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Barbara Allen in Tradition and in Print

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"BARBARA ALLEN" IN TRADITION
AND IN PRINT

by

Sister Mary Athanasius Riley, B.V.M.

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Loyola University in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

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LIFE

Sister Mary Athanasius Riley, B.V.M., was born in Exira, Iowa, February 3, 1909.

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Periodicals in which the author's poems appear include Commonweal, Spirit, and Lyrical Iowa. Two of her poems have been reprinted in anthologies: "Truth and Beauty," in Anthology of Magazine Verse for 1938-1942 edited by Alan Pater, New York, 1942; and "Meditation on Time," in Joyce Kilmer's Anthology of Catholic Poets, edited by James E. Tobin, New York, 1955.

PREFACE

The study of a ballad as prolific as "Barbara Allen" involves the handling of a greater bulk of material than would ordinarily be dealt with in a master's thesis. Conclusions, to be valid, must be based on an investigation of all available material.

Some deviations from the usual methods of handling material in the field of English have been found expedient because of the special nature of the problem.

Following the practice used in other ballad studies, variants are referred to by the name of the editor and the letter used by him to designate the text, or a letter will be assigned by the author in the absence of such designation. These references will be placed in the text, thus dispensing with footnotes for each reference.

Special thanks are due to Dr. Marie Neville for her helpful interest in this project.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: THE PROBLEM AND THE BALLAD

The founding of the Society of Antiquaries in 1572 was the culmination of the increasing preoccupation with the past which was to continue to grow greatly in scope during the next century.¹ Hustvedt believes that Pepys' interest in popular ballads was largely due to this preoccupation with antiquities. His delight at hearing the "little Scotch Song of Barbara Allen"² in 1666 is certainly the most quoted of his comments and is "peculiarly interesting from our popular point of view."³ Hustvedt would place Pepys "on the borderland between the historian and the antiquarian" in his enthusiasm for the ballad.⁴

The second reference to the ballad occurs in 1759 when Goldsmith published the first of the impressionistic comments on

1 Sigurd Fernhard Hustvedt, Ballad Criticism in Scandinavia and Great Britain during the Eighteenth Century, London, 1916, 36.

2 Samuel Pepys, The Diary of Samuel Pepys, ed. Henry B. Wheatley, London, 1898, V, 175.

3 Hustvedt, Ballad Criticism, 36.

4 Ibid.

"Barbara Allen" which have characterized references to it since.⁵ The fact that Goldsmith became acquainted with Percy during the preceding year⁶ may throw some light on Goldsmith's recollection. However, his comment antedates Percy's Reliques by six years.

We do not know what version of the ballad was known to Pepys under the title "Barbary Allen," or to Goldsmith as "The Cruelty of Barbara Allen." The latter title resembles the broad-side title "Barbara Allen's Cruelty."⁷

The problem of determining the time and place of the origin of this ballad is difficult if not impossible, but some facts can be assumed. There is strong presumptive evidence that "Barbara Allen" originated in the British Isles, for although it is the most prolific ballad in most parts of the English-speaking world, no trace of it can be found in any other language except for a few late literary translations mentioned by Child.⁸

5 Oliver Goldsmith, "Happiness, In a great Measure, Dependant on Constitution," The Bee, II, October 13, 1759, 51-52; The Works of Oliver Goldsmith, ed. J.W.M. Gibbs, London, 1884-1886, II, 334.

6 Hustvedt, Ballad Criticism, 202.

7 See Chapter III of this thesis for a discussion of printed versions of the ballad.

8 Francis James Child, The English and Scottish Popular Ballad, New York, 1886, II, 279.

The origin of the ballad is but one aspect of this study, however, for as C. Alphonso Smith has aptly pointed out, there is no standard version of a ballad. The surviving ballads are not already made but are in the making.

As long as a ballad circulates by oral transmission it is always in process of making or remaking. The first version, if we could catch it hot from the lips of the composing throng, would not, through mere priority, be one whit more authentic than the latest version, provided the latest version was also the product of the people.⁹

In the same vein, Hustvedt remarks that a ballad "is not stifled out by the mere circumstance of being put down on paper. The folk may continue to recite it; the student and the reader gain the opportunity of knowing it as it was at the moment it was recorded in writing."¹⁰

If the printed text could always be considered a record of the ballad as it was at the moment of printing, the study of ballads would be simpler. However, it is a commonplace that many recorded versions have been changed to suit the taste of their editors. Hustvedt says that early nineteenth century editors

⁹ C. Alphonso Smith, "Ballads Surviving in the United States," Musical Quarterly, London, 1916, II, 120.

¹⁰ Sigurd Bernhard Hustvedt, Ballad Books and Ballad Men, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1930, 233.

from Scott and Jamieson down "were more or less thoroughly committed to the principle of shaping a text according to their own devices."¹¹

This reshaping may indeed have produced better poetry but in the process the true ballad has been obscured. Such edited ballads have frequently reentered tradition in their altered form. In Chapter IV, I shall compare traditional texts with the printed texts to discover the extent of the influence of print on the oral tradition of this ballad.

Clues to the history of this ballad lead to a variety of interesting bypaths. Dolph says that the song was well known in Colonial America and that the tune was borrowed for "Sergeant Champe," a long ballad about an unsuccessful attempt to kidnap General Benedict Arnold.¹² Dorothy Scarborough mentions a song on the assassination of Governor William Goebel of Kentucky, composed by a mountaineer to the tune of "Barbara Allen."¹³ A paraphrase of the first four verses, written in 1752 by Sir Robert

11 Hustvedt, Ballad Criticism, 11.

12 Edward Arthur Dolph, Sound Off! New York, 1949, 49.

13 Dorothy Scarborough, Song Catcher in the Southern Mountains, New York, 1937, 83.

Murray Keith, is included in the additional illustrations to Stenhouse' Illustrations,¹⁴ and a broadside in the Harvard College Library contains a comic version of the ballad, by Sam Cowel.¹⁵

Newell reports that in Keene, New Hampshire, "Barbara Allen" was still being used for a children's game or dance in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. He describes this game as a rhythm in which couples facing each other "kept time with slow metrical movement, balancing without any considerable change in place" while an elderly lady who was much in demand for parties, sang the ballad. "At the final word, 'Barbara Allen' a courtesy [sic] took the place of the usual refrain."¹⁶

Although the story of "Barbara Allen" varies in details, it is fundamentally the same in all but the most fragmentary texts. A dying young man sends for Barbara, who takes her time about coming to his deathbed. When she sees him she recognizes his condition immediately with the words, "Young man, I think you're dying," to which he replies that she alone can save him.

14 [Cecil James Sharp], further illustrations in [William Stenhouse], Illustrations of the Lyric Poetry and Music of Scotland, London, 1853, #300.

15 Harvard Broadside No. 25242.28. (Currently missing from the collection.)

16 William Wells Newell, Games and Songs of American Children, New York, 1883, 78-79.

Various details of behavior are inserted at this point but versions agree in making clear Barbara's refusal and her leaving him either dead or in a dying condition. Frequently, she accuses him of slighting her by ignoring her at the tavern when offering wine or toasting the "other girls." Less frequently the slight is offered at a dance hall or in another place. As she leaves him she hears the bells, or birds, reproaching her for her cruelty, and she repents and dies of a broken heart.

"Barbara Allen" is unique among popular ballads for, although tragic love is a universal theme and one of the most appealing to ballad singers,¹⁷ this ballad seems to be the only one among the Child ballads in which sudden death is the result of unrequited love alone. This has led some to ascribe great antiquity to the ballad. Cambiare says, "This ballad must have a very old origin, and its story was known perhaps in prehistoric times."¹⁸ His statement that there is a very old Spanish romance having the same story¹⁹ need not imply any connection between the ballad and the romance.

The fact that Pepys refers to the song as having been

17 See Chapter II for a discussion of the theme.

18 Celestin Pierre Cambiare, East Tennessee and West Virginia Mountain Ballads, London, 1935, 68.

19 Ibid.

sung by an actress²⁰ has caused some to believe it a stage song. Belden says of it:

Whether originally a stage song (as might be conjectured from Pepys' entry of January, 1666) or not, Barbara Allen has become and remains the most widely known and sung of all ballads admitted by Child to his collection. Its persistence in print--broadside, stall and songbook--down to the present might be looked upon as a cause or an effect of its popularity; probably it is both.²¹

In a letter written to Arthur Hudson in 1940, Mrs. Eckstrom asserted that she and Phillips Barry had satisfied themselves before Barry's death that "as sung by Mrs. Knipp to the delight of Samuel Pepys in 1666, Barbara Allen was not a stage song at all but a libel on Barbara Villiers and her relationship with Charles II."²² But as late as 1952 Hudson had no knowledge that the argument had been published.²³

Louise Pound was aware of Barry's claim, for she told the author of this thesis that Barry died before he published a

20 Pepys, Diary, 175.

21 Henry Marvin Belden, Missouri Folk Songs, University of Missouri Studies, XX, Columbia, Missouri, 1940, 60.

22 Arthur Palmer Hudson, ed., Folk Ballads in North Carolina, Vol. II of A Collection of North Carolina Folklore, edited by Newman Ivey White, 3 vols., 1952, 111. Italics not in the original.

23 Ibid.

proof that "Barbara Allen" was a political satire which originated in the seventeenth century.²⁴

In a paper read before the Comparative Literature section II [Popular Literature] of the Modern Language Association, Detroit, December 29, 1951, Dr. Pound states:

Phillips Barry is reported to have been working on it ["Barbara Allen"] at the time of his death, with a promising outlook for determining its seventeenth century start.²⁵

Those who do not believe it originated as a stage song or a political satire are divided in their opinion as to whether this song is indigenous to England or Scotland. Since Percy first called attention to an "English" and a "Scotch" version²⁶ by publishing two texts of the ballad, it has become a common practice to refer to this dichotomy by labelling printed texts as either "English" or "Scotch."²⁷

Hendren's intuitive guess that the ballad originated in Scotland, he bases on these assumptions: (1) the Scotch claim

24 Louise Pound, Telephone conversation, September, 1954.

25 Louise Pound, "American Folksong, Origins, Texts, and Modes of Diffusion," Southern Folklore Quarterly, XVII, June, 1951, 116.

26 Thomas Percy, Reliques of Ancient Poetry, London, 1765, III, 125, 131.

27 See Chapter III for a discussion of these texts.

to national origination, and the scarcity of challenge to this claim; (2) the traditional belief in its origin as a border ballad; (3) the occurrence of the border name Graham, and (4) the plentiful survival of the old Scotch text in England and America, in contrast to a dearth of English and American texts in Scotland.²⁸ Since Hendren's chapter is, to date, though undocumented, the most ambitious study of the ballad, it will be necessary to examine these points to determine the plausibility of his guess.

"Barbara Allen" has attracted the attention of other students. Working under the direction of Professor Hudson, a student at the University of North Carolina completed a comparison of a control group of American variants in 1944.²⁹ At Princeton, Hendren used texts and tunes of "Barbara Allen" as illustrative material in his dissertation on ballad rhythm and music.³⁰

28 Joseph W. Hendren, "Bonny Barbara Allen," in Mody C. Boatwright, Folk Travelers, Dallas, 1953, 47-74.

29 Edith Cavell Walker, Some Characteristics of "Barbara Allen" in America, Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 1944.

30 Joseph W. Hendren, A Study of Ballad Rhythm with Special Attention to Ballad Music, Princeton, 1936.

Coffin recognizes nine basic story types in the American variants which he examined.³¹ These are:

(A) A young man lies on his death-bed for the love of Barbara Allen. He requests a servant to bring her to him (the man usually delivers the message in person, though in some texts a letter is sent). She comes without too much enthusiasm and remarks that the lover looks as though he were dying. In response to his pleadings, she accuses him of slighting her in tavern toasting, or at a ball. He defends himself, but she continues to scorn him. He dies of remorse. Later, when she hears the funeral bells she repents and dies. Sometimes the rose-brier theme is added.

(B) Like A, but the lover accepts Barbara's scorn without offering a defense. Not all these texts have accusations.

(C) Like A, but lover acknowledges the justice of Barbara's Charge.

(D) Story may follow type A or B, but the lover curses Barbara.

(E) Like D, but Barbara curses the lover in return.

(F) The story may be of either A or B types, but the man lavishes gifts on Barbara in direct contrast to her cruelty.

(G) Like A or B, although mother (or both parents) is usually blamed by Barbara for causing her to be cruel and the mother (or both parents) joins the lovers in death.

(H) Same as A, but view is given of courtship where Sir James the Graeme (See Child 213) tells Barbara she will be mistress of seven ships if she marries him. He then slights her at the tavern and regular story ensues.

(I) A negro version in which 'Boberick Allen' is a man.³²

31 Tristram P. Coffin, The British Traditional Ballad in North America, Philadelphia, 1950, 88-90.

32 See Chapter V for a discussion of another version showing change of sex.

Hudson uses another grouping for the texts of the Brown collection which he edited.³³ He classifies them according to their beginnings under the heads:

- (1) Those that begin in the first person of Barbara's lover (or at least of a narrator).
- (2) Those that begin with a springtime setting.
- (3) Those that begin with an autumnal setting.

He adds that group one may have either setting, and that the rose-brier ending may be added to any text. There is one version containing the lover's bequest.

What can be predicted for the future of this ballad? The modern revival of interest in ballads, while it has made them more widely known and appreciated, will probably kill the traditional character of these songs. Even now, it is difficult to reclaim another truly traditional variant. In response to an inquiry made through the columns of the Washington [D.C.] Evening Star, Elmer Helm of Brentwood, Maryland, who first heard the song about seventy years ago through two cousins who lived on a farm adjoining his father's in Texas, sent a copy of the ballad to the paper. In a letter to the author dated June 27, 1955, Mr. Helm says, "I do not remember how much of the song I then heard. The words I sent to the paper, I learned from a recording.

33 Hudson, Folk Ballads in North Carolina, 111.

"Since that time I have heard a fuller version with the addition of several verses. These carry the story on to the death and burial of her lover, also to her own death, apparently out of remorse."

Another casual mention of this thesis caused a listener to become animated and to reply with a nostalgic allusion to the ballad sung by a neighbor woman in Anamosa, Iowa, who had come from Virginia. I tried to prime her memory with texts of the ballad, but succeeded in getting only a few phrases.

Previous studies of this ballad have pointed out a vast number of texts and comments available. In fact, the bulk of material has sometimes confused the student who has been able to examine only a portion of it. It is the purpose of this thesis to examine all available material with a view to integrating fragmentary knowledge and fleeting impressions so that a clearer picture of the origin, history, and present condition of this ballad will emerge. I will begin by examining the comments of scholars and the folk, compare the printed texts of the ballad, and proceed to an analysis of the ballad in tradition to establish the relationship between print and tradition, and between various traditional texts.

CHAPTER II

"BARBARA ALLEN" AS SEEN BY THE CRITICS AND BY THE PEOPLE

"Barbara Allen" is both rewarding and frustrating to the student of the ballad. It has been hailed with enthusiasm and remembered with nostalgia by the educated and by the unlettered. It is held in contempt by some for its very weed-like adaptability and survival, yet is never ignored. It is as widely scattered, as deep-rooted and as common as the dandelion. The stability of its characteristics over a wide area and through successive generations indicates a vitality which is independent of artificial dissemination. W. H. Hendren recognizes this when he says:

There can be nothing basically adventitious about the fame of a song which endures through centuries. The explanation of its hold upon the public lies in the ballad itself, in the simple beauty of its language and melody and the emotional impact of its dramatic situation.¹

It is scarcely possible to find a single brief comment on ballads which does not contain the name of "Barbara Allen," yet when these references are compiled, the scarcity of valid

¹ Hendren, "Bonny Barbara Allen," 60.

literary criticism could well be discouraging did we not realize that there is little mention of individual titles in ballad criticism. Early enthusiasts devoted their energy to justifying the popular ballad as a type worthy of consideration as literature and scarcely ever mentioned ballads by name.²

Hustvedt points out the lack of early criticism when he says:

In glancing back over the period from Sidney to Addison, we note in England and Scotland, a good deal of interest in the private collecting of popular ballads, and some interest in getting them into print, but very little criticism properly so called.³

A few available comments show in what admiration critics hold this song. Gordon claims for his version that "[i]t is sheer music from beginning to end,"⁴ and Bryant classifies it among certain well known ballads which reveal the genre at the height of its perfection and the beginning of its decline.⁵

There are exceptions to the esteem in which this ballad is almost universally held. Louise Pound discouraged this study

2 For a detailed account of the history of ballad criticism see Hustvedt, Ballad Criticism.

3 Ibid., 61.

4 Robert W. Gordon, Folk Songs of America, New York, 1938, 69.

5 F[rank] E[gbert] Bryant, A History of English Balladry, Boston, 1913, 50.

with a disparaging remark that if no one has made a thorough study of this ballad the reason lies in the fact that everyone recognizes that there is little of value in it to study because it is a seventeenth century stage song which has been disseminated chiefly through print.⁶ Dr. Pound dismisses the ballad in the following:

"Barbara Allen's Cruelty" (no. 84) was heard by Samuel Pepys in 1666 and it may have made its debut on that occasion. . . the song is very current in the United States though unstable of text and melody as is to be expected.⁷

Dr. Pound's assumption that the ballad is a stage song is based on the fact that it was sung by an actress--an obviously illogical conclusion. The reliability of Dr. Pound's comments on this ballad can be further judged by the fact that in 1913 she referred to the "many Nebraska variants of this ballad,"⁸ yet research has failed to unearth these variants. The University of Nebraska, The Nebraska Historical Society, even Dr. Pound herself, can give no clue to their whereabouts.⁹

Although Gummere puts the ballad in a class "just

6 Telephone conversation.

7 Pound, "American Folksongs," 116.

8 Louise Pound, "Traditional Ballads in Nebraska," Journal of American Folklore, Philadelphia, XXVI, October-December, 1913, 351.

