SONGS AND RHYMES FROM THE SOUTH

BY E. C. PERROW

The region of the southern Appalachian Mountains, embracing the southwestern portion of Virginia, eastern Kentucky, western North Carolina, East Tennessee, and the northern portions of Georgia and Alabama, constitutes a country which, though divided among several States, is indeed a unit with regard both to the country and to the character of its people. The relative inaccessibility of the country, as compared with the surrounding territory, has until very recently kept back the tide of progress, which, sweeping around this region, has shut up there a strange survival of a civilization of three hundred years ago.

The most striking thing to be observed about the Southern people to-day is, I think, their extreme conservatism with regard to their customs, their manners, and their habits of thought; for the Southern people brought with them from Europe many Middle-Age traditions which their manner of life has tended to conserve. Their settlement in the plain country, on large and comparatively isolated plantations, the coming-in of the slave relation (essentially feudal in its nature), and the complete absence of immigration during recent years, have all tended to keep alive a form of civilization long outgrown by other divisions of the country.

In the mountain region to which I have referred the conditions have been especially such as might be expected to preserve primitive ideals. At an early date after the settlement of eastern Virginia and North Carolina the more adventurous spirits began to thread their way through the mountain-defiles of what was then the unknown West, and to build their cabins along the creeks that broke from that labyrinth of mountain and forest. They were rough; but many of them were worthy, honest-hearted people. Among them were not a few Scotch-Irish, who brought with them, besides their Scottish names and many Scottish words, their native sturdiness of character and love of liberty. Others there were, no doubt, of more questionable condition, — men who had been outlawed in Virginia and North Carolina and had sought refuge in these fastnesses; men who loved fighting better than work, and freedom better than the restraints of the law.

Since their settlement in this region, there have been few enough influences brought to bear to keep this isolated people in line with the growth of the outside world. For a long time commerce left the territory unexploited: "What shołde it han avayled to werreye?
Ther lay no profit, ther was no richesse." The rude log cabin of the mountaineer, with its stone-stick-and-mud chimney; the bit of truck garden near the house, tilled by the women-folk; the hillside, with its scant cover of Indian-corn, with now and then a creek-bottom in which weed and crop struggle on equal terms for the mastery; the cold, clear limestone water breaking from the foot of the ridges; the noisy trout stream, now clear as glass, now swollen by the almost daily thunder-storm; the bold knobs rising steep from the valleys and covered with blackberries or huckleberries; and in the background wave after wave of mountain forest, with its squirrel, wild geese, 'possum, coon, "painter," rattlesnakes, and an occasional bear,—these constituted the wealth of the country. Of course, the summer-resort found its place among us. Thither come, summer after summer, the "quality" to drink the far-famed mineral waters. A few are momentarily interested in the dialect and habits of the people, and some return to the outside world to write stories of the mountains more or less true to the characters with which they deal. But such visitors leave no impression on the people. Railroads have forced their way through these regions, but their influences have touched the people only superficially—given them something to sing about, or possibly caused some of those living near the stations to take up the custom of wearing collars instead of the standard red handkerchief. The man back in the ridges, however, they have left unchanged.

The dialect of this people marks them as belonging to another age. Uninfluenced by books, the language has developed according to its own sweet will, so that certain forms have become standard alike for the unlettered and the better educated. Here help is the preterite for help, sont for sent, fotch for fetch, dive for dive, crepe for creep, drug for drag, seen for see (sometimes see, cf. Gower's sigh), taken for take. Many old forms persist. Many old words appear, such as, lay (verb

1 The stories of Craddock are untrue as to dialect, and show, I think, an over-idealization of character. Her work has been, though, of great value in awakening an interest in the country of which she writes. Moonshining, of which Craddock made so much in her stories, has now about ceased in these mountains. It is less risky to buy cheap "rot-gut" from the licensed purveyors in Middlesboro, Ky., although for the consumer it is much less wholesome than the purer moonshine. The novels of Fox are interesting; but to me, at least, the atmosphere is far from convincing. The pictures drawn by Opie Reed are, I think, much nearer the truth. Better still are the sketches of Charles Forster Smith (Nashville, 1908); though both he and Craddock are wrong, I think, in what they say about the sadness of the women. Serious they are always, but to call their lives unhappy is a kind of pathetic fallacy. Their lot is simple, but they love their homes and even the monotony of their daily lives. The best single article I have seen about these people is that by Adeline Moffett (Journal of American Folk-Lore, vol. iv, p. 314). For interesting lists of dialect words, see Professor Smith's articles in Transactions of the American Philological Association for 1883 and 1886, and in The Southern Bisouca for November, 1885. Many interesting words have also been reported to Dialect Notes from various parts of the South, most of which are current in East Tennessee.
wager), start-naked, sned, larn (teach), find (furnish), outfavor (to be better looking than), frail (trash), ferninst (apparently a corruption of anent), piggin (a small wooden vessel with one handle), noggin (such a vessel with no handle), poke-supper (at which the food is served from pokes), buck (to bend), smidgin, and hobberod (cf. AS. hobb).

