceremony of which the etreche tableaux in the Catholic churches is a survival, I fancy), called "Die heilige Familie auf der Flucht nach Egypten," in which the tree is a date palm (not a fig, as Child says). The quaint old verses are worth reproducing:

Joseph der nam sein Knecht... Maria sprach die datteln... In Halliwell's edition of the Coventry Mysteries Pageant XV is a play which Hone describes under the title, "The Miraculous Birth, and the Midwives."

Mary, while they are travelling, espies a tree, and inquires of Joseph: "A my sweet husband! wolle se telle to me. What tree is that, standing yonder?"

"God in tryntrye," and he humbles himself accordingly. With the remainder of the play we are not concerned. From various copies printed at different places Hone compiled his version, which is as follows:

Joseph was an old man, An old man was he, And he married Mary, Queen of Galilee.

Thus far the carol follows the pseudo-Matthew legend; the continuation has nothing to do with the legend, and is the most beautiful part of the ballad. There is but a suggestion of it in the last two stanzas of the Kentucky version. In the compilation made by Hone the carol runs on as follows:

As I walked in my father's hall, All alone, O— She's taken her a walk one day, Down by the greenwood side, O.

The Cherry-Tree Carol musical score with lyrics: When Joseph was an old man, An old man was he, ho, ho, mar-rit tigit

1. When Joseph was an old man, An old man was he, He married Virgin Mary, the Queen of Galilee. 2. As Joseph and Mary were walking one day, Here are apples, here are cherries, enough to behold.

The Cruel Mother musical score with lyrics: There was a la-dy in yon-der town, A-lone, a-lone-y, O— She's tak-en her—a walk one day, Down by—the green-wood side—y—O!

1. There was a lady in yonder town, Alone, alone, O— She's taken her a walk one day, Down by the greenwood side, O.

Kentucky Version of "The Cruel Mother." (All rights reserved.)

The Greenwood Sidey musical score with lyrics: As I walked in my father's hall, All alone, O— I saw a ba-by toss-ing ball Down by the green-wood side-y.

the one string which is used as a chanterelle on which melody is played is stopped by the fingers without mechanical aid, as the strings of the violin and banjo are stopped. The strings which are left open furnish forth all the harmony that folksongs require.

How Pasquale Amato Made His Name

Pasquale Amato, the Metropolitan Opera star who has been called by some admirers "the emperor of barytone," did not start his career as an infant prodigy. He had not been "acclaimed in three continents" at the age of five. Not until he was twenty-two years old did he make his debut as Germont in "La Traviata," a role which was to prove as fortunate for him the first time he sang it as it has been since.

Central Park Concert.

The programme for to-day's popular concert at the Mall, Central Park, at 4 p. m., to be given by Franz Kaitenbom and his orchestra. The Park Department announces that this concert was made possible by the generosity of Elikan Naumburg.

MUSICAL INSTRUCTION. WATERHOUSE, CARO-MIHR-HARDY, ROXAS, DE STEFANO, BURRITT, OVIDE MUSIN, THELO VAN YORX TENOR, MEHAN, GEIGER FUNDAMENTAL, WOODRUFF, JUDSON HOUSE, NEWAMSTERDAM.

A Growsome Tale of Murdered Twin Babes.

An old ballad which Miss McGill has recovered with unusual completeness is obviously No. 20 in the Child collection, where it is called "The Cruel Mother." It is very common throughout Teutonic countries. The story is brief, but peculiarly growsome. A maiden gives birth to two babies. To hide her disgrace she takes them into the country and stabs them to death with a penknife. Some time thereafter while walking she comes across two handsome little boys whom she addresses, telling them of the kind treatment they should have if they were her children. They make answer that when they were hers theirs was a very different lot, accuse her of her wickedness and tell her of the punishment of hell which is in store for her.

A Christ-Child Legend in Ballad Form.