9 Verbal inquiries.

halting and trembling on the border of pure song,"¹⁰ Stemple comments, "The ditty first mentioned above seems to us somewhat over sentimental."¹¹

Among the people, too, may be found those who hold this song too common to be of value. Mrs. Carrie Grover, a ballad singer of nearly seventy, living in Graham, Maine, would not bother with "Barbara Allen" because "everyone knows that."¹²

The young woman of Joplin, Missouri, who requested that her name be withheld from any "hillbilly book," was reflecting an attitude which some rural singers have toward ballads in general, yet the song she sang on July 4, 1924, when she made this request, was a version of "Barbara Allen."¹³ This clearly indicates that she did not make an exception in favor of this song, as did the young man referred to in the following report.

Mr. Henry Wharton, an old time fiddler, knew many songs and ballads and although his thirteen children show varying degrees of skill in singing and plucking the guitar, his twenty-three year old son, Charles, would sing only

10 F[rancis] B[arton] Gummere, The Popular Ballad, Boston, 1907, 116.

11 Guido H. Stemple, A Book of Ballads Old and New, New York, 1917, 245.

12 Evelyn Kendrick Wells, The Ballad Tree, New York, 1950, 307.

13 Vance Randolph, The Ozarks, New York, 1913, 132.

"Barbara Allen" and preferred, generally, the modern songs he heard on the radio.¹⁴

In 1919 Miss Monnie McDonald of Lillington, North Carolina, sang a reduced version of "Barbara Allen" which she had learned from her grandmother, Mrs. John Allen McLean. The editor's note that this was Mrs. McLean's favorite song testifies to its hold on an earlier generation of Americans.¹⁵

One of the most poignant expressions of genuine feeling among ballad singers is recorded by William Owens:

In the fall of 1938 a friend took me to see Bob Brown, who lives on the road between Kountze and Sour Lake and at the edge of the "Big Thicket." In answer to our request for songs he replied that he knew "Sweet William." Needing little urging, he leaned against the picket fence and sang this version of "Barbara Ellen." When he came to the line, 'Young man, I think you're dying,' tears filled his eyes and he brushed at his wrinkled cheek with the back of his gnarled hand.¹⁶

The ballad is known to have existed at least three hundred years. The earliest known reference to a ballad of "Barbara Allen" is the frequently quoted passage from Pepys who entered in his diary under the date, January 2, 1666:

Up by candle-light, and my business being done, to my

14 MacEdward Leach and Horace P. Beck, "Songs from Rappahonock County, Virginia," Journal of American Folklore, Philadelphia, LXIII, July-September, 1950, 249.

15 Hudson, Folk Ballads in North Carolina, 124.

16 William A. Owens, Studies in Texas Folklore, Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, University of Iowa, Iowa City, 1941, 30.

Lord Brouncker's and there found Sir J. Minnes and all his company, and Mr. Boreman and Mrs. Turner, but above all, my dear Mrs. Knipp, with whom I sang, and in perfect pleasure I was to hear her sing, and especially her little Scotch song of Barbary Allen.¹⁷

A century elapses before another mention of the ballad is preserved although it had been disseminated by print and oral transmission throughout the English-speaking world. This second reference occurs in Goldsmith's third essay, "Happiness, In a great Measure, Dependant on Constitution." It was originally published in Number II of The Bee, October 13, 1759. Here the Irish poet associates the ballad with a feeling of nostalgia for the unspoiled happiness of his youth. His statement is significant as being the first of many such impressionistic comments on this ballad. He says:

When I reflect on the unambitious retirement in which I passed the earlie part of my life in the country, I cannot avoid feeling some pain in thinking that those happy days are gone forever. . . .

Then follows the oft-quoted passage:

The music of the finest singer is dissonance to what I felt when an old dairymaid sung me unto tears with "Johnny Armstrong's Last Goodnight," or the "Cruelty of Barbara Allen."¹⁹

17 Pepys, Diary, 175

18 Ibid., 177

19 Goldsmith, "Happiness."

According to Hustvedt, "Goldsmith's most interesting and, because supported by practice, most valuable criticism is in The Vicar of Wakefield."²⁰ Here Farmer Flamborough and the Blind Piper take turns entertaining Parson Primrose; "while one played the other would sing some soothing ballad, Johnny Armstrong's Last Goodnight, or The Cruelty of Barbara Allen."²¹ Whatever Hustvedt means by this statement, Goldsmith's second reference to the same ballad strengthens the association of "Barbara Allen" with the simple pleasures of the Irish writer's youth.

The power of this ballad to evoke emotion is further illustrated by Joyce, who says that a young girl, Ellen Ray of Glencoe, in 1847 sang this song "with such power and feeling that the air became at once stereotyped on my memory."²²

Following this impressionistic trend we find that the song appeals to a poet as modern as Carl Sandburg, whose comment is quoted by editors almost as frequently as that of Goldsmith:

Sometimes in the singing of this song, I get the feel of old, gnarled, thorn apple trees and white crabapple blossoms printed momentarily on a blue sky, of evanescent

20 Hustvedt, Ballad Criticism, 203-204.

21 Oliver Goldsmith, Vicar of Wakefield, London, 1766, 36-37; The Works of Oliver Goldsmith, ed., J. W. M. Gibbs, London 1884-1886, I, 85.

22 P [atrick] W [eston] Joyce, Ancient Irish Music, Dublin, 1873, 79.

things, of the paradox of tender and cruel forces operating together in life. Perhaps something of that paradox working in the hearts of people has kept the Barbara Allen story alive and singing through three centuries and more.²³

A correspondent who contributed a version of the ballad to the columns of The State, a newspaper published in South Carolina, accompanied his text with this account:

It has been over fifty years ago [ca 1870] when I was a boy at my home in Darlington County, my cousin sang the song as she frequently did. . . . I don't remember if I ever knew what were the troubles of Barbara Allen and young William but I remember the plaintive mourn-ful tune and it brings back to my recollection the scene of cape jessamine and mimosa blossoms, the note of the whippoorwill, and the peculiar hallo of the negroes.²⁴

Bertrand Jones, in the same impressionistic vein, says:

It is the type of song Andrew Lang must have had in mind when he said, "Ballads are a voice from secret places, from silent peoples, and old times long dead and as such they stir us in a strangely intimate fashion to which artistic verse can never attain."²⁵

"Certainly," says Professor Raine,

no one who has ever heard this old song sung by women "battling" their clothes before lonely cabins, or by flat boatmen under the blazing sun on the forks of the Kentucky River, can ever forget the profound impression of almost magic melancholy it produces. . . . Curious enough,--for me,

23 Carl Sandburg, The American Songbag, New York, 1927, 57.

24 The State newspaper, February 29, 1912, quoted in Bulletin of the University of South Carolina, Columbia, CLXI, 111.

25 Bertrand L. Jones, "Folklore in Michigan," Kalamazoo Normal Record, Kalamazoo, May, 1914.

at all events -- the poem is more moving in this corrupt Cumberland version than in any printed one that has come down to us. Is this because certain expressions like "yonders," having all but lost their meaning, lend to the verses something of that mystery and strangeness which are implicit in the very ideal of romantic art?²⁶

Elsewhere Professor Raine says "It has sung itself with plaintive sweetness into the hearts of many generations."²⁷

There is abundant evidence of the continued popularity of this ballad. Chappell says that the "general popularity of 'Barbara Allen' dates from 1765, when Bishop Percy presented his elegant version in the third volume of Reliques of Ancient Poetry."²⁸

In the first quarter of the nineteenth century Allan Cunningham, a ballad collector and editor, tells of versions he has seen:

The song of Barbara Allan is very old and very popular; and its beauty and pathos have carried it from cottage to castle, and from castle to palace. I have seen several embellished versions; but simplicity and nature resume their rights, and we return to the plain rude copy of Allan Ramsay; and by that I think we had better adhere.²⁹

26 [James W. Raine], Berea Quarterly, Berea, Kentucky, XVIII, October, 1915, 15-16.

27 James W. Raine, Land of the Saddle Bags, Texarkana 1924, 11.

28 William Chappell, ed., The Roxburghe Ballads, Hertford, 1880, III, 433.

29 Allan Cunningham, The Songs of Scotland, London 1825, II, 174.

Sharp states that there is "no ballad that country singers are more fond of,"³⁰ and in the introduction to his Somerset version of that ballad he says there is no ballad that is better known in Somerset.³¹

In 1891, Kidson admitted that

few ballads have had a more lasting popularity than "Cruel Barbara Allen." The story is common both in England and Scotland, and it may, I have no doubt, be equally well known in Ireland.³²

But he showed himself out of sympathy with the folk by declaring that the versions of his day had become so corrupted "as to make a very doleful and piteable story into that which might provoke more laughter than sympathy."³³

Stenhouse asserts it has been "a favorite ballad at every country fire-side in Scotland, time out of memory. The strains of the ancient minstrel who composed this song may indeed, appear harsh and unpolished when compared with modern refinements, nevertheless, he has depicted the incidents of his story with such a bold, glowing, and masterly pencil as would do credit to any age."³⁴

30 Cecil J [ames] Sharp, One Hundred English Folk-songs, Boston, 1916, XX.

31 Cecil J [ames] Sharp and Charles L. Marson, Folk Songs from Somerset, London, 1905, 68.

32 Frank Kidson, Traditional Tunes, Oxford, 1891, 36.

33 Ibid.

34 Stenhouse, Illustrations, 213.

When in 1912, Mr. W. E. Gilbert, a student of the University of Virginia, discovered a new version of the ballad, he was surprised to learn how universally known it was among the people.

"Barbara Ellen" is generally known among the people of that particular locality, being sung alike by the educated and the unlettered, and ranking as one of the most popular of their favorite songs. It is used most frequently as an open-air or camping song, although it is nearly always rendered by a single singer.³⁵

The inclusion of this song in the repertoire of a great number of country singers interviewed by ballad collectors is testimony of the place of the song in the hearts of the people. MacKenzie tells of a ballad singer, Mrs. Jake Langville, who offered to make atonement for leaving out a stanza of "Lord Thomas" by volunteering that she "remembered part of an old song which her uncle used to sing for the women "when he was feelin' good natured" and which was called "Barberry Ellen."³⁶

Fuson tells of a country fiddler who having played a song for him replied to his request for one of the singer's own choice, "A' right, 'Barbara Allen.'³⁷

³⁵ Stuart Seeger and Loyal A. Morrow, "A New Discovery in Ballad Literature," University of Virginia Magazine, April, 1913, 329.

³⁶ William Roy MacKenzie, Quest of the Ballad, Princeton, 1919, 100.

³⁷ Harvey H. Fuson, Ballads of the Kentucky Highlands, London, 1931, 6.

A collector of this ballad in Knoxville, Tennessee, thinks the texts are not significant in themselves but adds that "a failure to find any texts would have been surprising to a ballad collector." Several instances are cited of ballad singers who had heard so many versions of the song that the one they sing is of necessity a compilation, since they can't remember any one version.³⁸ One young man who sang the song in July, 1937, had first heard it from his mother but had heard it so many times since, that he "never sings the words the same way."³⁹

"It's a hurtin' song," is an approving comment of country people, according to Josephine McGill.⁴⁰ Callie Craven, a ballad singer of Alabama, who could neither read nor write, said she had heard "Barb'ry Allen" many times over the radio "but they never sing it right and I don't like it. It's a dwellin' song and must be sung slow and mournful dwellin' on the long notes."⁴¹

William Owens, who mentioned having collected twenty-

38 Edwin Capers Kirkland and Mary Neal Kirkland, "Popular Ballads Recorded in Knoxville, Tennessee," Southern Folklore Quarterly, II, June, 1938, 71.

39 Ibid.

40 Josephine McGill, "Sing All a Green Willow," North American Review, CCKVIII, August, 1929, 220.

41 Byron Arnold, Folksongs from Alabama, Birmingham, 1950, 8.

five versions in Texas⁴² declares, "I heard the song so often that I simply gave up trying to record variants."⁴³ Dr. Owens testifies, however, that most of these are but "bob-tailed versions" of the text he printed.⁴⁴

Kolb summarizes the influence of the ballad when he says:

"Barbara Allen" has charmed the English-speaking world for over three hundred years. Already a tradition in Colonial times, this story of love blighted by youthful pride was sung in most American homes up through the Civil War. Even today, in rural America, Barbara's fame rivals a Hollywood star's.⁴⁵

William Larkin, a young man of Illinois, stated in the introduction to his personal collection, "A Book of All Songs," begun in 1866:

These are selected [by the author] from the best songs he knows, which he believes to be the best selected songs in this country.

Ruth Ann Musick, who edits the album, adds that the statement

seems to indicate that his judgment did not err too far,

42 William Owens, Texas Folk Songs, Dallas, 1950.

43 William Owens, letter to the author, May 14, 1956.

44 Owens, Studies in Texas Folk Song, 30: Texas Folk Songs, 51.

45 John Kolb and Sylvia Kolb, A Treasury of Folk Song, New York, 1948, 2.

inasmuch as folk song scholarship during the intervening eighty years has confirmed the fact that "Barbry Allen" etc. were undoubtedly the best "love songs and war songs" of about 1866.⁴⁶

The same year in which young Larkin embarked on his ambitious enterprise in Illinois, Nathaniel Grigsby was recalling, in a letter to Herndon, the songs sung by the recently assassinated president, Abraham Lincoln, during his youth in Illinois. In the letter, preserved in the Weik manuscript and dated January 21, 1866, he says, "we sung a song called Barbra Allen."⁴⁷

A recent editor includes a version of "Barbara Allen" in a collection of Songs Lincoln Loved, with the statement for which he gives no source, "It is claimed that Lincoln stated in after years that 'Barbara Allen' was his mother's favorite song."⁴⁸

"Barbara Allen" is the only Child ballad mentioned by Horace Greeley, who recalls singing as a source of entertainment during his youth.

The Revolutionary War was not yet thirty years gone when I was born, and its passions, its prejudices, and its ballads were still current throughout that intensely Whig

46 Ruth Ann Musick, ed., "The Old Album of William Larkin," Journal of American Folklore, LX, July, 1947, 210.

47 Albert J. Beveridge, Abraham Lincoln, Boston, 1928, I, 68.

48 John Lair, Songs Lincoln Loved, New York, 1954, 4.

region. When neighbors and wives drew together at the house of one of their number for an evening visit, there were often interspersed with "Cruel Barbara Allen" and other love-lorn ditties then in vogue, such reminiscences of the preceding age as "American Taxation."⁴⁹

It is significant that "Barbara Allen" is not listed as a reminiscence of the preceding age but as a song "then in vogue."

This ballad demands attention, too, for the very bulk of available variants. Reed Smith's statement of the leadership in America of this ballad has not been challenged:

Of all the ballads in America "Barbara Allen" leads both in number of versions, number of tunes, and in geographical distribution. It is found all over the United States.⁵⁰

He repeated the statement in 1937, adding that there were 106 texts and thirty-nine tunes in published collections which he names.⁵¹ These numbers fall far below the number of available texts today. The Frank C. Brown collection, edited by Hudson, contains thirty-two texts of this ballad, and Hudson reiterates in his notes the fact that "of all the ballads in the Child collection this is easily the most widely known and sung, both

⁴⁹ Horace Greeley, Recollections of a Busy Life, New York, 1868, 51.

⁵⁰ Reed Smith, South Carolina Ballads, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1928, 129.