The idea of compounding words is still alive among this people. We hear stove-room (for kitchen), widder-man, home-house, and engineman. Suffixes are still alive: we hear such formations as pushy, botherment, and even footback.

There are some peculiar words and usages. Several means "a large number:" "There are several blackberries this year." Themirs is equivalent to young chickens. When one is proficient in anything, he is said to be a cat on that thing: "She is a cat on bread." Proud means happy. Ficety is an adjective applied to one who is "too big for his breeches."

The pronunciation seems to be old. Oi has invariably the older sound of ai in aisle; so in roil, poison, coil [kwail], etc. The diphthong ou has, not the later sound of a plus uu (as in the speech of the Virginians and in what I take to be the speech of the Englishman), but the older sound of a plus uu, with usually another vowel introduced before, making a triphthong e plus a plus u. Again, the diphthong represented in such words as light, wife, wipe, by the spelling i, has not, as in the speech of the Virginians and in that of the Englishmen (cf. Murray's Dictionary), the sound a plus i, but the older a plus i.  

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1 a = vowel in but.
2 In the dialect of my own family (Piedmont, Va.) the spelling au, ow, is pronounced a plus u in an unclosed syllable, before a voiced consonant, and before l, m, n, and r; so, now [nau], thow, loud, mouth (verb), gouge, foul, sound, town, our, louse,ouse (verb). But before a voiceless consonant the spelling au, ow, is pronounced as a plus u; so, louse [lose] (contrast lousy), lout (contrast loud), mouth (contrast the verb). The diphthong represented by the spelling i, y, is pronounced a plus i in unclosed syllables, before voiced consonants, and before l, m, n, and r; so, tribe [trob], ride, writhe, "Tige," oblige, mile, time, wine, wire, wise, rive. But before voiceless consonants the pronunciation is a plus i; so, wise [wize] (contrast wives), like, wipe, wise and rice, site, "Smythe." These rules hold also for New England, as far as I can judge. Sweet represents the first element of the spelling au, ow, as being in modern English the low-mixed-wide, which is probably the sound I hear in the Virginia house [hous]. The Englishman, it seems to me, has let his diphthong slip forward for practically all the words spelled au, ow. The same tendency is observable in eastern Virginia, where one hears cow [kau], our [ou], and the plural houses [houses]. I think this is because eastern Virginia has been more closely in touch with the mother country and the developments there. But in Tennessee, and in all that part of the South which has not been in constant intercourse with the mother country, all the au, ow, words are pronounced with a diphthong made up of the mid-back-wide plus the high-back-wide-round. (It must be remembered that these sounds, both in Virginia and Tennessee, are often modified by the introduction before them of an e sound, the mid-front-narrow; so that with many we have the triphthongs, [eau] in Tennessee, and [eau] in Virginia.) Murray's Dictionary records that in England the diphthong represented by the spelling i, y, is in almost all English words the mixed vowel plus the high-front-narrow; so, time [tizim], etc.
Further, the r, now reduced to a mere vocal murmur in the standard pronunciation of the English, is heard here with all the snarl that it could have possessed in the time of Ben Jonson.¹

Certain customs, too, mark this people as of another age. The practice of giving nicknames is universal among them. No boy grows up without being called by something other than the name his parents gave him. Sometimes the nickname of the father will become a patronymic, and serve as a surname for the children. Some peculiarity of personal appearance, speech, or habit, or some action in which the man has been involved, usually serves as a basis for the nickname.

The custom of feasting at funerals still obtains. When a death occurs, all the neighborhood gather at the house of the deceased. There they “sit up” with the body day and night for several days, and eat the “funeral baked meats” that the family of the departed one are expected to prepare.

The people are for the most part rather superstitious. Almost every affair of life is regulated in accordance with the sign of the moon. Scarcely any one will dig a well without consulting a water-witch, who with his peach-tree fork, together with a good supply of native judgment, usually succeeds in locating a stream. The belief in “hants” is universal here. I know one man who, professing to communicate with the dead, keeps the whole neighborhood in terror. Old women gather “yarbs” and practise medicine. Charms are used to heal diseases in man and beast, and sick children are brought many miles to be breathed upon by a seventh son or by one who has never seen his father.

A remarkable degree of honesty obtains among the mountain folk. I was among them for over twenty years, and yet I never heard of a burglary in the county in which I lived. Indeed, I heard of very little stealing. People do not lock their corn-cribs or chicken-houses. Boats on the river are common property. Any one may use a boat, but he is expected to bring it back to the place from which he took it. I had a neighbor who was sent to jail for a term as a punishment for destroying a “neighbor’s landmark.” The jailer allowed him to return home on Saturday night and spend Sunday with his family. On Monday morning he was always promptly back at his work. He never thought of running away. There is maintained, too, a very high standard of sexual relations. Now and then there are relations of this kind between young folk; but it is almost invariably the outcome of a pure and genuine love, and the boy almost invariably stands by the girl and marries her. No one thinks less of either therefor; and the child of such a relation, even though born out of wedlock, is

¹ For an excellent treatment of the southern r, see the Louisiana State University Bulletin, February, 1910.
never made to feel that there is any stain on his name. Should the boy fail to stand by the girl, he would have to choose "Texas or hell," the choice being forced both by public sentiment and the accuracy of what rifles the girl's family could put in the field.