It will probably surprise no one familiar with balladry to learn that of the 305 ballads which Professor Child printed in his collection the one that has often been found in the United States and which is most widely distributed in this country is "Barbara Allen." An obvious reason for this is the fact that "Barbara Allen" has frequently been printed in popular song-books and sung by many persons who never gave a thought to its traditional character. It has been found in every one of the Southern states mentioned and eight variants have been noted officially in New England. As opposed to this there is only one recovery of "The Cherry-Tree Carol" in the United States and that is the one which is printed and discussed for the first time now and here, though it, too, has been published with music for popular use. I am beholden for this version, collected in Kentucky to Miss McGill who writes that she heard it from only one singer who lived in a most inaccessible place in the mountains. The evidence that it is genuinely traditional is incontrovertible. Child, who numbers it 84, prints a version with variants from Sandy's "Christmas Carols" collected in the West of England; another version from Husk's "Songs of the Nativity" reprinted from a broadside of the 18th century; one from Hone's "Ancient Mysteries" published in 1823; one from Sylvester's "A Garland of Christmas Carols;" one from a Birmingham chapbook of about 1845 quoted in Cowper's "Apocryphal Gospels;" one from Bramley and Stainer's "Christmas Carols" (in which it appears with a melody as sung in Yorkshire); and one taken down from the mouth of a wandering gypsy girl in Berkshire. In No. 13 of the Journal of the English Folk-song Society, published in June 1909, there is

John Runciman, Musical Critic

"The London Athenaeum" for May has an interesting analysis of the work and character of the late John F. Runciman, the well known English music critic. The article is signed "R. H. L.," and is most keen and amusing in some of its bits. "J. F. R. was undoubtedly clever and full of knowledge, often brilliant in his writing, yet quite as often needlessly violent. Normally his judgment was unimpeachable, but his almost natural violence of expression so frequently got the better of him that the judgment went by the board in the storm. If his word had not swept so much to many, Runciman's attitude would often have been downright amusing, for in conversation he had a curious knack of demolishing his own idols, and of promptly reconstructing them if his hearer agreed to the lawfulness of his bludgeoning. In other words, he—according to the writer's experience of twenty years or more—preferred opposition to agreement. He was not in reality so independent in his views as he was popularly believed to be, for he was always 'agin the government,' right or wrong. This is precisely where he became to the writer of more true interest than through his work, excellent, even fine, though that was on occasion. "Runciman was neither the founder nor really the chief representative of his school, though he came to be regarded as both by those who do not know their contemporary history. A few years ago there lived in the north of England one Arthur Johnstone, critic for 'The Manchester Guardian,' the bravest and best-equipped professional music critic of our day. To his finger-tips Johnstone was an artist, in that the Naxos hammer and the velvet glove were equally familiar to him in their uses. Arthur Johnstone, both in his method of expressing his opinion and in the formation of that opinion, was sui generis. His knowledge was profound, and he was always a student, always learning, always open and unbiased, so far as any man can be unbiased. He was full of race qualities, and these qualities had their defects. As would appear to be human, it was just these very defects of great qualities that appealed to lesser minds, and of these lesser minds Runciman's was one, though not the only one, on the critical bench of the time. Runciman could hit even harder, avoidspoas as it were, than Johnstone, but he could not give so sound a reason for the punch or the cause of it, nor did he concern himself in the matter; and he could be as suave and honeyed, but his honey was of the 'synthetic' or substituted kind, of the cheap Swiss order, not pure as from the heather. Yet nevertheless he was a descendant from Johnstone; he was the 'naughty boy' of the same school, and in the winter's experience he rejoiced in the defects of his qualities rather than in the qualities themselves, in the prejudice which consumed him often rather than in any truth that may have existed in the object of his prejudice. And so, very often, he made himself supremely ridiculous, even when he allowed his better self to override the prejudice. His best was distinguished; his worst was contemptible. But he was frank and outspoken and often convincing. He had all of Johnstone's defects, but, unfortunately, by no means all of Johnstone's glorious qualities. "Not altogether kind is R. H. L., but there is much truth in his writing.

MUSICAL INSTRUCTION.

MME. NOVELLO DAVIES, CLARA DE BAUERE, ALICE GARRIGUE MOTT, VAL PEAVEY, Russell Studios, PHILIP SPOONER, BANKS, SINGALLIANO, KARL A. KRUEGER, CONSERVATORY, FLORE McCALLAN, PHILIP SPOONER, JUDSON HOUSE, A. FRECKELTON, JR., NEWAMSTERDAM, PROFESSIONAL ENTERTAINERS.