⁵¹ Reed Smith, "The Traditional Ballad in America," Southern Folklore Quarterly, March, 1937, I, 16.

in the old country and in America. Scarcely a single regional gathering of ballads but has it."⁵²

Of the ballad in Virginia, which is probably the source of dissemination in America, Davis says:

"Barbara Allen" is facile princeps in number of items collected, both of texts and music. Her ninety-two Virginia progeny are something of a record achievement, certainly for a lady who, according to the ballad, scorned her lover.⁵³

There is no lack of testimony of the popularity of this ballad in local regions. Ruby Duncan testifies to the truth of Reed Smith's statement in Hamilton County, Tennessee:

Practically every pupil in the State Creek High School knows the song, some of them, it is true, having learned it from the radio, but most of them having heard it at home as small children. "Barbara Allen" was my keyword when I was trying to explain the kind of songs I wanted, to older people, and it very seldom failed to get a response, "Oh yes, I used to know that," they would almost invariably answer, sing a stanza or two of it, then perhaps think of another song.⁵⁴

Geneva Anderson also found it the best known ballad in East Tennessee where she obtained nine well preserved versions

52 Hudson, Folk Ballads from North Carolina, 111.

53 Arthur Kyle Davis, Traditional Ballads of Virginia, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1929, 302.

54 Ruby Duncan, Ballads and Folk Songs in North Hamilton County, Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Tennessee, Nashville, 1939, 66.

for her collection.⁵⁵ Arthur Hudson found the statement true in Mississippi where the sixteen texts collected might easily have been doubled.⁵⁶ Robert Mason says it is the "most popular of all moss-covered ballads in Cannon County."⁵⁷ According to Brewster "Barbara Allen" easily ranks first among Indiana ballads in point of number and versions recorded,⁵⁸ Morris says it is Florida's favorite Scottish and American ballad,⁵⁹ and Rayburn declares it the "best known folksong of ancient lineage in the Ozarks."⁶⁰ E.C. Perrow also testifies that "it is perhaps the most widely current of all the traditional ballads." In 1915 he he said it was still sung by school children in Kentucky.⁶¹

55 Geneva Anderson, A Collection of Ballads and Songs from East Tennessee, Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 1932, 33.

56 Arthur Palmer Hudson, Folksongs of Mississippi, Chapel Hill, 1936, 95.

57 Robert Mason, Folk Songs and Folk Tales of Cannon County, Unpublished Master's Thesis, George Peabody College, Nashville, 1939, 23.

58 Paul G. Brewster, Ballads and Songs of Indiana, Bloomington, 1940, 99.

59 Alton G. Morris, Folk Songs of Florida, 1950, 290.

60 Otto Ernest Rayburn, Ozark Country, New York, 1941 232.

61 E. C. Perrow, "Songs and Rhymes of the South," Journal of American Folklore, XXVIII, April-June, 1915, 129.

In Iowa, "Barbara Allen" has a history at least three generations long, for Miss Edith Stanley of Massena declared that her version was a favorite song at the Lyceums held in country schoolhouses in her great grandmother's time.⁶² In 1913, an old lady in Clinton County, Missouri, declared her variant was a common neighborhood song when she was a girl.⁶³

As late as 1927, a casual request by an Iowa woman, for a copy of the ballad elicited twenty replies from readers of Farm Life. The editors were moved to wonder if the time was ripe for a revival of old time songs since we are "surfeited with jazz and blues."⁶⁴

The fact of the long and widespread popularity of this ballad cannot be denied. Let us see what elements of the ballad itself have been responsible for this. Critics stress three reasons for its continued appeal. They are, (1) its value as a good story; (2) the universal preference for its theme--tragic love; and (3) its freedom from the limitations imposed by association with local tradition. There is one other element which

62 Earl J. Stuart, Folklore from Iowa, New York, 1936, 8.

63 H[enry] M[arvin] Belden, "Old Country Ballads in Missouri," Journal of American Folklore, XIX, October-December, 1906, 288; Henry Marvin Belden, Missouri Folk Songs, Columbia, Missouri, 1940, 60.

64 "Old Time Songs Sent in by Farm Folk," Farm Life, Spencer, Indiana, March, 1927, 26.

cannot be ignored. The beauty of the melodies and their suitability for the theme must surely be a contributing factor in the popularity of the song; but a discussion of these melodies is outside the scope of this thesis. We can only agree with Joseph Hendren when he remarks that

To those who know and love folk songs it is needless to point out that the true effect of a tragic ballad can only be experienced in hearing it sung with feeling and also with dignity and a fair share of tonal beauty.⁶⁵

Let us see how far the story itself is acknowledged as a source of popularity. In 1825 Allan Cunningham wrote of the story:

Never was a tale of love sorrow so simply or so soon told; yet we learn all we wish to know, and any further incident would only encumber the narrative and impair the effect. I have often admired the ease and simplicity of the first verse, and the dramatic beauty of the second; the former tells the time, the place, the name of the hero and the heroine, and that love was the matter of the song; the latter sends a messenger to the unrelenting maiden; the simple and effectual way in which he delivers his master's message has been imitated in Hardyknute.⁶⁶

In 1909, Hamilton Wright Mable contrasted the story with the popular reading of his time:

Contrast the story of Barbara Allen, which the fore-runners of the people who now read the yellow journals

65 Hendren, "Bonny Barbara Allen," 60.

66 Allan Cunningham, The Songs of Scotland, London, 1825, II, 174.

once knew by heart, with Maeterlinck's "Seven Princesses," and the simplicity and ingenious veracity of the song stand out in striking relief.⁶⁷

Josephine McGill bears witness to her own sharing in the universal appreciation of the story:

Of all such canticles of woe, the one most familiar to mountain balladists, as to all the English speaking world, is Barbara Allen. There are few of us who have reached the misty mid-region as to our years who have not burned with indignant sympathy for the youth whose sole comfort from the lips of his scornful beloved was the remark, cruel and ungracious even from a ballad heroine, "Young man, I think you're dying." Later in the story, it is true, our indignation changes to pity when, looking upon the face of her dead lover Barbara turns away weeping,

"O mother, mother, make my bed,
Go make it long and narrow,
Young Jemmy died for me today,
I'll die for him tomorrow."⁶⁸

Miss McGill advances the modernity of the heroine's psychology as an added element of appeal in the story:

There is a hint of subtle mental process animating Barbara's conduct entirely absent in the case of most ballad heroines; they are for the most part creatures of simple emotions and quick decisive actions; but there is something in Barbara's coolness, her deliberation, most of all in her accessibility to remorse that is more complex, more modern, less according to fixed type than is the swift, passionate action of the other heroines who commit the irretrievable with no chance for after thought. Of none of them do we read a passage like the following:

⁶⁷ Hamilton Wright Mabie, "Barbara Allen's Cruelty," The Outlook, XCIII, October 23, 1909, 463.

⁶⁸ Josephine McGill, "Sing All a Green Willow," North American Review, CCXVIII, August, 1929, 219.

So slowly, slowly she got up,
 And slowly she went from him,
 The birds they sang so clear in her ear,
 "Hard-hearted Barbara Allen."

Thus she comes down to us beloved and remembered, not as "Cruel Barbara Allen" but as "Bonny Barbara Allen;" like young Jemmy Grove we sense something in her other than her cruelty, and we feel that he was wise to die forgiving her and commending her to his "dear friends all."⁶⁹

Phillips Barry once said that if Barbara Allen was not a real character it took genius to invent her for "no other woman in balladry stands out so in the round, with incident, nature, and action all so consistently sequent."⁷⁰ The very stability of the heroine's name tells us that it is her story.⁷¹ Only one printed version, "Sir John Grehme and Barbara Allan,"⁷² is not named for her alone. Hendren has a word to say about her dominance of the story:

It is a curious thing that, whereas the hero masquerades under a bewildering variety of names, or perhaps no name at all, Barbara never changes except for slightly variant pronunciations. . . . The contrast is explainable, I think, by one of the simplest axiomatic laws of ballad transmission: That the elements most important to the indispensable core of the narrative are always slowest to change or be lost,

69 McGill, "Sing All a Green Willow," North American Review, CCXVIII, August, 1929, 220.

70 Phillips Barry, British Ballads from Maine, New Haven, 1929, 100.

71 For a discussion of the names of the characters, see Chapter V of this thesis.

72 Percy, Reliques, 131.

whether they be names, objects, or incidents. Here the figure of Barbara dominates the drama; she is of the two the dynamic soul, clearly defined throughout in the central focus of interest, and she therefore has exerted, in contrast to her lover, a far more tenacious hold on the memories of traditional narrators.⁷³

A second clue to its popularity is found in the basic theme of the ballad, which is tragic love. According to Henderson:

Love is the theme of the larger number of the non-historical ballads, . . . and it is oftener its tragic than its joyous aspect that is set forth. What the ballad chiefly exemplifies, is the strength, the supremacy, the fatefulness of passion--a passion against the gratification of which rank is no barrier, which makes light of the opposition of relatives, is blind to evil possibilities, and more frequently brings woe than weal. But the tales of love which they essay to set forth are evidently old tales, tales which derive their credibility and much of their interest from the fact that they represent a condition of society that is strange to the experience of the listener.⁷⁴

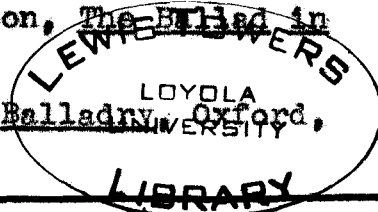
Entwistle believes that the survival of innumerable versions of such ballads as the "sentimental Barbara Allen" is part of a certain limitation of interest since "the modern singer prizes above all a love song, and the historical and supernatural ballads have receded from his ken."⁷⁵

Bess Owens testifies to the accuracy of these remarks

73 Hendren, "Bonny Barbara Allen," 64.

74 T[homas] F[inlayson] Henderson, The Ballad in Literature, New York, 1912, 30.

75 William J. Entwistle, European Balladry, Oxford, 1939, 241.



in the Gumberland region where she says "tragedy is the prevailing note, especially the tragic side of love."⁷⁶ Another enthusiast from Tennessee says:

Another very interesting body of folklore that closely touched my life was the old love songs. As a child I felt deeply the tragedy of Barbara Allen when the old and mournful song was sung by my companions.⁷⁷

William Owens, a ballad enthusiast from his childhood, preferred the tragic ballads during his early years. "I especially liked the ballads for their tragic stories," he says; "Utah Carroll and Barbara Allen were real people to me, and I could easily come to tears over their sad endings."⁷⁸ By the time he was fourteen his preferences had changed but "Barbara Allen" was still sung by the neighborhood boys who gathered on warm sunny days under a bush arbor to sing.⁷⁹

Referring to her own collection from Overton County, Tennessee, Lillian Crabtree says that "disappointed love is a favorite subject. More of the songs [of this collection] deal

⁷⁶ Bess Owens, Some Unpublished Folk Songs of the Gumberlands, Unpublished Master's Thesis, George Peabody College, Nashville, 1930, 6.

⁷⁷ L. L. McDowell, "A Background of Folklore," Tennessee Folklore Bulletin, II, February, 1936, 7.

⁷⁸ Owens, Texas Folk Songs, 15-16.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 27.

with this phase than any other one . . . just as more songs deal with love than with any other general subject."⁸⁰

Jean Thomas observes of this ballad, "Invariably sung by the lovelorn this ballad seems to express completely the mountain lover's heartache and disappointment."⁸¹

Hendren epitomizes the importance of the theme in the popularity of the ballad thus:

The story combines in a remarkably effective way the two imaginative sources of emotion dearest to the heart of the human race, namely romance and tragedy: the bewitching sweetness of love betwixt man and maid, and the impressive shock of death, with its attendant pathos. The two responses are authentically passionate; they have their roots deep in the physical and spiritual nature of man; there is a kind of biological and cosmic compulsion about both of them. And they are given maximum freedom of action by the strange catalytic magic of the music in which their existence is poised.⁸²

We have yet to examine the third reason for the appeal of the ballad; namely, the universality of the setting. Evelyn Wells says that

⁸⁰ Lillian G. Crabtree, Songs and Ballads Sung in Overton County, Unpublished Master's Thesis, George Peabody College, Nashville, 1936, 204.

⁸¹ Jean [nette Bell] Thomas, The Singin' Gatherin', New York, 1939, 94.

⁸² Hendren, "Bonny Barbara Allen," 59-60.

the sturdiest survivors among transplanted ballads are those which are independent of special setting and circumstance, which in their dramatic form and interest, their special idiom, and their selection of themes of human experience treated in the most condensed manner and adjusted to the singer's experience, are the favorites of every folk singer.⁸³

Indeed, there is a singular absence of local tradition associated with the ballad. The only place for which any historic association with the heroine is claimed seems to be Annan, Dumfriesshire. Christie says that the scene of the story is supposed to have been here.⁸⁴ Evidently this claim originated with Stenhouse who states:

A learned correspondent informs me, that he remembers having heard the ballad frequently sung in Dumfriesshire, where it is said the catastrophe took place--that there were people of the name of Allan who resided in the town of Annan--and that in some papers which he had seen, mention is made of a Barbara of that family; but he is of opinion she may have been baptized from the ballad.⁸⁵

Charles Kirkpatrick Sharp identifies himself as the "learned correspondent" referred to by Stenhouse:

In this note Mr. Stenhouse alludes to me. Unluckily I lost the paper I found at Hoddam Castle, in which Barbara Allan was mentioned.⁸⁶

83 Wells, The Ballad Tree, 100.

84 W. Christie, Traditional Ballad Airs, Edinburgh, 1876, 88.

85 Stenhouse, Illustrations, 213-214.

86 [Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe] notes in James Johnson, The Scots Musical Museum, IV, *300 [Illustrations of the Lyric Poetry of Scotland], Edinburgh, 1853.

He adds the observation that the peasants of Annandale sang many more verses than have appeared in print, "but they were of no merit--containing numerous magnificent offers from the lover to his mistress--and, among others, some ships in sight, which may strengthen the belief that the song was composed near the shores of Solway. I need scarcely add that the name of Grahame, which the luckless lover generally bears, is still quite common in and about Annan."⁸⁷

The only other local tradition is associated with Newberry, Vermont, and is obviously not to be taken seriously. Barry says that a Barbara Allen was "jilted by her lover for a girl whom he described as 'an angel without wings,' whereupon some local wag sent a pair of goose wings to the bride."⁸⁸

These references, although limited in number and spanning nearly three centuries, show the wide appeal of the ballad in time, space and circumstance. We have seen the worldly-wise but naive Pepys enjoying the singing of an English actress in seventeenth century London; the child Goldsmith moved to tears by the same song sung by an Irish dairymaid about three generations later; and pioneer children who are listed among our

⁸⁷ [Sharpe] notes in James Johnson, The Scots Musical Museum, IV, #300 [Illustrations of the Lyric Poetry of Scotland], Edinburgh, 1853.

⁸⁸ Barry, British Ballads from Maine, 200.

nation's great names, taking part in the singing with their neighbors around a cabin fireplace. It has been heard on the lips of cowboys on the open range and of women at their household tasks in isolated regions. It is known today by school children and sung by teen-agers whose preference in songs usually runs to modern jazz. Across the miles and through the years this song has seldom failed to touch deeply the emotions of those who heard the tragic story of frustrated love. This alone, I think, justifies a study of the ballad, no matter what its origin, history, or destiny, for in the words of Addison:

It is impossible that anything should be universally tasted and approved by a multitude though they are only the Rabble of a nation, which hath not in it some peculiar Aptness to please and gratify the Mind of Men.⁸⁹

⁸⁹ [Joseph Addison], The Works of the Right Honorable Joseph Addison, ed., Henry G. Bohn, London, 1883, II, 374.

CHAPTER III

"BARBARA ALLEN" IN PRINT

Since Percy printed two texts of this ballad in separate places in his Reliques,¹ it has become a common practice to refer to the "English" and "Scotch" versions of "Barbara Allen" as separate ballads.

This practice is sanctioned by no less an authority on folk literature than Gordon Hall Gerould,² who clearly indicates that he recognizes two ballads when he declares that the English and Scottish forms of "Barbara Allen" should not be omitted from a collection.

Bishop Percy's texts, however, are not the earliest texts of the ballad in print. The fact that Bishop Percy did not adhere to his sources in the publication of texts is too well known to need demonstration. The earliest known printed text which Percy's "English" text approximates is the old

1 Percy, Reliques, 125, 131.

2 Gordon H [all] Gerould, The Ballad of Tradition, Oxford, 1932, 31.

Roxburghe text which was not published in book form until Chappell³ edited the Roxburghe collection for the Ballad Society in 1880.

In the hundred and fifteen years which elapsed between the publication of the Reliques and the Roxburghe Collection, Percy's text had gained such prestige in print that careless editors and commentators continue to confuse these texts to the present. This confusion is apparent in such statements as:

The earliest publication of the old Roxburghe text in book form was Bishop Percy's in the Reliques, 1765, and it was a great event in the career of the ballad.⁴

Students of the ballad will hardly quarrel with the latter part of the statement, for the preponderance of Percy's text in songbooks and anthologies, as can be seen from the bibliography appended to this thesis, in comparison with the few re-printings of the Roxburghe text will make it evident that any search for the influence of print on tradition will necessitate a familiarity with the phrasing peculiar to Percy.