One of the most interesting survivals is the mountaineer's idea of law. His conception is pre-eminently the Germanic. With him it is not an affair of the State, such as may be modified by legislators in distant Nashville: it is something personal, something belonging to his family, a heritage that cannot be alienated; and the guaranty of these unwritten rights is neither sheriff nor governor, but his own right arm. To him the courts are an impertinence. No one could appreciate better than he the feeling of Robin Hood toward the high sheriff of Nottingham.

There is a considerable amount of shooting going on in this country all the time, though formerly there was more than there is now. On one occasion a generation ago, nine men, I am told, were hanged at one time in the county in which I was reared. The ninth man to ascend the scaffold coolly remarked that "it seemed the sign was in the neck that week." There was a tavern at no great distance from where I lived, at which fifty-seven men had been killed. During the last summer that I spent in my county, four men on the "yan side er Clinch" shot one another to pieces with Winchester rifles, the wife of one of the combatants standing by her husband, and handing him ammunition until he fell. The man who brought across the news to us had little to say about the men, but remarked that it was a pity to see lying there a fine horse which had been killed by a stray shot. These are men of war from their youth. The training with "shootin'-irons" begins with childhood; and the boy of twelve is often, in marksmanship, the match for an experienced man.

But while outlawry there is not so common as it once was, the people still admire it, and will sit for hours telling stories of men who have defied the courts. Many are the prose sagas told there of men like Macajah Harp, Bill Fugate,\(^1\) Bloof Bundrant, and Harvey Logan. Nor do I think this admiration for the outlaw is anything abnormal. It is only another expression of admiration for bravery, whether rightly

\(^1\) I have a friend in Grainger County who takes great pride in the fact that he "run" with Bill Fugate. He tells many stories of this outlaw. One will bear repeating here. The sheriff sent Fugate word that he was coming for him. Fugate sent him word that if he did, he had better bring a "wagin" with which to haul back his own dead body; if, however, the sheriff were anxious to see him, he would come to the next session of his own accord. At the appointed time Fugate came, took his seat in the prisoner's box, and awaited the completion of his trial. He was found guilty, and the judge pronounced the sentence. The sheriff came over to take charge of the prisoner; but that individual promptly covered the sheriff with two pistols, told the crowd that if all remained quiet, none should be hurt, backed out of the room, sprang on his horse, and rode back to the mountains.
or wrongly exerted. The stories of Hereward, Fulk Fitz Warine, Robin Hood, Grisli, Grettir, Wolf, Wilhelm Tell, Eustace, and Francisco are just such expressions as have come from earlier periods of the English, Scandinavian, German, French, and Spanish peoples. Even to-day the story of crime still holds its place in the bookstalls; and we all, old and young, like still to see a criminal die game.

One other characteristic of this folk must not be forgotten: they sing constantly. If, on almost any "pretty day," you should walk along a country road in East Tennessee, you could listen to the ploughman singing or whistling in the fields, while across the neighboring creek there would come the song of the barefoot country girl as she helped her mother hang out the washing or "pack water" from the spring. If you should pass a group of men who, having been "warned" to work the road, were "putting in their time" on the highway, you would hear them continually breaking into song as they swung the pick, handled the shovel, or drove the steel drill into some projecting rock. On the porch of the cross-roads store you would find a party of idle boys and men, who, if not eager listeners to some rude banjo minstrel's song, would be singing in concert, now a fragment of some hymn, and at the next moment some song of baldest ribaldry. If your visit to this country happened to be at the proper time of the week, you might be able some night to attend a "singin'." You would find the young folk gathered at the "meetin'-house," or still more probably at the home of one member of the "class." The songs which they have gathered to practise are of the Sunday-school variety, such as have been introduced by the singing-school teacher. In this gathering nearly every one has a book and reads his music. I have known people who, although they can scarcely read a word of English, read music well. You are not to be surprised, too, if you hear some very good singing, only it is fearfully loud, each singing at the top of his voice, while the song is invariably "entuned in the nose." They often mispronounce the words, and still oftener have no idea as to what the words mean, but that does not matter: the song goes on. After the

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1 This teacher, called the "professor" (a title given in the South to all male teachers), teaches ten days for ten dollars, and "boards around" with his "scholars." He is a representative of what was once the travelling minstrel. Not only is he the final authority on all matters musical, and the high priest of religious music, but he also, from time to time, essays the composition of both poetry and music, and teaches the folk to sing his songs. Professor Beatty published recently in the Journal of American Folk-Lore (vol. xxii, p. 71) a song based on the New Market wreck. I heard last summer another song composed on this same occurrence by one of these travelling minstrels. I have also in mind a song that the teacher who "learned" me the "rudiments" composed and had us sing at the farewell session of his school. Besides the fact that the singing-master is the custodian of all religious music, he also assumes many of the functions of the preacher. Teaching in the churches and drawing his patronage from the members, he finds it necessary also to "talk;" and so it is the usual thing to hear religious exhortation mixed with instruction in music.
singing is over, the young folk make their way home, usually singing all
the way. The boys who have not a “swing” amuse themselves by
firing their pistols (the logae viriles of the mountain boy) in proud
contempt of the sheriff and all that with him ever be.