Hendren's confusion of texts is carried further in the discussion of the Roxburghe text where he states, "This old version contains fifteen or sixteen stanzas, the sixteenth, when

³ William Chappell, ed., The Roxburghe Ballads, London, 1880, 434-436.

⁴ Hendren, "Bonny Barbara Allen," 55.

present expressing Barbara's familiar warning to 'shun the fault I fell in.'⁵ This phrase is found in print only in Percy's text; the broadside from which Percy is thought to have made his "corrections" since it was once in his possession, has a sixteenth stanza:

As she was lying down to die
 A sad feud she fell in;
 She said I pry⁶ take warning by
 Hard-hearted Barbara Allen.⁷

Indeed Percy's text has acquired so much prestige that even an accomplished student of folk lore can make the following remark about a traditional text of the ballad:

A comparison with Percy's copy will show how much the above has suffered by being handed down traditionally.⁸

Chappell, himself, stated his preference for Percy's version, which is the one he printed in his Popular Music of Olden Times,⁹ published in 1859. He was already familiar with

5 Hendren, "Bonny Barbara Allen," 55.

6 This word, usually written pray, is a clue to the dialect from which this text was taken down.

7 [William Dacey, printer] "Barbara Allen's Cruelty; or the Young Man's Tragedy" with Barbara Allen's lamentations for her unkindness to her Lover, and Herself, to the Tune of Barbara Allen, Bow-Church-Yard-in London, [after 1730] Harvard College Library 25245.36.

8 Frank Kidson, Traditional Tunes, Oxford, 1891, 40.

9 William Chappell, Popular Music of Olden Times, London, 1859, 538.

the Roxburghe ballad at that time.

Having brushed aside the confusion caused by the palimpsest of Percy's text over the earlier printed "English" version of the ballad, we come to the old Roxburghe black-letter broadside. The earliest known printed text is this broadside headed, "Barbara Allen's Cruelty, or, The Young Man's Tragedy; with Barbara Allen's Lamentation for her Lover and Herself, to the tune of Barbara Allen." This copy, preserved in the Roxburghe collection II, 25, is a stall ballad printed for "P. Brooksby, J. Deacon, J. Blare, J. Bach." Chappell,¹⁰ who edited the collection, considered this copy contemporary with Pepys.

Inquiry into the history of the publishers listed reveals that the broadside was probably printed between 1683, when Joseph or Josiah Blare began to do business in London, and 1696, when Philip Brooksby ceased to do business as a bookseller.¹¹ The only other clue to the relative place of this text in the history of the ballad is that implied by the direction "To the tune of Barbara Allen." Obviously a ballad of that

10 Chappell, Roxburghe Ballads, III, 433.

11 Henry R. Plomer, A Dictionary of Printers and Booksellers Who Were at Work in England, Scotland, and Ireland from 1668-1725, Oxford, 1922, 12, 28, 102.

title was already known to the prospective purchasers of the broadside, Londoners of the late seventeenth century.

We direct our attention next to the "Scotch" version of the ballad. Here the task is simpler, for although Percy's Reliques contains an "emended" version apparently more Scotch than its original, this "Scotch" ballad already had a history of twenty-five years in print by 1765, and was too well established for Percy's text to crowd it out of subsequent collections.

"Bonny Barbara Allen," the usual title of the "Scotch" text, is sometimes held to be closer to the original text than the "English" version. Hendren believes "there is, indeed, the possibility that this venerable specimen may be a close approximation to the unknown original composition."¹² Yet his intellectual honesty forces him to admit that "we have no factual knowledge about the old Scotch version, however, until 1740, the year in which it was published by James Oswald in A Curious Collection of Scots Tunes and also by Allan Ramsey in The Tea-Table Miscellany."¹³ With curious inconsistency Hendren continues, "The ancient text has been abundantly preserved in tradition, as well as in many reprintings, down to our own time."¹⁴

12 Hendren, "Bonny Barbara Allen," 51.

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid. For examination of this statement with regard to traditional texts see Chapter IV of this thesis.

I am assuming that Hendren is correct in his implication of the identity of the text published almost simultaneously by Oswald and Ramsay, for I have been unable to locate a copy of Oswald's book. The fact that two copies of a hitherto unknown text should be published simultaneously, argues for an identical source. We are not in possession of this hypothetical source, but some remarks of critics about the ballads printed at this period may lead to significant conjectures.

Hodgart informs us that

Reshaping by learned poets is most evident in the period 1740 to 1780 and it is perhaps no accident that many of the great ballads appeared in their most beautiful form at this time. . . . It was then that the art of the ballad reached its height in Scotland, and it seems likely that this perfection of form was brought about by a number of talented and anonymous poets. At a time when new ballads were no longer being composed and the practice of ballad singing was probably beginning to decline, they transformed folk tradition into literature, and gave the ballads their final form as far as literary criticism is concerned. . . . In the 1740 edition of his Evergreen [sic] Allan Ramsay put the best version of 'Barbara Allan.'¹⁵

Hustvedt points out the lack of scientific treatment of texts at this period, by editors anxious to supply a demand for popular poetry:

The predominance of Scottish interest in popular poetry during this period is particularly noticeable in the publications of collections such as Ramsay's and Thomson's. The twelve editions of The Tea Table Miscellany bear witness

¹⁵ M[atthew] J[ohn] O[aldwell] Hodgart, The Ballads, New York, 1950, 108.

to the strength of the demand for verse of this kind. Ramsay's work left much to be desired from a critical point of view. The scientific treatment of ballad texts was not yet looked upon as necessary, or even desirable; and the capacity for such treatment was still relatively small. . . . The discussion of the ballad was, on the whole, not theoretical, but aesthetic and literary, much as in the first quarter of the century. 16

It is not necessary to question the intellectual honesty of Ramsay in his publication of this ballad. He supplied the demand of a "Scotch" public for a "Scotch" ballad, in the characteristic uncritical manner common to publishers of his time.

Let us turn our attention to James Oswald, the other publisher of the ballad. Kidson, in making a case for James Oswald as the composer of "God Save the King," remarks:

The figure of James Oswald is shadowy enough, but it is evident from eighteenth century musical publications that he was a notable composer. . . 17

Significant for Kidson's purpose is the fact that,

A peculiarity about James Oswald is that for some reason not now to be discovered, he frequently published anonymously and under fictitious names. 18

The author of a history of the music of Scotland, published in 1838, has this to say about Oswald's contributions to

16 Hustvedt, Ballad Criticism, 154.

17 Alfred Moffat and Frank Kidson, The Minstrelsy of England, London, 1901, 310.

18 Ibid.

Scottish music:

The slow, drawling, and monotonous style of many Scottish melodies which were popular during the last century, is certainly something very different from the description given by the Cambrian churchman of our ancient airs and not a little at variance, we should say, with the spirit and character of the nation, . . . the effervescent, enthusiasm of our countrymen. Some of these airs were composed and most of those which have been handed down from antiquity were altered by Oswald and others, especially by the former, a person whose taste in music, although he unquestionably possessed some inventive talent (would that he had possessed less) was too much perverted by the age in which he lived for him to relish the simple notes of our primitive melodies; and who, accordingly, so far from taking pains to preserve them in their original form, generally contrived to adapt them to a formula of his own.¹⁹

In Redgauntlet, Sir Walter Scott mentions Oswald thus:

"It is not a Scots tune, but it passes for ane; Oswald made it himsel, I reckon. He has cheated mony a ane, but he canna cheat wandering Willie."²⁰

If these quotations point to Oswald as a possible composer of the song it is not unrealistic to suppose that he is the author of the text. Two years after the publication of his collection we find this versatile Scotchman in London, associated with the publisher, John Simpson. Kidson²¹ believes it not unlikely that he did hack work for this publisher.

¹⁹ William Daune, Ancient Scottish Melodies, Edinburgh, 1838, 205-206.

²⁰ Walter Scott, Redgauntlet, Boston, 1868, 153.

²¹ Kidson, The Minstrelsy of England, 310.

The anonymous editor of Oswald's correspondence states in the preface to that volume that

at an early period of life he [Oswald] had prosecuted literary pursuits with great ardor and success, and made considerable proficiency in classical learning; and had not his attention been withdrawn from literature to politics it is not unreasonable to presume, that with his admitted talents, . . . he would have attained high literary distinction, and left a name worthy of being associated with those of his illustrious friends whose writings reflect so much honour on Scotland²²

The same anonymous eulogist²³ claims that Oswald's advice was sought and freely obtained by well known literary men of the period.

This extravagant praise leaves little room for doubt that Oswald possessed what passed for literary talent at the time.

Although no printed text need be considered the oldest form of the ballad, the controversy over whether this ballad originated in England or Scotland, which has cropped up periodically throughout the known history of this ballad, must center about these two earliest known texts, which though differing in many respects still show enough similarity in essentials to be treated as one ballad.

²² Memorials of the Public Life and Character of the Right Hon. James Oswald of Dunnikier contained in a correspondence with some of the most distinguished men of the last century. Edinburgh, 1825, XIV-XV.

²³ Ibid.

Joyce declares "the English and Scotch have each a ballad named Barbara Allen and the words of the two ballads, though differing considerably, are only varieties of the same original."²⁴

A glance at what has been said about the differences between English and Scottish ballads, in general, may throw some light on the problem.

Motherwell says that

the ballad poetry of England and Scotland has been at one time so much alike, that it is difficult, if not impossible, to discriminate between what may be considered as the native production of the one, or the other. To lay down any general law for ascertaining their respective rights of property in literature of this description, is therefore impracticable.²⁵

Cecil Sharp has this to say about the relationship of the ballads of England and Scotland:

It has been asked: How did the English Ballad, as literature, compare with the Scottish Ballad? Many writers -- Mr. Andrew Lang for example--plump unhesitatingly for Scotland. But then they take the traditional poetry of England, as it now exists and contrast it with the Scottish ballad of a hundred years ago. This, besides being grievously unjust to England is very bad criticism. Moreover, such critics forget, or they do not know, that a large number of so-called Scottish songs are still being sung--in corrupt and incomplete form, no doubt--and presumably have for many centuries been sung by the peasantry of the

24 Joyce, Ancient Irish Music, 79.

25 William Motherwell, Minstrelsy, Ancient and Modern, Glasgow, 1827, XXXIX.

south of England. . . . Now if this fact be held in mind, instead of contrasting the ballad literatures of the two countries, would it not be more reasonable to ascribe to them a common origin? Many collectors of English folk-songs will, I think, agree with me when I say that it is not a question of superiority or inferiority, but rather one of identity. I suggest that the Scottish Ballad (I am not of course referring to the Highland Gaelic Ballad, but the Lowland Scottish Songs to be found in the collections of Sir Walter Scott, Motherwell, Buchan, and others) is no other than the English Ballad in northern dress, that it crossed the border together with the English language of which it was part and parcel; that it took root there and is now mistaken for an indigenous product.²⁶

Sharp includes "Barbara Ellen" in the list of these "Scotch" English ballads.²⁷

A comparison of these texts will show how closely they follow the same pattern. Since Child has used these two texts [Ramsay's and the Roxburghe ballad] as his A and B text, respectively, I am using these letters to designate the texts in the following comparative skeleton of these ballads.

It was in and about the Martinmas time,	(A)
All in the merry month of May,	(B)
were a falling	(A)
When green leaves	
they were springing	(B)

26 C[ecil] J[ames] S[harp], "Folk Songs Noted in Somerset and North Devon," Journal of the Folk-Song Society, London, II, 1905, 3.

27 Ibid.

Sir John Grehme (A)
 This young man (B)

Fell in with Allan, (A)
 love Barbara
 For the of Allen. (B)

 down through the town (A)
 He sent his man unto her then (B)

 place (A)
 To the where she was dwelling (A)
 town (B)

Haste and (A)
 come to my master dear (A)
 You must (B)

Gin ye Allan, (A)
 be Barbara
 If your name Allen, (B)

O hooley, hooley, rose she (A)
 up
 So slowly, slowly, she got (B)

.

 you're (A)
 Young man I think dying. (A)
 you are (B)

He turned his face unto the wall (A&B)

 was with him dealing (A)
 And death (A)
 came creeping to him (B)

A my dear friends (A)
 dieu, adieu all
 Then a , and adieu to (B)

 be kind Allan, (A)
 And to Barbara
 adieu Allen, (B)

She had not gone a mile but twa (A)
 And as she was walking on a day (B)

When dead (A)
 she heard the bell ringing, (A)
 ---- a (B)

And every jow that the dead-bell geid (A)
 And it did seem to ring to her (B)

It cried woe to Allan. (A)
 Unworthy Barbara Allen. (B)

.

O Mother, Mother, make my bed (A & B)

I'll die for him tomorrow (A)
 For his death has quite undone me (B)

Unmistakably, there is enough similarity of phrasing to warrant the conclusion that these texts have a common source.

Chappell says that David Herd, in publishing the "Scotch" version in 1776, does not claim antiquity for this version, and that the Scottish version is "closely built upon the English ballad."²⁸

There remains only one obstacle to the acceptance of the priority of the "English" printed version of the ballad. How can we account for the fact that the earliest printed reference to "Barbara Allen" clearly designated it as a "little Scotch song?"²⁹

28 Chappell, Roxburghe Ballads, 433.

29 Pepys, Diary, V, 175.

In his preface to the Roxburghe version of the ballad Chappell gives this explanation:

We have here a contemporary [of Pepys] copy, and it proves to be one of that numerous class of songs and ballads which before the union of crowns had been called "Northern"--a polite substitute for "rustic"--and which under our Scottish kings were gradually denominated "Scotch." The change may be said to have commenced after Charles II had been crowned King of Scots; the loyalists of the two countries being then brought together, John Playfort, the publisher, was perhaps the last to use the word "Northern" in this sense and his "Northern Songs" were afterwards reprinted as "Scotch."³⁰

If Chappell is correct in his statement about the use of the term "Scotch" it can explain Pepys' meaning of the word as he used it in 1666. Chappell believes, however, that the Roxburghe text is a corruption of the song heard by Pepys, for he states: "Mrs. Knipp's ballad seems to have been written down from memory by some illiterate listener, and very corruptly."³¹ He thinks Bishop Percy's black letter copy may have been a true one,³² but there is evidence that this was published after 1730.³³

30 Chappell, Roxburghe Ballads, 433.

31 Ibid.

32 Ibid.

33 Frank Kidson, "The Ballad Sheet and Garland," Journal of the Folk-Song Society, II, 1905, 75.

If contemporary opinion of James Oswald, the remarks of such competent authorities as Hustvedt and Sharp, and the absence of any trace of the existence of the "Scotch" ballad before 1740, is not convincing evidence of the non-traditional character of this text, an examination of the style of the ballad, itself, may complete the evidence. It has always seemed to me too smooth and flawless to be the product of unaided tradition. The unnecessary repetitions of stanzas seven and eight of the Roxburghe version have been omitted. Notice, too, that the title of Ramsay's ballad is "Bonny Barbara Allan" although the phrase is not used within the text. The Roxburghe ballad does contain this phrase in stanza five:

Then little better shall he be
For bonny Barbara Allen.

There seems little doubt that this text is a literary reworking of an English version, whether that be the Roxburghe text or some version based on another broadside or on oral tradition.

Percy's "Scotch" version, which he entitled "Sir John Grene and Barbara Allen, A Scottish Ballad," is relatively unimportant in comparison with the other three texts. Although he claims to have printed this with a few "conjectural emendations from a written copy," no trace of this written copy has been found and a comparison with Ramsay's text seems to indicate that

the "conjectural emendations" were made to the earlier printed version.

Percy's "English" version entitled like the earlier broadside, "Barbara Allen's Cruelty," is given with "some corrections from an old printed copy in the editor's possession entitled "Barbara Allen's Cruelty or The Young Man's Tragedy." Unlike the Scotch manuscript which Percy claims as his source for the "Scotch" version, a broadside by this title which was once possessed by Percy, is in the collection of the Harvard College Library. This copy bears the imprint "printed and sold at the Bow Church Yard in London."³⁴ William Dacey followed John Cluer at this address in Cheapside about 1730 and this is the imprint the ballads then bore.³⁵

An examination of the text at the end of this chapter will show phrases that Percy introduced into subsequent history of the ballad. Some of the most significant are:

Made Every youth crye wel-awaye

Green buds they were swellin'

Young Jemmye Grove

34 Harvard Broadside No. 25245.36.

35 Frank Kidson, "The Ballad Sheet and Garland." Journal of the Folk-Song Society, London, II, 1905, 75.

And O'er his heart is stealing
 O lovely Barbara Allen
 And slowly she came nigh him
 What needs the tale you are tellin'
 When ye the cups were fillan
 As deadly pangs he fell in
 As she was walking o'er the fields
 She turned her body round about
 Her cheeks with laughter swellin'
 Her heart was struck with sorrow

and the following stanzas:

She on her death-bed as she laye
 Beg'd to be Buried by him,
 And sore repented of the dye
 That she did ere denye him.

Farewell she sayd ye vergins all,
 And shun the fault I fell in,
 Henceforth take warning by the fall
 Of cruel Barbara Allen.

In 1825 Allen Cunningham³⁶ published a version which closely resembles Percy's "Scotch" version except for the substitution of the line:

When the red wine ye were fillan

for Percy's,

When ye the cups were fillan

³⁶ Allan Cunningham, The Songs of Scotland, London 1825, II, 172-173.

In 1864 a hybrid version was published by William Allingham³⁷ in his Ballad Book. This nine stanza version seems to combine Percy's "English" version and Cunningham's version which can be identified by the "red wine" line. This hybrid version has had a vogue in popular anthologies to the present, but seems to have little relationship with oral tradition. Percy's beginning was appended to this version in the Oxford Book of English Verse, first published in 1900.³⁸ The resulting text of ten stanzas has been copied by many anthologists.

It is not possible to trace completely the history in print of any ballad because, as Kidson explains:

Folksongs seldom attained the dignity or inclusion in regular songbooks before the modern period of interest in their collection; their words only were printed, without music, either in garland or on ballad sheets (otherwise broadsides), the printers and publishers of these were almost invariably people who made a special business of this line of trade.³⁹

This ephemeral material forms an important link in the history of this ballad. Morris is only stating the obvious when he says:

37 William Allingham, Ballad Book, London, 1864, 243-244.

38 Sir Arthur Thomas Quiller-Couch, Oxford Book of English Verse, London, 1900, 451.

39 Kidson, "The Ballad Sheet and Garland," 70.

Of material aid in keeping this song alive is probably a large number of copies of stall prints, broadsides, and songster reproductions of it from the beginning of the eighteenth century onward.⁴⁰

London, according to Kidson, was the home of the ballad and garland printer before the middle of the eighteenth century.⁴¹ We have examined the ballad from the Roxburghe Collection published in the late seventeenth century, and the broadside formerly belonging to Percy which is probably typical of early eighteenth century texts.

Broadsides printed in the early eighteenth century are far scarcer than those printed in the late seventeenth century. Whether ballad printing slackened at this period, or whether broadsides have not been preserved, it is impossible to determine. Many, too, were issued without names of printer or publisher.⁴²

Later English broadsides, which have been examined for this thesis, are frequently copies of either Ramsay's "Scotch" version or Percy's "English" version. Ramsay's is the ultimate

40 Morris, Folksongs of Florida, 428.

41 Kidson, "The Ballad Sheet and Garland," 75.

42 Ibid.

source of a broadside bearing no imprint⁴³ which Kittredge⁴⁴ believes is probably one of Cadman's, and an identical text bearing the imprint, "Bebington Printer, 26 Goulden St., Oldham Road, Manchester, sold by J. Beaumont, 176 York-street Leeds."⁴⁵

A version similar to Percy's but substituting the name "Reading" for "Scarlet" bears the imprint of "J Catnach, printer, 2 Monmouth-Court 7 Dials."⁴⁶ The same version was printed by Henry Such, Printer and Publisher/ 123 Union Street, Boro'-- S.E."⁴⁷

James Catnach was printing in London between 1813 and 1838. Henry Parker Such did not turn to news vending until 1849. A great many Such ballad sheets bear the above address.⁴⁸ Bebbington was printing in Manchester in the nineteenth century but later than 1820.⁴⁹

43 Harvard Broadside No. 25242.17, V, 112.

44 George Lyman Kittredge, "Ballads and Songs," Journal of American Folklore, Philadelphia, XXX, July-September, 1917, 317.

45 Harvard Broadside, No. 25242.17, IX, 201.

46 Ibid., V, 163.

47 Ibid., XII, 53.

48 Kidson, "The Ballad and Garland Sheet," 78.

49 Ibid.

Undoubtedly this is but a sampling of the copies circulated in this ephemeral form in England.

William Allingham, who published what he considered a "selection of the choicest British Ballads" in 1865, states that he has also a large collection of ballads hawked by ballad singers throughout Ireland and that only two of the old ballads are still in the market in Seven Dials--the usual version of "Lord Thomas and Fair Eleanor" and "a very corrupt version of Barbara Allen" beginning,

In Reading town where I was born
A fair maid there was dwelling.⁵⁰

This text may be the Catnach ballad referred to above, which was published in "7 Dials."

Although Allingham claims to have used Ramsay's version, his text is actually that hybrid version discussed above.

In America, the earliest extant printing of the ballad is a broadside published in Philadelphia about 1820. This bears the imprint, "Sold wholesale at the corner of Market and Decatur Street."⁵¹ Maps of Philadelphia⁵² show Decatur Street intersect-

50 Allingham, The Ballad Book, XXVII.

51 Harvard Broadside, No. 25276.43.81.

52 John Adams Paxton, The Stranger's Guide. . . . Philadelphia, 1810; Philadelphia in 1824, Philadelphia, 1824.

ing with High or Market Street. The date is given by Kittredge.⁵³ The text of this early American broadside is Percy's "English" version. The first American book in which the ballad was printed is *The American Songster*, Baltimore, 1836. This, also, is Percy's text. Other reprintings of this text and of Ramsay's text will be found in the bibliography.

An eighteen stanza version beginning "It fell about the Martinmas Day" was first published in *The Pearl Songster*, New York, 1846. This text was printed in several American songbooks within the following decades. It is identifiable by its second stanza beginning, "She was a fair and comely maid," and by the offer to make "you mistress" of "yon seven ships." These songbooks probably had a wide circulation in the North and Middle West in the mid-nineteenth century for several traditional versions of the ballad, which closely follow this text, have been recorded in these areas.⁵⁴

Neely reports a southern Illinois variant which was ultimately derived from a broadside.⁵⁵

From the examination of available printed texts of this ballad, and the comments on these texts by publishers and

53 Kittredge, "Ballads and Songs."

54 See Chapter IV for a discussion of the relationship between printed texts and tradition.

55 *Ibid.*

critics, we may conclude that a ballad by this title was well enough known in the Restoration period that the direction "To the Tune of Barbara Allen" was meaningful to the average Londoner; that the English version has a longer history in print; that the "Scotch" text is probably a literary reworking of an English text, perhaps by James Oswald.

I here append the texts of "Barbara Allen" which have a significant history in print.

"Barbara Allen's Cruelty"⁵⁶

In Scarlet Town, where I was bound,
 There was a fair maid dwelling,
 Whom I had chosen to be my own,
 And her name was Barbara Allen.

All in the merry month of May,
 When green leaves they was springing,
 This young man on his death-bed lay,
 For the love of Barbara Allen.

He sent his man unto her then,
 To the town where she was dwelling:
 "You must come to my master dear,
 If your name be Barbara Allen."

"For death is printed in his face
 And sorrow's in him dwelling,
 And you must come to my master dear,
 If your name be Barbara Allen."

"If death be printed in his face,
 And sorrow's in him dwelling,
 Then little better shall he be
 For bonny Barbara Allen."

⁵⁶ Roxburghe Ballads, II, 25. Here copied from
 [Helen Child Sargent and George Lyman Kittredge], English and
 Scottish Popular Ballads, Boston, [1932], 85.

So slowly, slowly she got up,
And so slowly she came to him,
And all she said when she came there,
Young man, I think you are a dying.

He turned his face unto her then;
"If you be Barbara Allen,
My dear," said he, "come pitty me,
As on my death-bed I am lying.

"If on your death-bed you be lying,
What is that to Barbara Allen?
I cannot keep you from your death;
So farewell," said Barbara Allen.

He turned his face unto the wall,
And death came creeping to him:
"Then adieu, adieu, and adieu to all,
And adieu to Barbara Allen!"

And as she was walking on a day,
She heard the bell a ringing,
And it did seem to ring to her
"Unworthy Barbara Allen."

She turned herself round about,
And she spy'd the corps a coming:
"Lay down, lay down the corps of clay,
That I may look upon him."

And all the while she looked on,
So loudly she lay laughing,
While all her friends cry's out amain,
"Unworthy Barbara Allen!"

When he was dead, and laid in grave,
Then death came creeping to she:
"O mother, mother, make my bed,
For his death hath quite undone me.

"A hard-hearted creature that I was,
To slight one that lov'd me so dearly;
I wish I had been more kinder to him,
The time of his life when he was near me."

So this maid she then did dye,
 And desired to be buried by him,
 And repented herself before she dy'd
 That ever she did deny him.

"Bonny Barbara Allan"⁵⁷

It was in and about the Martinmas time,
 When the green leaves were a falling,
 That Sir John Graeme, in the West Country,
 Fell in love with Barbara Allan.

He sent his man down through the town,
 To the place where she was dwelling:
 "O haste and come to my master dear,
 Gin ye be Barbara Allan."

O hooly, hooly rose she up,
 To the place where he was lying,
 And when she drew the curtain by,
 "Young man, I think you're dying."

"O it's I'm sick, and very, very sick,
 And 'tis a' for Barbara Allan!"
 "O the better for me ye's never be,
 Tho your heart's blood were a spilling.

"O dinna ye mind, young man," said she
 "When ye was in the tavern a drinking,
 That ye made the healths gae round and round,
 And slighted Barbara Allan?"

He turned his face unto the wall,
 And death was with him dealing:
 "Adieu, adieu, my dear friends all,
 And be kind to Barbara Allan."

And slowly, slowly raise she up,
 And slowly, slowly left him,
 And sighing said, she could not stay,
 Since death of life had reft him.

⁵⁷ Allan Ramsay, The Tea-Table Miscellany, London, 1740, IV, 46. Here copied from Sargent and Kittredge, English and Scottish Popular Ballads, 84.

She had not gane a mile but twa,
 When she heard the dead-bell ringing
 And every jow that the dead-bell geid,
 It cry'd "Woe to Barbara Allan!"

"O mother, mother, make my bed!
 O make it soft and narrow;
 Since my love died for me to-day,
 I'll die for him to-morrow."

"Barbara Allen's Cruelty

Given with some corrections from an old black letter copy en-
 titled, 'Barbara Allen's Cruelty

or the Young man's tragedy!"⁵⁸

In Scarlet towne, where I was borne,
 There was a faire maid dwellin,
 Made every youth crye wel-awaye!
 Her name was Barbara Allen.

All in the merrye month of May
 When greene buds they were swellin;
 Young Jemmye Grove on his death-bed lay,
 For love of Barbara Allen.

He sent his man unto her then,
 To the town where she was dwellin;
 "You must come to my master deare,
 Giff your name be Barbara Allen,

"For death is printed on his face,
 And ore his hart is stealin;
 Then haste away to comfort him,
 O loveye Barbara Allen."

"Though death be printed on his face,
 And ore his harte is stealin"
 Yet little better shall he bee
 For bonny Barbara Allen."

⁵⁸ Percy, Reliques, 189-190. Here copied from the London edition of 1889.

So slowly, slowly she came up
 And slowly she came nye him;
 And all she said when there she came,
 "Young man, I think y'are dying."

He turned his face unto her strait,
 With deadlye sorrow sighing;
 "O lovely maid, come pity mee,
 Ime on my death-bed lying."

"If on your death-bed you doe lye,
 What needs the tale you are tellin?
 I cannot keep you from your death;
 Farewell," said Barbara Allen.

He turned his face unto the wall,
 As deadlye pangs he fell in;
 "Adieu! Adieu! Adieu! to you all,
 Adieu to Barbara Allen!"

As she was walking ore the fields,
 She heard the bell a knellin:
 And every stroke did seem to saye,
 "Unworthe Barbara Allen!"

She turned her bodye round about,
 And spied the corps a coming;
 "Laye down, laye down the corps," she sayd,
 "That I may look upon him."

With scornful eye she looked downe,
 Her cheeke with laughter swellin;
 Whilst all her friends cried out amaine,
 "Unworthe Barbara Allen!"

When he was dead, and laid in grave,
 Her harte was struck with sorrowe;
 "O mother, mother make my bed,
 For I shall dye tomorrowe."

"Hard-harted creature him to slight,
 Who loved me so dearlye;
 O that I had beene more kind to him,
 When he was alive and neare me!"

She on her death-bed as she laye,
 Beg'd to be buried by him,
 And sore repented of the daye,
 That she did ere denye him,

"Farewell," she said, "ye virgins all,
 And shun the fault I fell in:
 Henceforth take warning by the fall
 Of cruel Barbara Allen."

"Sir John Grehme and Barbara Allan

A Scottish Ballad

Printed, with a few conjectural emendations, from a
 written copy."59

It was in and about the Martinmas time,
 When the greene leaves were a fallan,
 That Sir John Grehme o' the west countrye
 Fell in luve wi' Barbara Allan.

He sent his man down throw the towne,
 To the plaice wher she was dwellan:
 "O haste and cum to my maister deare,
 Gin ye bin Barbara Allan."

O hooly, hooly raise she up,
 To the plaice wher she was lyan;
 And whan she drew the curtain by,
 "Young man, I think ye're dyan."

"O its I'm sick, and very, very sick,
 And its a' for Barbara Allan."
 "O the better for me ye'se never be,
 Though your harts blude were spillan.

"Remember ye nat in the tavern, sir,
 Whan ye the cups were fillan,
 How ye made the healths gae round and round,
 And slighted Barbara Allan?"

59 Percy, Reliques, 193-194. Here copied from the
 London edition of 1889.

He turn'd his face unto the wa'
 And death was with him dealan;
 "Adiew! adiew! my dear friends a';
 Be kind to Barbara Allan."

Then hooly, hooly raise she up,
 And hooly, hooly left him,
 And sighan said she could not stay,
 Since death of life had reft him.

She had not gane a mile but twa,
 When she heard the deid-bell knellan;
 And everye jow the deid-bell geid,
 Cried, "Wae to Barbara Allan!"

"O mither, mither, mak my bed,
 O mak it saft and narrow,
 Since my love died for me to-day,
 I'se die for him tomorrowe."

"Barbara Allan"⁶⁰

It fell about the Martinmas day
 When the green leaves were falling,
 Sir James the Graham in the west country,
 Fell in love with Barbara Allan.

She was a fair and comely maid
 And a maid nigh to his dwelling,
 Which made him to admire the more,
 The beauty of Barbara Allan.

O what's thy name my bonny maid;
 Or where hast thou thy dwelling,
 She answered him most modestly,
 My name is Barbara Allan.

O see you not yon seven ships
 So bonny as they are sailing,
 I'll make you mistress of them all,
 My bonny Barbara Allan.

But it fell out upon a day,
At the wine as they were drinking,
They tossed their glasses around about
And slighted Barbara Allan.

O she has taken't so ill out,
That she'd no more look on him,
And for all the letters he could send,
Still swore she'd never have him.

O if I had a man, a man,
A man within my dwelling,
That will write a letter with my blood
And carry't to Barbara Allan.

Desire her to come here with speed,
For I am at the dying,
And speak one word to her true love,
For I'll die for Barbara Allan.

Her man is off with all his speed,
To the place where she is dwelling,
Here's a letter from your master dear
Gin ye be Barbara Allan.

O when she looked the letter upon,
With a loud laughter gi'd she,
But e'er she read the letter through,
The tear blinded her moist eye.

O hooly, hooly, rose she up,
And slowly goes she to him,
And slightly drew the curtains by,
Young man I think you're dying.

O I am sick, and very sick,
And my heart is at the breaking,
One kiss or two of thy sweet mouth,
Would keep me from the dying.

O min[d] you not young man, said she,
When you sat in the tavern,
Then you made the health go round,
And slighted Barbara Allan.

And slowly, slowly, rose she up,
And slowly, slowly left him,
And sighing said she could not stay,
Since death of life had reft him,

She had not gone a mile from the town,
Till she heard the dead bell knelling,
And every knell that dead bell gave,
Was woe to Barbara Allan.

Now when the virgin heard the same,
Sure she was greatly troubled,
When in the coffin his corpse she view'd
Her sorrows all were doubled.

What! hast thou died for me she cried,
Let all true lovers shun me,
Too late I may this sadly say,
That death has quite undone me.

O mother, mother, make my bed,
O make it soft and narrow,
Since my love died for me to-day,
I'll die for him to-morrow.

CHAPTER IV

THE VARIANTS OF "BARBARA ALLEN"

In the study of this ballad there is too much overlapping of traits to warrant a systematic classification of the many texts on the basis of story traits. It is more useful for the purpose of this study to point out the texts which are related to print and, having isolated these, to examine the bulk of material which remains, for evidence of its traditional character.

It is inevitable that the numerous printed texts of this ballad should have influenced the ballad in tradition.

The alleged dichotomy of "Scotch" and "English" texts of this ballad was discussed in the chapter on the ballad in print. We noted that the "Scotch" version, first printed by Ramsay in 1740, has been printed in anthologies more than any other version except Percy's "English" version. Let us now examine the relationship between this text and the ballad in tradition.