I call attention to this religious singing because it is one of the
directions that the popular love of music has taken. The Church has
often, consciously or unconsciously, been the greatest foe to the
preservation of popular tradition. These songs, learned at Sunday-
school, take the place of all others; and it is mostly these that, on the
next day, occupy the girl as she “battles” the clothes, and the boy as
he chops out the “crap.”

But as strong as is the grip of the Church, back in the coves and
hollows the spirit of mirth still dwells in other than idle brains. At
“Square” Murray’s, near the head of Wildcat, there is pretty sure
to be, before many weeks pass, a “quiltin’,” a “house-raisin’,” a
“workin’,” a “watermelon-cuttin’,” a “candy-pullin’,” or a “pea-
hullin’.” At the last named the tedious task of shelling the summer’s
crop of peas is made even a pleasure, for the happy thought of the
hostess has seated the young folk two by two on the sand-scoured
floor in front of a great backlog fire, now roaring, in the wide-throated
chimney, against the wind and the frost outside. About eleven o’clock
the floor is cleared of hulls, the banjo and the fiddle are brought in,
and some of the young folk are soon dancing to the time of “Rabbit in
the Pea-Patch,” “I Love Somebody,” “The Arkansaw Traveller,”
“Old Folks better go to Bed,” “The Devil’s Dance,” “Fire in the
Mountain,” or some other characteristic mountain melody. I said
“some of the young folk” designedly; for not all are bold enough
to risk the anathema of the circuit-rider backed by the entire body
of the Church. In fact, the parents of many of these young people
allow them to come to this merry-making only on condition that
they do not dance. But these young church members are in-
genious. They propose a game of “Skip-to-my-loo,” “Weavilly-
Wheat,” “Shoot-the-Buffalo,” or some other equally innocent form of
moving to the time of music. Here, of course, the fiddle is left out,
and the “players” sing for an accompaniment to their “play.” This,
as everybody knows, is not dancing, this is “Skip-to-my-loo;” and yet
by this name it seems as sweet to these thoughtless ones as the forbid-
den pleasure itself, while they have the added assurance that it leaves
neither soil nor cautel to besmirch the virtue of their church records.¹

¹ Dancing is considered by the religiously inclined as one of the most damning of sins.
It seems to derive its wickedness from the instrument which accompanies it. An instrument
of music is considered the especial property of the Devil. Not many churches will
allow even an organ in their buildings. Particularly does the Devil ride upon a fiddle-
stick. People who think it a little thing to take human life will shudder at the thought of
dancing.

VOL. XXV.—NO. 96.—10
That song is instinctive with this folk is further shown, I think, by the fact that with them all formal discourse is sung. I do not here refer to the sing-song way in which all speech is carried on among them; though I think this, too, is significant. I mean that whenever a man or woman speaking in public becomes deeply interested in what he is saying, he begins to sing to a definite rhythm, and with a distinct regard for pitch, all that he has to say. The Hard-shell Baptists sing their sermons to well-defined melodies,—melodies which are improvised by the preacher at the time of speaking. Indeed, this gift of singing the sermon is regarded as the chief criterion of a call to preach. It is also to be noted that the members, when they get happy and shout, cry out in the same rhythmic movement, and sometimes dance—after King David's manner, we can imagine—in perfect time to their shouting.

Having once understood how completely for several generations these people have been separated from the advancing civilization of the rest of the world, and having seen how thoroughly instinctive with them is their love for song, we should not be surprised to find that among them there still exist some traces of the ancient ballad-making faculty. As a matter of fact, many of the traditional ballads have been found among them still alive; and yet other songs, apparently the very material out of which the popular ballad is made, may be picked up there to-day.

It was my fortune, while I was yet a child, to move with my parents to the mountains of East Tennessee. As I grew up, I learned a good many of these songs, and I have even watched some of them in the process of formation. For some years past I have been trying to make a collection of such fragments of popular verse as I could remember or could induce my friends to write down for me.

Although I have found the germ of this collection in the body of verse which I secured from the mountains, I have also included such kindred verse as I have been able to collect in other Southern States. I have even gone further; for, believing that the Southern negro is, in a yet greater degree than the white man of the South, a representative of the ballad-making epoch, I have included also such negro verse as I could readily pick up.