Seven almost identical texts have been recorded in the United States and Nova Scotia, which are Ramsay's text almost verbatim. These texts have been found in Nova Scotia (Fauset), Maine (Barry B), Mississippi (Hudson E), Arkansas (Randolph H),

and South Carolina (Brown Z, AA, BB, CC).

It is not surprising to find these texts in the south where the ballad was printed in songbooks in Richmond in 1845.¹ A broadside using this text was published in New York as late as 1880.²

Another group of texts with an autumn setting is related to the text published in the Pearl Songster in 1846, and in various editions of the Forget-Me-Not Songster.³

William Larkin, who began a personal collection of "the best songs he knew" in 1866, copied this eighteen stanza version of Barbara Allen, probably from one of these songsters.⁴ Davis collected a text of this type (Davis R) in Virginia in 1920. The singer had learned it from her mother seventy years earlier and volunteered the information that her grandfather, who came from Ireland about 1800, had sung the song. This text (Davis R) is fifteen stanzas long and has several modifications which

1 See bibliography for a listing of these sources.

2 Henry J. Wehman, "Barbara Allan," Harvard Broadside No. 25241.29.

3 See bibliography.

4 Musick, "Old Album of William Larkin."

show that it has passed through tradition.

The line:

She has taken it so ill out,

has been altered to:

She has taken so allow.

The seventh stanza is:

He turned his back then to the wall
 His eyes then to the ocean,
 And all the words that he did say,
 "Farewell to Barbara Allen."

Other texts of this type have been collected in Virginia (Davis O,R), Missouri (Belden A), Nova Scotia (Mac Kenzie A), Washington (Adventure [C]), and Kentucky (Kittredge). One fragment (Davis EE) is the only text with a spring beginning which includes the stanza beginning, "She was a fair and comely maid."

Another text of nine stanzas with an autumn setting (Shoemaker B) comes from Pennsylvania where it can be traced back to about 1850. It is the only traditional text examined for this study, in which the tavern scene includes the line:

When you the cups were fillin!

The presence of this line indicates that the text is derived from Percy's "Scotch" text rather than from Ramsay's.

It is natural to expect to find this song in tradition

in Scotland. Greig published a fifteen stanza text⁵ which is Ramsay's, almost verbatim, except for three very neat insertions of one, two, and three stanzas, which show "Bawbie" as vindictive, list bequests to "Bawbie" of a watch, prayer book and napkin full "O my heart's blood," and report a conversation between "Bawbie" and her relatives in which she implies that they are guilty of the tragedy.

After stanza five of Ramsay's version:

"A kiss of you would do me good,
My bonnie Bawbie Allan."
"But a kiss o me you sanna get,
Though your heart's blood were a-spillin."

After stanza six of Ramsay's version:

"Put in your han at my bedside,
An' there ye'll find a warran,
Wi my gold watch an' my prayer book,
Gie that to Bawbie Allan.

"Put in your hand at my bedside,
An' there ye'll find a warran
A napkin full o my heart's blood
Gie that to Bawbie Allan."

Between stanzas eight and nine of Ramsay's:

In then cam her father dear,
Said, "Bonnie Bawbie, tak him."--
"It's time to bid me tak him noo
When ye know his coffin's makin."

⁵ Gavin Greig, Last Leaves of Traditional Ballads and Ballad Airs, Aberdeen, 1925, 67-70.

In then cam her brother dear,
 Said, "Bonnie Bawbie, tak him."--
 "It's time to bid me tak him noo
 When his grave-cloes is a-makin."

Then in cam her sisters dear,
 Said, "Bonnie Bawbie, tak him."--
 "It's time to bid me tak him noo,
 When my heart it is a-brakin."

It is reasonable to assume that this lengthening of Ramsay's ballad is the work of some hack writer who made these alterations for a stall print. Tradition does not deal with material in this way. Greig describes three other texts which he does not print in his collection. Only one of these (Greig B) has an autumn beginning. However he says that both his B and C texts are similar to A but shorter. The fourth text (Greig D) is merely Percy's text shortened to eight stanzas.⁶

Ord's collection of Scotch ballads, published in Aberdeen in 1930, contains a frankly collated text called "Barbara Allan" which examination reveals to be Percy's "Scotch" text with two stanzas inserted which contain a bequest to Barbara and the direction to find a bloody shirt,

That was bled for Barbara Allan.⁷

6 Greig, Last Leaves, 257.

7 John Ord, The Bothy Songs and Ballads of Aberdeen, Aberdeen, 1930, 476.

There are, besides these texts which are obviously from printed versions, just six texts which begin with the autumn setting. Three of these are from North Carolina (Brown Z, AA, DD), two from Virginia (Davis G, BB), and one from Georgia (Morris A). These texts show some relationship with other traditional texts which have a spring setting. Three of these (Brown Z, AA, and Davis G) are obviously related texts. Brown Z begins:

It was the fall season of the year
 The yellow leaves were falling,
 Sweet William he was taken sick
 For the love of Barbara Ellen.

The name is "Barbara Allan" in Davis G.

All three texts have Barbara's reproach, and William's justification is in Davis G and Brown AA. In Davis G the insult occurs in "yonders town," and in Brown A it is "last Tuesday night." Both phrases occur in other texts. The curtain around the bed is retained from Ramsay's or is superimposed. Barbara weeps when she meets the corpse. In Brown Z and AA, Barbara asks her father to dig her grave and all end with the rose-brier motif.

Brown DD is described by Hudson as "a full normal text with autumn setting." It has thirteen stanzas and the girl is "Barbara Ellen."

The remaining text (Davis BB) has some interesting variations but it is obviously contaminated by Percy's "English"

version. It begins:

'Twas late-lie, late-lie in the fall,
 'Twas when the leaves were dying,
 That Johnny from the back countree
 Fall in love with Barbara Allen.

And oh, he hired a little boy
 To run for him an errand,
 To run for him to Strawberry town
 To fetch him Barbara Allen.

Some of the text has probably been lost, for the bells and meeting with the corpse are missing, but there is a stanza which suggests this situation:

The more she looked the more she laughed
 The farther she went from him;
 And all her friends cried out, "For shame!
 Hard-hearted Barbara Allen."

It ends with the familiar rose-brier motif which the editor says is sometimes used with "Lord Lovell."

Percy's English version with the setting in "Scarlet Town," was the first version printed in America. The printed copies of this version have obviously influenced tradition whether the singers who already knew the ballad adopted lines from the printed version, or whether the ballad was disseminated in this form. From tradition, twenty-two copies which are identical with Percy's in all essentials, have been recorded. These all begin with Percy's opening stanza, lack the accusation, specify that Barbara laughed at the corpse and end with the warning to all virgins to "shun the fault I fell in." In most

of these the man's name is some variation of Jemmy Grove. This version has been found in Virginia (Davis A, Scarborough A, D), West Virginia (Cox A), North Carolina (Brown A, B, D), South Carolina (Smith A, Millican), Mississippi (Hudson F, G, H), Tennessee (Perry, Cobb), Iowa (Stout A, B), Indiana (Brewster C, E, I, Neal), Missouri (Belden B, Randolph M), Pennsylvania (Eddy C, Shoemaker I). Eddy C is the only one of this group in which the young man is "Sweet William." This includes also, the extra stanza common to other types of the ballad:

It was all in the month of June
When all things they were blooming,
Sweet William on his deathbed lay
For the love of Barbara Allen.

The death bells are lacking in Perry. Hudson F and G, and Scarborough D are six stanza versions, obviously Percy's abbreviated, and may owe their start to one of the shorter printed adaptations from a popular songbook. Scarborough C is essentially Percy's text with the insertion of the accusation and justification stanzas and the rose-brier conclusion.

The version of Shoemaker, although obviously from Percy, begins:

In Reading town, when I was young,
which may reflect association with Reading, Pennsylvania, rather than the influence of one of the broadsides which have Reading

Town for a setting.

In Millican's text the usual eleventh and twelfth stanzas are telescoped in such a way that the laughter is omitted:

She turned her body round about,
And spied the corpse a-coming,
While all her friends cried out amain;
"Unworthy Barbara Allen."

This version has the addition of the rose-brier stanza common to other types of the ballad:

Out of his grave sprang a rose-bush
And out of hers a briar;
They grew and wrapped in a true love-knot;
The rose wrapped round the briar.

Barry reports an eight stanza version from Maine which has retained the essentials of Percy's but not the exact form. The singer was not sure whether Scarlet or Charlotte Town was the form sung by her mother. In this version it is the tolling of the bells which bring on the fit of laughter and Barbara laughs again in the following stanza:

She turned about to get her breath
And spied the funeral coming;
She laughed to see him pale in death,
O cruel Barbara Allen. (Barry A)

The concluding warning has a deepened meaning in:

"Now maidens all a warning take,
And shun the ways I fell in,
Or else your heart like mine may break;
Farewell!" said Barbara Allen. (Barry A)

Another Virginia variant (Davis N) shows the influence of Percy by the lines:

The green buds they were swelling

.....

Made every youth to weal or woe,

But the name of the young man is Jimmy Grame,

This version of eleven stanzas has Barbara's laughter, lacks the accusation, but has one stanza which may be a corruption of the toast drinking:

He sent his man unto her then,

Unto the tavern where she was dwelling.

"You must go to my master dear,

If your name be Barbara Allen." (Davis N)

and ends with a stanza nearer to the Roxburghe ballad:

When on her death-bed she did lay,

She begged to be buried by him,

And sore repented of the day

That ever she did deny him.

(Davis N)

Percy's version has even penetrated Scotland where one of four traditional texts reported by Greig is an eight stanza abbreviation of Percy's ballad, ending with the warning to all virgins (Greig D).

Another group of variants which begins by naming the setting includes the accusation by Barbara that the young man has slighted her. A few of these seem to be strongly influenced by Percy. Most texts of this type have the setting in Scarlet Town,

add a stanza of accusing birds to the accusing bells, show Barbara bursting into tears rather than laughter, at the sight of the corpse, and end with the rose-brier motif. These include an additional stanza:

"O Father, O Father, go dig my grave;
Go dig it long and narrow,
Sweet William died for me today;
I'll die for him tomorrow."

This type includes the "month of June" stanza of Eddy C.

The version just described was fixed in southern Illinois by a broadside which was given to Neely⁸ for his collection and which had been in the family of Miss Catherine Kettler of New Baden for two or three generations. This version was also used by Bradley Kincaid in a series of radio broadcasts over station WLS beginning in 1926 and was printed by him in his collection of favorite mountain ballads.⁹ The broadcasts may be responsible for the prevalence of this version in the area around 1936.

A typical ballad of this type was collected in Dale, Indiana, in 1936 (Brewster A):

⁸ Charles Neely and J. W. Spargo, Tales and Songs of Southern Illinois, Kenosha, Wisconsin, 1938, 138.

⁹ Bradley Kincaid, Favorite Mountain Ballads and Old Time Songs, Chicago, 1928, 14.

In Scarlet Town, where I was born
There was a fair maid dwelling,
Made every youth cry "well away,"
And her name was Barbara Allen.

All in the merry month of May,
When the green buds were swelling,
Sweet William came from the Western States,
And courted Barbara Allen.

He sent his servant to the town,
Where Barbara was a-dwelling;
"My master is sick and sends for you,
If your name be Barbara Allen."

"And death is printed on his face,
And o'er his heart is stealing;
So hasten away to comfort him,
O lovely Barbara Allen!"

So slowly, slowly she got up
And slowly she came nigh him;
And all she said when she got there,
"Young man, I think you're dying."

"O yes, I'm sick, and very sick,
And death is in me dwelling;
No better, no better I never can be
If I can't have Barbara Allen."

"O yes, you're sick, and very sick,
And death is in you dwelling;
No better, no better you never will be,
For you can't have Barbara Allen."

"O don't you remember in yonder town
When you were at the tavern,
You drank a health to the ladies all around,
And slighted Barbara Allen!"

As she was on her highway home,
The birds they kept a-singing,
They sang so clear they seemed to say,
"Hard-hearted Barbara Allen!"

As she was walking o'er the fields,
 She heard the death-bell knelling;
 And every stroke did seem to say,
 "Hard-hearted Barbara Allen!"

She looked to the east, she looked to the west;
 She spied his corpse a-coming;
 "Lay down, lay down that corpse of clay
 That I may look upon him."

The more she looked the more she mourned,
 Till she fell to the ground a-crying;
 Saying, "Pick me up and carry me home,
 For I am now a-dying."

"O Mother, O Mother, go make my bed;
 Go make it long and narrow.
 Sweet William died for pure, pure, love,
 And I shall die for sorrow."

"O Father, O Father, go dig my grave;
 Go dig it long and narrow,
 Sweet William died for me today;
 I'll die for him tomorrow."

She was buried in the old churchyard,
 And he was buried a-nigh her;
 On William's grave there grew a red rose,
 On Barbara's grew a briar.

Other related texts include Brewster, B, F, J, Thompson, Thomas [B], Raine, Crabtree A, and Mason.

One other Indiana version (Brewster D) is close to Percy but the corpse is not met by Barbara, she accuses him of slighting her in drinkings:

"You remember on the other day
 When you were all a-drinking,
 You filled your glass and handed it around,
 And you slighted Barbara Allen."

Barbara rides through town:

She mounted on her milk-white steed
 And she rode through town a-sailing,
 And every house that she passed by
 Said, "Woe unto Barbara Allen."

A stanza similar to Ramsay's concluding stanza is followed by the usual two stanza rose-brier ending.

Dorothy Scarborough has caught one in the southern mountains (Scarborough C) which is very close to Percy in all details, but adds Barbara's accusation and Jimmie's justification:

Recollect, recollect, recollect young man
 When I boarded at your tavern,
 You drank, you walked with the ladies round,
 And you slighted Barbara Allen.

Oh, yes, Oh, yes, oh, yes, oh, yes,
 When you boarded at my tavern,
 I made the health go round and round,
 My love to Barbara Allen.

The two-stanza rose-brier ending is added after the warning to all virgins.

When these orally transmitted versions which show close relationship to one of the well known printed texts are discounted, the number of complete texts which show the vitality characteristic of tradition, is remarkable.

The following outline has been used in this study to tabulate all readily available texts whose source can be verified. Frankly collated texts, and those for which no source is given are not included in the tabulation although they will be found

listed in the bibliography. The place given is the place of the recording unless the singer gave a clue to an earlier locality. The date assigned is the date of the recording unless the singer or editor gives an earlier source. Fragments and texts for which only a description is given by their editors, have been included whenever a source is given, for the added information they give about characteristics of the ballad in tradition.