As far as I know, the material I have has never appeared in print. It is certainly in the possession of the folk, and for the most part, I believe, has sprung from the heart of the folk. Most of the songs I
am reporting are mere fragments. Individuals seldom know a song in its entirety: they know it only by snatches. It must be remembered, too, that these songs are not integral things. In many cases the stanzas have no definite order; and some stanzas may be known to one person and community, and be entirely unknown to another. Further, some songs have become hopelessly confused with others. This fact is due chiefly, I think, to the comparative scarcity of melodies, one melody being made to serve for several different songs.

In such songs as I have from recitation, I have attempted to represent by phonetic spelling the words which have a local pronunciation. In those which I know only from manuscript I have retained the spelling of the original, although that spelling rarely represents the true sound. Such manuscripts as I have been able to secure I have deposited in the Harvard College Library.

I. SONGS OF OUTLAWS

Besides the many stories of outlaws current in the mountains, we are not surprised to find some songs of outlaws. Usually, whenever an outlaw has attracted public attention, some form of song springs up concerning him. A few summers ago Harvey Logan, an outlaw of national reputation, was confined in the Knoxville jail. The public made a hero of him, and many ladies carried him flowers during his imprisonment. During the same summer he made his escape from jail in a very sensational manner. He was after this more than ever considered as a hero. I was not surprised, then, last summer to find a fragment of a ballad which had already sprung up concerning the deeds of this outlaw. Other outlaws are honored in the same way. I present below some of the outlaw songs I have picked up in the South.

1. JESSE JAMES

1 See *Journal of American Folk-Lore*, vol. xxii, p. 246, for a version from North Carolina.
Variant of the foregoing Chorus.

(Laid Jesse James in his grave,)

\[\text{D.S.}\]

A

(From East Tennessee; mountain whites; from memory; 1905)

Jesse James wuz the man\(^1\) who travelled thoel the lan',
Stealin' en robbin' wuz 'is trade;
But a dirty little caoward by the name uv Robert Haoward\(^2\)
Laid Jesse James in 'is grave.\(^3\)

Pore Jesse James! Pore Jesse James!
Laid Jesse James in 'is grave;
En a dirty little caoward by the name uv Robert Haoward
Laid Jesse James in 'is grave.

Oh, the people uv the West, when they h'yerd uv Jesse's death,
Wondered haow the hero come ter die;
But a dirty little caoward by the name uv Robert Haoward
Laid Jesse James in 'is grave.\(^4\)

It wuz late one Saddy\(^5\) night when the moon wuz shinin' bright
Thet Jesse James robbed the Danville\(^6\) train;
But thet Smith en Wesson ball knocked pore Jesse frum the wall\(^7\)
En laid Jesse James in 'is grave.

B

(From Eastern Kentucky; mountain whites; MS. of C. B. House\(^8\))

Oh! Jesse was the man, he travelled through the land,
For money Jesse never suffered pain;
Jesse and his brother Frank they robbed Chicago bank,
And stopped the Danville train.

Jesse said to his brother Frank, "Will you stand by my side
Till the Danville train passes by?"
"Yes; I'll stand by your side and fight one hundred men till I died\(^9\)
And the Danville train has rolled by."

\(^1\) In the mountains the "short a" has the standard English sound low-front-wide, not the low-front-narrow of other parts of the South.
\(^2\) Compare the corresponding line in C. Howard was a pseudonym assumed by Jesse James at one time in his career.
\(^3\) Assonance is of frequent occurrence in the songs of the mountains.
\(^4\) This stanza has evidently been corrupted by the slipping-out of the last two lines, and the substitution of lines from the refrain.
\(^5\) A night much beloved by the negroes and poor whites.
\(^6\) Folk etymology for Glendale, a railroad-station in Missouri where a famous robbery took place. The name of the station was afterward changed to avoid the danger of frightening passengers for the road. Danville is a natural change; the mountain folk did know Danville, Ky.
\(^7\) Jesse James was hanging a picture on the wall when his pretended friend shot him.
\(^8\) Contributed by Mr. C. B. House, Manchester, Ky.
\(^9\) This line appears to be too long, but it perhaps never existed in a smoother version.
Oh! Robert Ford was the man, he travelled through the land,
   He never robbed a train in his life,¹
But he told the courts that his aims was to kill Jesse James,
   And to live in peace with his wife.

Ten thousand dollars reward was given Robert Ford
   For killing Jesse James on the sly;
Poor Jesse has gone to rest with his hands upon his breast,
   And I'll remember Jesse James till I die.

C
(From Jackson County, Missouri; country whites; MS. of F. A. Brown, student in
Harvard University; 1907)

How the people held their breath
When they heard of Jesse’s death,
And they wondered how the hero came to die;
It was for the great reward
That little² Robert Ford
Shot Jesse James on the sly.

Jesse had a wife,
The joy of his life;
His children they were brave;
'Twas a thief and a coward
That shot Captain Howard
And laid Jesse James in his grave.

Jesse James was a man and a friend of the poor,³
And for money Jesse never suffered pain;
It was with his brother Frank
He robbed Chicago bank
And stopped the Glendale train.