KEY TO TABULATION OF TRADITIONAL TEXTS

A First person beginning with setting named

- 1 Scarlet Town
- 2 Reading Town
- 3 Scotland
- 4 Newbury
- 5 Honor
- 6 Stony Town
- 7 Over
- 8 Yonder (or Yonders)
- 9 Scarland
- 10 London
- 11 Away down south
- 12 Gordon town
- 13 In the town
where I was born
- 14 Quelick town
- 15 Ireland
- 16 Upon a hill
- 17 Lexington
- 18 Story
- 19 Dark and Gloomy
- 20 Lonely
- 21 Limerick
- 22 Charlotte
- 23 Totnes Town

Followed by one or more
of the following details

- a Percy's "Made Every Youth
Cry 'Wel-awaye'"
- b Whom I had chosen to be
my own
- c That's where I got my
learning
- d In _____ was my dwelling
- e Three maids were dwelling
- f Maids dressed in red
- g Two maids were dwelling
- h Many maids were dwelling
- i I fell in love with a
pretty little girl
- j I chose her out to be my own
- k Dressed in every color
- l Where I was bound

B Time of year is given as

1 Autumn

2 Spring

When a young man--

a Came from the west (or other
point of the compass)

b On his deathbed lay

c To this country came

d Is sick and sends for you

e Courted a fair young maid

C An incremental stanza inserted which begins in the month of
June

(subdivided as "B" above)

D The young man courted Barbara

1 For seven years

2 For months and years

3 Six years

4 In summer and in winter

5 Six months or more

6 A very long time

7 For weeks and months

E Barbara is sent for

1 By servant

2 By letter

3 By no specified method--
is merely requested to come

4 By servants (plural)

5 By a "boy"

6 By a nephew

7 By cousins

F A stanza equivalent to stanzas in printed versions beginning
"Death is printed on his face" followed by

1 Percy's text

"And o'er his heart is stealing"

a "Then haste away to comfort him"

b "And none the better will he be"

- 2 Roxburghe Text,
"And sorrow's in him dwelling,"

G Barbara goes to the young man, in stanza beginning:

- 1 Slowly she put on her clothes (usual English text)
- 2 Slowly rose she up (usual American text)
- 3 (She goes in haste)
- 4 Slowly she fixed up
- 5 (Other beginnings)

H Young man responds to statement that he is dying by

- 1 Acknowledging that he will die if he can't have Barbara
- 2 Saying, "A dying man, o don't say so."
- 3 Trying to draw her to him
- 4 Asking for a kiss

I Barbara refuses young man

- 1 Refuses kiss
- 2 Says she would gladly kill him with a kiss
- 3 Merely refuses him

J Young man turns to the wall and

- | | | |
|---|---|---------------|
| 1 | Death came creeping to him,
or was in him dwelling | |
| 2 | Turned his back upon her | |
| 3 | Burst out crying | |
| 4 | She turned her back upon him | He speaks his |
| 5 | With deadly sorrow sighing | last words |
| 6 | His nose gushed out a bleeding | which are: |

- ↓
- a Adieu (farewell or goodbye) Barbara Allen
 - b Be kind to Barbara Allen
 - c Wee to Barbara Allen
 - d Hard-hearted Barbara Allen

K Barbara accuses young man of slighting her

- 1 In drinking
- 2 In dancing
- 3 In another way

L Young man reacts to accusation by

- 1 Defending himself
- 2 Acknowledging his guilt

M Barbara leaves the dying man

- 1 Slowly
- 2 Riding away
- 3 With no mention of details
- 4 By descending stairs

N Young man makes bequest to Barbara of

- 1 Valuables
- 2 Blood
- 3 Tears
- 4 Money

O Barbara is admonished by

- 1 Birds
- 2 Bells
- 3 Nothing--merely hears bells
- 4 Every tongue
- 5 Young men
- 6 Her own heart

P Barbara sees funeral procession as she

- 1 Looks to the east and west
- 2 Walked out upon a day
- 3 Looked back
- 4 Looked to the south
- 5 Turned her body round about
- 6 (Others)

Q She reacts to meeting with corpse by

- 1 Weeping
- 2 Laughing or smiling
- 3 Merely gazing
- 4 Kissing the corpse
- 5 Asking that he be taken away
- 6 Making a long speech and fainting

R Barbara blames another for the tragedy

- 1 Mother
- 2 Father
- 3 Others

S Mother dies also

T Barbara requests

- 1 Mother to make her bed
- 2 Father to dig her grave
- 3 Burial, does not specify person
- 4 Nothing, merely states that she will die
- 5 Mother to dig grave

U Ballad ends with rose-brier stanzas in which

- 1 Rose grows from his grave, brier from hers
- 2 Rose grows from her grave, brier from his
- 3 Dove and sparrow replace rose and brier
- 4 Rose grows from one grave, brier from the other,
not specified which
- 5 Rose grows from both graves
- 6 Leaf is substituted for rose

V Name of heroine is Barbara, or some derivative of Barbara

- 1 Allen or Allan
- 2 Ellen

W Number of stanzas in text or fragment given

- 1 One stanza
 - 2 Two stanzas
- Etc.

A hyphen with a number or letter indicates a characteristic telescoped with another stanza.

A hyphen standing alone indicates that information about the characteristic is lacking.

x indicates a detail not listed in outline.

* indicates characteristic present.

A period stands in the column to indicate a characteristic not present in the text.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W			
Eng. 1850	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	x	6 ¹ / ₂	Brown R
Eng. 1850	1	2b	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	JFSS I [A]	
Eng. 1869	23a	2b	.	.	1	1a	2	1	3	5a	.	.	.	.	.	5	2	.	.	.	1	.	1	16	Hewett
Eng. 1880	.	2b	.	.	1	.	1	4	1	.	.	.	1,2	.	2	.	2	.	.	.	1,2	.	1	11	Burne	
Eng. 1890	12d	.	.	2	1	.	1	3	1	1a	.	.	.	2	2	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	1	10	Kidson [A]
Eng. 1890	3di	.	.	3,4	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	2	Kidson [B]
Eng. 1890	2a	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	1	Kidson [C]
Eng. 1890	2j	2b	.	.	1	.	1	2	1	1a	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	7	JFSS I [C]
Eng. 1890	3d---b	.	.	.	1	.	.	2	1	.	.	.	.	1,2	1,2	2	2	.	.	.	1	1	2	13	Sharp-Nov.
Eng. 1900	3d---b	.	.	.	.	.	.	2	.	.	.	.	.	3	.	2	2	.	.	.	.	2	2	11	Sharp-Som.
Eng. 1900	.	---a	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	1	.	3	.	2	3	.	.	.	1	.	-	2	JFSS I [B]
Eng. 1900	.	---a	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	1	.	3	.	2	3	.	.	.	1	.	1	- ¹	JFSS II [A]
Eng. 1903	3d---b	.	.	.	.	.	.	2	.	.	.	.	.	2	2	2	2	.	.	.	.	2	11	11	JFSS II [E]
Eng. 1904	3d---b	2	1	1	JFSS II [B]
Eng. 1904	.	2b	1	1	1	JFSS II [C]
Eng. 1904	.	2b	2	1	1	JFSS II [D]
Eng. 1920	4j	2b	.	.	1	.	1	2,4	1	.	.	.	1,2	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	12	Williams [A]
Eng. 1920	.	2b	.	.	1	.	1	.	1	1a	.	.	.	.	2	.	2	.	.	.	3	.	1	8	Williams [B]
Eng. n.d.	3---b	.	.	.	1	.	1	2	.	.	.	.	.	1,2	1,2	2	2	.	.	.	1	1	2	13	Sharp 100
Ire. 1800	.	1a	.	.	2	.	.	.	.	2a	1	.	.	1	2	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	1	15	Davis R
Ire. 1900	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	1,2,3	.	.	.	2	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	5 ²	Barry C
CBI ³ 19--	15di	.	.	7	.	.	.	4	.	.	.	.	.	1,2,4	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	2	2	7	Davis T
Scot. 1825	.	1a	.	.	1	.	1	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	3	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	9	Child C
Scot. 1925	.	1a	.	.	.	.	2	1,4,3,1	1	1	.	.	.	1,2	.	.	.	2,3	.	1	.	1	15	Greig A	
Scot. 1925	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	*	-	-	-	1	11	Greig B		
Scot. 1925	3d	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1,3	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	10	Greig C		
Scot. 1925	1a	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	8	Greig D		

1 Prose version.

2 Couplets.

3 Cape Breton Island.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W		
Ark. 1920	.	2b	.	.	3	2b	1	1	1	8	Randolph B
Ark. 1931	2	1	1	1	4	Randolph K
Ark. 1941	.	2a	-b	1	2	Randolph C
Ark. n.d.	2	1	Randolph C
Conn. 1856	2c	.	2	.	2	1	6	1	-	Thompson
Conn. 1949	.	2b	.	.	.	.	2	4	1	.	1,2	.	.	1,2	.	x	2	.	.	1	.	x	10	Flanders
Fla. 1900	.	2b	.	.	1	.	2	3	.	2a	1	.	.	.	2	6	.	.	*	1	1	1	12	Morris B	
Fla. 1900 10ci	.	.	.	1	2	.	.	.	.	3	1-1	.	.	.	1	1	1	.	.	1	.	2	10	Morris D
Fla. 1937	.	2b	.	.	1	.	2	1-3	.	4-	.	.	-3	.	3-	-1	1	.	*	.	1	1	11	Morris E	
Fla. 1940	.	2b	.	.	1	.	2	1	3	1	1	9	Morris D[2]
Ga. 1840	.	1b	.	.	1	.	2	1	.	2c	1	1	.	.	3-	-1	1	1	1	14	Morris A
Ga. 1900	.	2b	.	.	1	.	2	1	3	3a	3	.	4	.	*	.	.	1	1	12	Morris C
Ga. 1910	.	2b	.	.	1	.	2	.	.	3a	.	.	.	.	3	1	1	.	*	1	4	1	12	Sharp B
Ga. 1914 8e	3	.	.	1	.	3,4	1	1	4	.	2	1	3	.	.	1	1	1	12	Sharp A	
Ga. 1914	.	2b	.	.	1	.	2	3	3	.	.	.	2	.	3	1	3	1,2,3	*	.	1	2	12	Sharp C	
Ga. 1916	2	1	1	Rawn B
Ill. 1860	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	Belden J	
Ill. 1935	.	.	.	1	.	1b	.	.	3	.	.	.	.	.	2	5	1	.	.	-1	2	1	7	MacIntosh B
Ill. 1935 1a	2a	-b	.	.	1	2	1	3	.	1	.	.	.	.	1,2	1	1	.	.	1,2	1	1	15	Brewster F
Ill. n.d.	.	2b	.	.	1	.	2	1	.	.	1	1	.	.	.	3	1	.	.	2	2	1	10	Lair	
Ill. n.d. 1a	2a	-b	.	1	1	2	1	3	.	1	.	.	.	.	1,2	1	1	.	.	1,2	1	1	16	Neely
Ind. 1935	.	2b	.	.	1	.	2	.	.	2b	1	.	.	.	2	1	1	.	.	4	1	1	9	Brewster I	
Ind. 1935	.	2b	.	.	1	.	3	1	3	1	1	1	9	Brewster H
Ind. 1935 1a	2a	-b	.	1	1	2	1	3	.	1	.	.	.	.	1,2	1	1	.	.	1,2	1	1	16	Brewster B
Ind. 1935 1a	2b	-b	.	1	.	2	1	3	.	2c	1	1	2	.	1,2	1	-	.	.	1,2	1	1	16	Brewster J	
Ind. 1935	.	2b	.	.	1	2a	1	3	Brewster M
Ind. 1935	-	2	Brewster N
Ind. 1936 1a	2a	-b	.	1	1	2	1	3	.	1	.	.	.	.	1,2	1	1	.	.	1,2	1	1	17	Brewster A
Ind. 1936	.	2b	.	.	.	2	4	.	.	2	1	.	.	.	2	1	.	1	7	Brewster K
Ind. 1936	.	2b	.	.	2	.	2	4	.	.	1	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	4	1	1	9	Brewster G

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W			
Ky. 1899	.	2b	.	.	1	.	2	1	.	4a	1	1	.	.	2	1	1	.	.	1	.	1	11	Independent		
Ky. 1907	.	2b	.	.	1	.	2	1	.	1b	.	.	.	.	3	.	3	.	.	1,2	1	2	11	Sharp F
Ky. 1907	.	2b	.	.	1	.	2	1	.	4a	1	1	.	.	2	1	1	.	.	1	2	1	13	Beatty		
Ky. 1915	.	2b	.	.	1	.	2	.	.	1b	1	1	.	.	2	1	1	.	.	1,2	1	1	13	Wyman		
Ky. 1915	.	2b	.	.	1	.	2	1	.	1b	1	1	1	.	1,2	.	1	.	.	1,2	.	1	14	McGill		
Ky. 1915	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	Berea		
Ky. 1915	.	2b	.	.	3	.	2	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	1	1	1	7	Cox K
Ky. 1915	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	-	3	Cox L
Ky. 1915	.	2b	.	.	3	.	2	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	1	1,2	.	.	1	1	2	9	Cox G
Ky. 1916	.	2b	.	.	1	.	2	.	.	1b	1	1	.	.	2	1	1	.	.	1,2	1	2	14	Wells		
Ky. 1916	(Similar to Cox C, q.v.)																									
Ky. 1917	.	2b	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	2	1	Sharp L
Ky. 1917	-1	2+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	2	1	Sharp M
Ky. 1917	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	1	.	.	3	1	1	.	.	.	.	2	5	Cox H
Ky. 1917	10ci	.	.	1	2	.	.	3	3	3	1	1	4	.	1,2	2	1	.	.	1,2	1	2	16	Sharp K		
Ky. 1917	16g	2b	.	.	1	.	2	.	.	2a	1	.	.	.	3	1	3	.	*	1	1	1	13	Duncan D		
Ky. 1930	1a	2b	.	.	1	.	2	1	1	1b	1	1	4	.	.	1	3	.	.	1,2	1	2	15	Niles		
Ky. 1930	.	.	.	.	1	.	2	4	.	2c	.	.	.	.	2	.	.	.	.	1	2	2	10	Thomas [B]
Ky. 1930	.	2a	.	.	5	.	2	1	3	2b	.	.	.	.	2	1	3	.	.	5	1	1	11	Scarborough E
Ky. 1930	.	2b	.	.	1	.	2	.	.	1b	1	1	.	.	2	1	1	.	.	1	1	1	12	Wheeler		
Ky. 1937	.	2a	.	.	3	.	.	4	.	4d	1	1	.	.	2,1	.	5	.	.	2	1	1	13	Fuson		
Ky. 1938	2	1	3	3b	2	1	5	WPA	
Ky. n.d.	"Like Child B"---Hudson.-																									
Ky. n.d.	"Like Child B"---Hudson.-																									
La. 1925	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	4	Davis --	
Me. 1934	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	FSSNW
Mass. 1915	2ldi	.	.	.	3	.	.	2,4	1	2	5	Linscott	
Mich. 1900	.	1a	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	11	Gardner B	
Mich. 1900	1a	2b	.	.	.	1	2	-1	.	1	6	Gardner C	
Mich. 1914	.	2b	1	1	Jones	

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	
Miss. 1880	19e	2b	.	.	2	.	2	1	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	*	.	1	1	9	Dobie A
Miss. 1900	.	2b	.	.	1	.	2	1	3	1b	3	.	.	.	2	1	1	.	*	.	1	1	13	Hudson A
Miss. 1909	—	2b	.	.	1	.	2	1	3	2a	1	.	.	.	1,2	1	.	.	*	1,2	1	1	16	Perrow [A]
Miss. 1909	.	2b	.	.	1	.	2	1	3	4	.	.	.	.	2	.	.	.	*	.	.	1	9	Perrow [B]
Miss. 1915	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	1	-	Brown M
Miss. 1916	.	2b	.	.	1	.	2	4	1	2a	2	1	1	.	.	1	1	.	.	.	.	1	13	Brown Q
Miss. 1920	.	2b	.	.	1	.	2	1	3	4c	.	.	.	.	2	.	1	.	.	3	1	1	11	Hudson C
Miss. 1920	.	2b	.	.	1	.	2	1	3	4c	.	.	.	.	2	.	.	.	.	3	2	1	10	Hudson B
Miss. 1930	1a	2b	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	10	Hudson K
Miss. 1930	.	2b	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	13	Hudson L
Miss. 1930	.	2b	-	-	1	-	2	-	-	1b	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	6	Hudson M
Miss. 1930	.	2b	-	-	1	-	2	1	3	4c	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	-	13	Hudson N
Miss. 1930	-	2b	-	-	1	-	2	1	3	4c	1	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	1	-	10	Hudson O
Miss. 1930	.	2-	.	.	-1	.	2	1	3	3b	3	.	.	.	2	.	.	.	*	1	1	1	12	Hudson P
Miss. 1930	.	.	-b	.	1	.	2	1	3	2a	1	1	.	.	2	.	.	.	*	3	2	1	13	Hudson D
Mo. 1860	.	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	8	Belden F
Mo. 1877	.	2b	.	.	1	.	2	1	3	2c	1	1	.	.	2	.	.	.	.	.	2	1	14	Randolph D
Mo. 1880	.	2b	.	.	1	2	1	3	3	.	.	.	.	.	2	.	.	.	*	.	1	1	10	Belden H
Mo. 1880	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	3	Belden E
Mo. 1880	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	Belden P
Mo. 1890	.	2b	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	6b	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	3	Randolph J
Mo. 1900	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	*	-	-	-	11	Brown R
Mo. 1906	3di	.	.	.	1	.	2	1	3	3a	1	1	.	.	2	1	.	.	*	1	1	1	14	Belden C
Mo. 1906	.	2b	.	.	1	.	.	4	1	.	1	1	.	.	4	2	1,4	.	.	1	1	1	14	Belden D
Mo. 1909	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	Belden I
Mo. 1916	17d	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	1	Belden M
Mo. 1924	.	2b	.	.	1	.	2	1	.	.	1	1	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	5	1	1	11	Randolph F
Mo. 1926	.	2b	.	.	1	.	2	.	.	-d	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	x	1	5	Randolph E
Mo. 1927	.	2b	.	.	3	.	2	.	.	2b	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	1	8	Randolph B
Mo. 1931	.	2b	.	.	1	.	2	.	.	4b	.	.	2	.	3	.	1	.	.	.	1	1	8	Randolph A
Mo. 1934	6e	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	Randolph I
Mo. 1936	.	2b	.	.	1	.	2	4	.	2c	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	1	2	2	11	Hummel A
Mo. 1936	.	2b	.	.	1	.	2	4	.	2c	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	1	2	2	11	Hummel B