And he wandered to the car that was not far away—
   For the money in the safe they did aim;

¹ A good expression of the supreme contempt of the mountaineers for a man like Ford.
   To them it was the height of tragic irony that such a man should kill Jesse James.
² One of the chief characteristics of the outlaw hero is his kindness to the poor. Compare
   the legends of the generosity of Hereward, Fulk Fitz Warine, and Robin Hood. Mr.
   F. A. Braun, a citizen of Jackson County, Missouri, tells me the following story of Jesse
   James, which he says is current in his county: One day the outlaw stopped at the cottage
   of a poor widow and asked for something to eat. The woman generously shared her meal
   with the stranger. But the latter noticed that both the widow and her children were in
   distress. He asked the poor woman what her trouble was. With tears in her eyes she
   told him that the house in which she lived was mortgaged, that this was the day for pay-
   ment, and that the landlord was coming for his money; but she lacked a considerable
   amount of the money that must be paid, and she knew that she should be turned out.
   The outlaw counted out the money needed, made her a present of it, and departed. He
   did not go far, however, but hid in a cornfield near the roadside. There he waited till
   the creditor had called at the widow’s cottage and was returning with the money. There-
   upon Jesse James took possession of the entire sum, and sent the creditor home with empty
   saddle-bags.
While the agent on his knees
Delivered up the keys
To Frank and Jesse James.

D
(From Jackson County, Missouri; country whites; MS. of F. A. Brown; 1908)
Jesse James was a man and the friend of the poor,
And for money he never suffered pain,
But with his brother Frank,
He robbed Chicago bank,
And stopped the Glendale train.
And they wandered to a car that was not far away,
For the money in the safe was their aims.
And the agent on his knees
Delivered up the keys
To Frank and Jesse James.

Jesse had a wife
And he loved her dear as life,
And he loved his children brave.
Oh the dirty little coward
That shot Johnny Howard
And laid Jesse James in his grave.

E
(From Southern Indiana; country whites; recitation of U. H. Smith, Bloomington, Ind.; 1908)
Jesse James had a wife,
The joy of his life,
And the children, they were brave;
But that dirty little coward
Who shot Johnny Howard
Has laid Jesse James in his grave.

F
(From Mississippi; country whites; MS. of Miss Annie Reedy, student in the University of Mississippi; 1908)
Jesse left a wife to mourn all her life,
Three children to beg for bread;
Oh, the dirty little coward that shot Mr. Howard,
And they laid Jesse James in his grave.

G
(From Mississippi; country whites; MS. of J. E. Rankin, student in the University of Mississippi; 1908)
Jesse James had a wife who mourned all her life,
Three children to cry for bread;
But a dirty little coward shot down Thomas Howard,
And they laid Jesse James in his grave.
H
(From Mississippi; country whites; MS. of Ben Bell, student; 1908)
Jesse James was a man, a pistol in each hand
He flagged down the great Eastern train;
In the shade of the trees, he delivered up the keys
Of the trains he had robbed years ago.

He pulled off his coat and hung it on the wall, —
A thing he had never done before,—
Robert Ford watched his eye, and shot him on the sly,
Which laid Jesse James in his grave.

I
(From Mississippi; country whites; MS. of J. L. Byrd, student; 1908)
Little Jesse James was a man of his own,
Killed many men and expected to kill as many more,
When he was shot on the sly by little Robert Ford,
Who laid poor Jesse in his grave.

People of the South, ain’t you sorry? (thrice)
They laid poor Jesse in his grave.

J
(From Mississippi; country whites; MS. of W. C. Stokes, student; 1908)
Mother I’m dreaming,
Mother I’m dreaming,
Mother I’m dreaming,
Of Frank and Jesse James.

K
(From Mississippi; negroes; 1909)
O Jesse James, why didn’t yuh run
When Bob Ford pulled his Gatlin gun,
Gatlin gun, Gatlin gun!

2. JACK MIDDLETON
(From Mississippi; country whites; MS. of J. E. Rankin, student; 1908)
My name, it is Jack Middleton;
From Arkansas I came;
I am a highway roughian;
Stage robbing is my game.

I went out into Texas,
Some gamblers ther to see;
I tell you, wild and reckless boys,
I got on a western spree.

I wore a pair of six shooters,
Which made me feel quite grand.

1 Jesse James, on this occasion, took his pistols off and tossed them on the bed.
2 "Little" appears to be a favorite epithet of ballad literature.
I found myself in camps one day
With Jesse James's band.\(^1\)

You know it put sad feelings o'er me
To think of days of yore,
And it's I'll be a good boy
And do so no more.\(^3\)

Jesse passed the bottle around;
We all took a dram;
Liquor put old hell in me
And I didn't give a damn.

There was Dick Little, Joe Collins, myself,
And Frank, and the other three,—
A squad containing seven men,
And a merry bunch was we.

Jesse took the train for St. Joe
And shipped the other three.
That left a squad containing
Joe Collins, Frank, and me.

Our plan was to cross the Rio Grande\(^8\)
And enter the western plains,
To intercept the U. P.
And rob the West-bound train.

O'Bannan's rangers followed us
One cold and stormy night.
At last we saw our only revenge
Was to give the boys a fight.

They whistled bullets all around our ears,
Although they passed us by;
But every time our rifles cracked
A ranger had to die.\(^4\)

I then pulled for old Arkansas,
I thought it was the best,
To put up at my girl's house,
And take a little rest.

There the sheriff tackled me,
He thought he was the boss;
But I drew old Betsy \(^6\) from my side
And nailed him to the cross.

---

\(^1\) This is interesting as connecting a group of other men with the Jesse James matter.
\(^2\) Possibly a momentary Falstaffian repentance.
\(^3\) Jesse James's band did some of their robbing across the border, in Mexico.
\(^4\) A touch of the true ballad brevity.
\(^6\) The more primitive folk are fond of giving names to their weapons. Compare the practice of the heroes of Romance.
3. OLD BRADY

(From Mississippi; country whites; MS. of R. J. Slay, student; 1908)

O mamma, mamma! what was that?
A big gun busted right across our back!

Ho, ho! he has been on the jolly too long.

I went a little closer and then stepped back,
And saw the blood on Brady's back.²

They sent for the doctor in a mighty haste.
"Oh, yonder comes the surgeon in a racking pace!"
He raised his hand, and his hand was red,
"Oh, my goodness gracious! old Brady is dead!"

When the news got out that old Brady was dead,
Out came the ladies all dressed in red.

4. DOCK BISHOP

(From Mississippi; country whites; MS. of J. E. Rankin; 1908)

My parents advised me when I was quite young
To leave off night walking,¹ bad company to shun.
To leave off night walking, bad company to shun.

But to their advising I paid little care;¹
Kept rambling and gambling in the wildest career.

I rambled and gambled by night and by day
All to maintain pretty Maggie and to dress her so gay.

Ofttimes I have wondered how women could love men;
But more times I've wondered how men could love them.

They will bring him to sorrow and sudden downfall;
They will bring him to labor, spring, summer, and fall.

When I was on shipboard, pretty Maggie by me,
Bound down in strong iron, I thought myself free.

When I landed from shipboard, my old father did stand,
A-pulling his grey locks and wringing his hands,

Saying, "Son, I have warned you before to-day,
And now I am ready to be laid in the clay."

Farewell to young men and ladies so gay;
To-morrow I'll be sleeping in the coldest of clay!

¹ An outlaw who was killed some years ago in Mississippi.
² Identical rhyme, a not uncommon thing in folk-poetry.
³ A gait of a horse amounting to about a mile in four minutes.
⁴ A Mississippi outlaw who claimed that he was driven to his nefarious trade by the expensive tastes of his wife. This is a good example of the ballad of moral advice that gets itself composed anent the execution of some criminal. Compare the broadsides, "The Trial and Confession of Frederick Prentice," the lamentation of James Rogers' "John Brown's Body" and "Captain Kidd."
⁵ Compare "night-riding" as used at present in the Southern States.
⁶ Pronounced to rhyme with "career," ke-uh.
5. OLD JOE CLARK

A

(From East Tennessee; mountain whites; from memory; 1905)

Ole Joe Clark 'e killed a man
En buried 'im in the san';
Said ef 'e had another chance,
He'd kill another man.

Good-by, ole Joe Clark!
Good-by, I'm gone!
Good-by, ole Joe Clark!
Good-by, Betty Brown!

B

(From Mississippi; country whites; MS. of R. J. Slay; 1908)

Old Joe Clark, he is a sharp,
Creeping through the timber,
Old Joe Clark shot at a lark
And killed my wife in the window.

6. CAPTAIN KELLY

(From West Virginia; mountain whites; MS. of Davidson; 1908)

As I walked over Mulberry Mountain,
I met Captain Kelly; his money he was counting,
First I drew my pistol; then I drew my rapier,
"Stand and deliver, for I'm your money-taker!"

Mush-a-ring-a-ring-a-rah!
Whack fol-d' the dady O!
Whack fol-d' the dady O!
Ther's whiskey in the jug.

I took it home to Molly,
I took it home to Molly,
And she said she'd ne'er receive it,
For the devil's in the women.
7. MY ROWDY BOY
(From West Virginia; mountain whites; MS. of Davidson; 1908)
Where is my rowdy boy?
Where is my rowdy boy?
He's been to the pen,
And he's got to go again.
Good-by, my rowdy boy!

8. THE STAGE ROBBER
E
(From Tennessee; mountain whites; from memory; 1905 ¹)
O fæther, O fæther! whut made you do so,
To rob the pore driver in the lowlan's so low? ²

9. THE DYING COWBOY³
A
(From Mississippi; country whites; MS. of M. A. Kent; 1909)
I rode to fair Laden, fair Laden,
I rode to fair Laden so early one morn,
And there I fancied a handsome young cowboy,
All dressed in linen and ready for the grave.

Go beat the drum lowly, and play the fife slowly,
And play the dead-march as they carry me along;
Go carry me to the graveyard and throw the sod o'er me;
For I'm a poor cowboy, I know I've done wrong!

Oh, once in the saddle I used to be dashing,
Oh, once in the saddle I used to be gay.
'Twas then I took to drinking, from that to card-playing,
Cut short in my living, now dying I lay.

Go call around me a crowd of young cowboys,
And tell them the story of my sad fate;
Go tell the[ir] dear mothers, before they go further,
Go stop the[ir] wild roving before it is too late.

Go write a letter to my grey-haired mother,
Go write a letter to my sister dear,
But then there is another, yes, dearer than mother;
What will she say when she knows I am dead?

¹ This is the only stanza I can remember of a song brought from Texas. It is said to have been composed by the daughter of the criminal and sold by her at the execution of her father. In this connection the following story is of interest. Some years ago an outlaw named Callahan was executed in Kentucky. Just before his execution he sat on his coffin and played and sang a ballad of his own composing, and, when he had finished, broke his musical instrument over his knee. The situation is, of course, the same as that of Burns’s “McPherson’s Farewell.”


³ For other versions of this well-known song compare Ibid., vol. xii, p. 250; and vol. xxii, p. 258.
(From Mississippi; country whites; MS. of J. E. Rankin; 1909)
As I went out walking early one morning,
As I went out walking one morning in May,
I met a young cowboy all dressed in white linen,
All dressed in white linen and ready for the grave.

Go write me a letter to my grey-headed mother;
Go write me a letter to my sister so dear;
And there is another more dear than a mother,
I know she’d be weeping if she knew I lay here.

"Go bring me a cup of cold water, cold water;
Go bring me a cup of cold water," he said;
But when I returned with the cup of cold water,
I found the poor cowboy lying there dead.

(From West Virginia; mountain whites; MS. of Davidson; 1908)
Once in my saddle I used to go socking,
Once in my saddle I used to be gay;
I first took to drinking, and then to card-playing,
Was shot in the breast, now dying I lay.

IO. TATERHILL

(From Tennessee; mountain whites; from memory; 1911)

\[\text{Sheet music:} \]

\[\text{Sheet music:} \]

Ef yer want ter git yer head knocked off,
Ef yer want ter git yer fill;
Ef yer want ter git yer head knocked off,
Go back ter Taterhill.

\[\text{Footnote:} \]
1 When the church now called Mary's Chapel was built, there was much dispute among the parishioners as to what the church should be named. One party stood for "Mary's Chapel," another for "Mount Zion," and another for "Tate's Hill." Officially the first prevailed; but the common people chose the last, which by folk-etymology they transformed to "Taterhill." The dispute, however, was for a time very violent, and the contending parties several times came to blows,—"drawed rocks en knives," as my friend Dave Noe expressed it. This stanza is a part of a song which sprang up to celebrate this contest. Even to this day it is not infrequent to have religious meetings broken up by a free-for-all fight. The men bring their pistols and their whiskey to the church, and, if things do not go to suit them, they sometimes resort to violence. I remember on one occasion the group on the inside of the church were besieged by the Moore clan from the outside. My cousin succeeded in holding the doorway against them by knocking down each man as he came up the steps, while the women and children were taken out through a window at the back of the building.
II. RAILROAD BILL

A

(From Alabama; negroes; recitation of Mrs. C. Brown; 1909)

Railroad Bill cut a mighty big dash;
Killed McMillan like a lightnin'-flash.
    En he'll lay yo po body daown.

Railroad Bill ride on de train,
Tryin' t'ac' big like Cuba en Spain.²
    En he'll lay yo po body daown.

Get up, ole woman, you sleepin' too late!
Ef Railroad Bill come knockin' at yo gate,
    He'll lay yo po body daown.

Talk abaout yo bill, yo ten-dollah bill,
But you never seen a bill like Railroad Bill.
    En he'll lay yo po body daown.

B

(From Mississippi; negroes; MS. of R. J. Slay; 1909)

Railroad Bill said before he died,
He'd fit all the trains so the rounders could ride.
    Oh, ain't he bad, oh, railroad man!

Railroad Bill cut a mighty big dash;
He killed Bill Johnson with a lightning-flash.
    Oh, ain't he bad, oh, railroad man!

C

(From Mississippi; negroes; MS. of J. R. Anderson; 1909)

Railroad Bill is a mighty bad man,
Come skipping and dodging through this land.

D

(From Mississippi; negroes; MS. of Dr. Herrington; 1909)

Talk about yer five er yer ten dollar bill;
Ain't no bill like de Railroad Bill.

12. JOE TURNER

(From Mississippi; negroes; MS. of M. F. Rubel; 1909)

Tell me Jo Turner's come to town; (thrice)
He's brought along one thousand links er chain;
He's gwine ter have one nigger fer each link,
Gwine ter get this nigger fer one link.

UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE,
LOUISVILLE, KY.

1 Railroad Bill was a "bad niggah" who terrified Alabama some years ago.
2 A reminiscence of the Spanish-American war.

(To be continued)