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W		
Mo. 1936	.	.	.	.	1	1b	.	.	3	.	.	.	.	.	2	5	1	.	.	1	2	1	8	Belden O
Mo. 1938	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	Randolph L	
Mo. 1939	1a	2b	.	.	1	.	2	4	1	1c	1	.	.	.	2	1	1	.	.	1,2	1	2	16	McDonald	
Mo. 1941	1	2b	.	.	1	.	2	1	3	.	1	1	1	.	3	1	.	.	.	1	1	1	12	Randolph N	
Nebr. 1920	5e	.	.	.	1	.	2	3	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	*	.	.	1	5	Pound B
Nebr. n.d.	.	2b	.	.	1	.	.	4	1	.	1	1	.	.	4	.	1,4	.	.	1	1	1	14	Pound A	
N.C. 1850	.	2b	.	.	1	.	2	.	.	.	1	2	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	5 $\frac{1}{2}$	Henry D
N.C. 1893	.	2b	.	.	1-	-	-1	4	2	2b	3	.	2	.	2	3	1	.	.	4	2	1	12	Edwards	
N.C. 1900	5e	2c	.	.	1	.	.	3-	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	*	1	4	1	8	Scarborough F
N.C. 1900	6-	-b	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	1	-	Brown C	
N.C. 1910	.	2b	.	.	1	.	.	1	.	-b	1	2	.	.	2	1-	-1	.	*	1	1	1	11	Morris F	
N.C. 1914	-ek	.	.	.	3	.	3	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	3	1	3	.	*	.	3	2	8	Sharp D
N.C. 1914	.	2b	.	.	1	.	2	1	.	.	1	1	1	.	.	1	.	.	.	1	1	1	14	Brown O	
N.C. 1915	8a	2a	-b	.	4	.	4	4	1	1b	1	1	3	.	4,1,2	2	1,4	.	.	.	.	1	16	Brown G
N.C. 1915	.	2b	.	.	1	.	2	4	1	2a	.	.	1	.	3	1	.	.	.	1	1	1	11	Brown P	
N.C. 1915	-5e	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	*	-	1	1	-	Brown K	
N.C. 1916	.	2b	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	2	1	Sharp G
N.C. 1920	-i	-2	.	5	3	.	2	4	2	2-	1	.	.	4	2	1	.	.	.	4	2	1	13	Brown F	
N.C. 1920	.	2b	.	.	1	.	2	1	3	.	1	1	.	.	2	2	3	.	.	4	1	1	11	Henry A	
N.C. 1922	9kl	2b	.	.	1,2	.	2	1	3	2b	.	.	2	.	2	1	1	.	.	1,4	2	1	15	Cox I	
N.C. 1924	.	-b	4	.	1b	1	1	1	5	Chappell
N.C. 1927	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	Brown Y	
N.C. 1929	.	2b	.	.	1	.	2	1	3	2b	1	1	1	.	3	1	1	.	*	1,2	2	1	16	Henry C	
N.C. 1930	10ci	.	.	1	2	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	4	.	2,1	1	3	.	.	1	1	1	12	Henry E
N.C. 1930	9h	2b	.	.	2,1	.	2	1	3	2b	.	.	.	.	.	1	1	.	.	4	2	1	14	Carter
N.C. 1930	.	2b	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	1b	.	.	.	.	2	1	1	.	.	1,2	1	2	11	Scarborough H
N.C. 1930	-	2b	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	2	1	-	Brown U	
N.C. 1933	.	2b	.	.	1	.	2	1	3	2b	1	1	1	.	3,1	1	1	.	*	1	1	2	16	Henry & M.	
N.C. 1934	.	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	Belden --	
N.C. 1939	8a	2b	-b	.	4	.	4	4	1	1b	1	1	3	.	1,2,4	2	1,4	.	.	1,2	1	1	-	Brown H	
N.C. 1939	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	Brown V	
N.C. 1940	.	2b	.	.	1	.	2	1	3	2b	1	1	1	3	1	1	.	.	*	1,2	1	1	16	Brown W	

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	
N.C. 1940	.	2b	.	.	1	.	2	.	.	.	1	1	1	.	2	.	1	.	*	1,2	1	.	14	Brown X
N.C. n.d.	7e	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	*	-	1	1	-	Brown J
N.C. n.d.	.	.	.	.	-1	.	1	1	.	.	1	1	1	.	3	1	1	.	.	.	2	1	12	Scarborough I
N.C. n.d.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	13	Brown S
Ohio 1900	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	Eddy E
Ohio 1915	1a	2a-	-b	.	1	1	2	1	3	.	1	.	.	.	1,2	1	1	.	.	1,2	1	1	16	Eddy D
Ohio 1922	16-	-b	.	.	1	3	2	.	3	2c	.	.	.	.	2	1	.	.	.	4	2	2	11	Eddy A
Ohio 1939	j-	2-	.	.	1	.	2	.	.	jx	1	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	2	8	Eddy B
Ohio n.d.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	2	2	1	Eddy F
S.C. 1890	20e	.	.	.	1	.	2	.	.	2b	.	.	.	.	3	1	1,4	.	*	1	4	1	10	Arnold
S.C. 1900	16g	2b	.	.	1	.	2	.	.	2a	1	.	.	.	3	.	3	.	*	1	1	1	13	Smith B
S.C. 1912	.	2-	.	-5	.	.	2	3	2	2	3	.	.	4	3	1	.	.	.	1,2	1	1	12	Smith E
S.C. 1912	.	2b	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	*	5	.	1	5	Smith D
S.C. 1913	10i	.	.	1	2	.	.	3	1	3d	1	1	.	.	1,2	2	.	.	.	1,2	1	1	16	Smith F
S.C. 1913	-ef	1-	.	.	1	.	2	1	3	-b	-1	.	3	.	3	3	1	.	.	1,2	1	1	15	Smith C
Tenn. 1880	.	2b	.	.	1	.	2	4	1	4b	1	.	3	.	.	.	1	.	.	1	5	1	12	Dobie B
Tenn. 1890	.	2b	.	.	1	.	4	.	.	2b	1	1	2	.	2	1	1	.	.	.	1	1	11	Perry B
Tenn. 1900	6e	2d	.	.	.	.	2	1	3	-a	.	1	.	.	3	1	1	.	.	1	1	2	16	Haun
Tenn. 1900	.	2b	.	.	1	.	2	1	3	3-	2	1	.	.	2	.	1	.	.	2	.	2	12	Anderson G
Tenn. 1912	.	2b	.	.	1	.	2	1	3	2b	2	1	.	.	2	4	.	.	.	1	1	1	14	Anderson D
Tenn. 1916	.	2f	.	.	2	.	5	1	3	3b	1,2	.	2	.	1	1	1	.	.	1,2	1	1	14	Sharp E
Tenn. 1920	11e	2a	-b	.	1	.	2	1	3	3b	.	.	.	.	2	.	.	1	.	3	1	1	14	Duncan B
Tenn. 1928	11ci	2b	.	1	1	.	5	1	3	2b	1	1	2	.	2	1	1	.	.	.	2	2	15	Henry B
Tenn. 1930	11ci	2b	.	1	1	.	5	1	3	2b	1	1	2	.	2	1	1	.	.	.	2	2	15	Anderson B
Tenn. 1930	5e	.	.	.	1	.	2	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	*	.	.	1	5	Anderson E
Tenn. 1930	.	2b	.	.	1	.	2	1	3	3-	.	.	4	.	2	.	.	.	.	1	4	1	10	Anderson H
Tenn. 1930	.	2b	.	.	1	.	2	1	3	3a	.	.	.	2	1	1	.	.	.	.	2	1	11	Anderson C
Tenn. 1930	.	2b	.	.	1	.	2	1	3	1a	2	.	.	.	2	5	2	.	.	1,3	1	1	16	Anderson I
Tenn. 1930	(First two stanzas of Henry B and Anderson B, by man from same locality)																				1	2	Henry --	
Tenn. 1932	.	2b	.	.	1	.	2	.	.	2b	1	.	3	.	2	1	1	.	.	.	1	1	10	Anderson A

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W		
Tenn. 1936	1a	2b	.	.	.	1	2	3	Crabtree C
Tenn. 1936	1a	2b	-b	.	1	1	2	1	.	.	1	.	.	.	1,2	1	1	.	.	1,2	1	1	15	Crabtree A	
Tenn. 1936	.	2b	.	.	1	.	2	1	.	3b	1	.	.	.	2	1	.	.	*	.	1	2	13	Crabtree B	
Tenn. 1938	11a	2b	.	.	1	.	2	-1	.	3-	.	.	.	.	.	6	.	1	.	3	2	1	10	Duncan C
Tenn. 1938	11e	2a	-b	.	1	.	2	1	.	3b	.	.	.	.	2	6	.	1	.	4	1	1	13	Duncan A
Tenn. 1938	10e	.	.	1	2	.	2	.	.	3	.	.	4	.	1,2	1	1	.	.	1	2	2	11	Anderson F	
Tenn. 1938	.	2b	.	.	2	.	2	.	.	-3	1	1	.	.	2	2	1	.	.	1,2	1	1	13	Perry A	
Tenn. 1939	1a	2a	.	.	1	1	1	1	.	.	1	1	.	.	1	1	1	.	.	1,2	1	1	15	Mason	
Tenn. 1942	8e	.	.	.	3	.	.	-1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	12	Kennedy
Tex. 1920	(Two stanzas not related to other texts.)														1	2	Bales
Tex. 1940	1a	2b	.	.	1	.	2	4	1	1c	.	1	.	.	2	1	1	.	.	1,2	1	2	16	Owens	
Va. 1862	.	2b	.	.	1	.	2	1	.	3	1	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	*	.	1	2	10	Belden K
Va. 1865	3d	.	.	.	5	.	2	.	.	.	.	.	.	1,2	5,2	.	1	.	.	2	4	2	11	Rawn A
Va. 1890	.	2a	.	.	1	.	2	4	.	2c	3	.	.	.	2	6,1	4,2	.	.	1	2	2	13	Cox C	
Va. 1912	-e	2b-	.	.	1	.	2	.	.	2c	1,2	1	.	.	.	1	.	.	*	.	2	2	16	Davis A	
Va. 1913	10i	.	.	1	2	.	.	4	1	3	.	.	.	.	1,2	.	.	.	.	1,2	1	1	16	Davis C
Va. 1914	10c	.	.	6	.	.	5	1	3	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	1	.	*	2	1	1	14	Davis X
Va. 1914	.	2b	.	.	6	.	2	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	2	1	.	.	5	1	1	10	Davis AA
Va. 1914	.	2b	.	.	1	.	2	.	.	2c	1	.	.	.	3	.	.	.	.	.	1	2	9	Davis Q
Va. 1914	.	2b	.	.	1	.	2	1	.	3	1	1	2	.	.	1	.	.	.	-2	.	1	12	Davis H	
Va. 1914	.	2b	.	.	1	.	2,3	1	3	2b	1	.	.	.	3	.	3	1	.	2	4	1	12	Davis J	
Va. 1914	.	2b	.	.	1	.	2	1	.	.	.	.	2	.	2	1	.	.	.	5	4	1	11	Davis U
Va. 1914	.	2a	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	2	Davis EE
Va. 1915	.	2b	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	1	Davis GG
Va. 1915	12c	.	.	1	1	.	1	1	3	2a	.	.	.	.	3,6	5	.	.	.	5	2	2	13	Davis Z
Va. 1915	11ci	.	.	1	2	.	2	.	.	1a	1	1	.	.	2	1	1	.	.	1	1	1	14	Davis E	
Va. 1915	.	2d	.	.	3	.	2	1	.	4	1	.	.	.	2	1	1	1	*	1	1	1	12	Davis W	
Va. 1915	.	2b	.	.	1	.	5	1	.	4b	.	.	2	.	2	1	1	.	*	4	4	1	11	Davis Y	
Va. 1916	.	2b	.	.	1	.	2	1	3	2	1,3	.	3	.	2	.	2	.	.	1,2	1	2	17	Davis B	
Va. 1916	13a	2b	.	.	1	.	4	1	3	1a	.	.	.	.	2	5	2	.	.	.	.	1	11	Davis N
Va. 1916	14e	.	.	.	1	.	2	.	.	2b	.	.	.	.	.	.	3	.	.	1,5	1	1	10	Davis V

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	
Va. 1916	.	2b	.	.	1	.	2	1	3	2	1	.	.	.	2	1	3	.	.	1,2	.	2	13	Davis L
Va. 1917	.	2b	.	.	1	x	2	.	.	3a	.	.	.	4	2	2	2	.	.	.	.	2	9	Davis S
Va. 1917	10ci	.	.	1	.	.	1	.	3	.	1	1	.	.	1	1	1	.	.	1	1	2	12	Davis I
Va. 1920	.	2b	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1a	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	2	Davis DD
Va. 1921	11ci	.	.	1	2	.	5	4	.	.	1	1	.	.	1,2	2	1	.	.	1	1	1	14	Davis D
Va. 1921	.	2b	.	.	1	.	1	1	3	2	1	1	.	.	2	.	1	.	.	.	1	1	14	Davis F
Va. 1921	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	3	1	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	1	3	Davis CC
Va. 1921	.	.	.	.	1	.	5	4	3	3c	1	1	2	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	1	9	Davis P
Va. 1922	.	2d	.	.	.	.	.	4	.	.	1	2	1	.	2	.	.	.	.	1	6	1	8	Davis K
Va. 1930	1	2b	.	.	1	.	2	.	.	.	1	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	1	2	9	Grapurchat
Va. 1950	.	.	-2b	.	1	.	2	.	.	.	1	1	.	.	.	2	3	.	.	1	1	1	9	Leach
Va. n.d.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	1,2	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	3	C. Smith
Vt. 1940	.	2b	.	.	.	.	3	2,4	.	1a	1	2	.	1,2	2	5	2	.	.	1	.	1	16	NYFQ II
W.Va. 1900	.	2e	.	5	3	.	2	1	.	2	.	.	.	4	.	.	.	.	.	1,2	1	1	10	Cox F
W.Va. 1915	.	2b	.	.	1	.	2	4	.	2c	1	.	.	.	2	.	.	.	.	1	.	2	11	Cox E
W.Va. 1916	3di	2b	.	7	1	.	1	.	3	1a	1	.	.	.	2	.	3	.	.	1	4	2	13	Cox B
W.Va. 1916	.	2b	.	.	5	.	2	1	3	.	1	.	1	.	2	1	4	.	.	.	2	2	12	Cox D
W.Va. 1930	.	2b	.	.	3	.	2	4	3	2d	.	.	.	.	2	2	3	.	*	3	2	2	10	Scarborough G
W.Va. 1930	.	2-	.	.	-1	.	3	1	3	2b	.	.	.	.	2	.	3	.	.	.	1	2	10	Scarborough B
Newf. 1930	.	2b	.	.	.	.	5	2,4	.	.	1	.	.	1,3	2	.	.	.	.	1	1	2	13	Greenleaf
Nov.S.1919	.	2b	.	.	1	.	2	.	.	5a	.	.	.	.	2	.	2	.	.	1	.	2	10	McKenzie C
Nov.S.n.d.	21a	2b	.	.	2	.	2	4	1	5a	1	.	1	.	3	.	4	.	.	2	2	2	13	McKenzie B
Ontario	3di	2b	.	2	1	.	1	1	3	1a	1	.	.	2	2	.	3	.	.	.	4	1	14	Gardner A
Can. 1919	.	.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Belden --
--- 1880	.	2a	.	.	3	.	5	4	.	1c	1	.	.	.	2	1	2	.	.	1	.	1	10	Adventure [A]
--- 1925	.	-a	.	.	7	.	3	.	.	2b	1	.	1	.	3	.	.	.	.	.	1	2	12	Adventure [B]
--- n.d.	.	2b	.	.	3	.	2	1	3	2a	2	1	4	.	6	.	1	.	.	4	2	1	15	Minish

Of the sixty texts with a first person beginning, only thirteen have the setting in "Scarlet Town." In most of the complete texts the second stanza mentions spring and a young man lying on his deathbed for love of Barbara Allen. Sometimes the young man's origin is mentioned. In this case he is usually from the west, or, in the United States, from the Western States. In ten texts the month of June is mentioned in an added stanza.

The length of courtship is mentioned in twenty-two texts. The longest period of courtship is "seven years," found in eleven texts; the shortest period is "weeks and months" (Smith E, C, Brown F, Y) and "six months and more" (Davis T).

In all complete texts Barbara is sent for, usually by servant, but in fourteen texts, by letter or the method of sending is not specified. In two texts both letter and a servant are employed.

The stanza based on Percy's "Death is printed on his face," is found thirteen times--mostly in the Middle West where, it has been noticed, Percy's text has persisted in tradition.

When she is summoned, Barbara goes "slowly" in nearly all texts. In only five does she go in any kind of haste.

Apparently the earliest recorded text which is known to be from tradition is Child C. This text from Motherwell's manuscript was recorded on February 9, 1825, from the singing of

Mrs. Duff of Kilburnie.

Child thought this text was "perhaps derived from Ramsay," but he conceded that it may have come down from purely oral tradition.¹⁰

Motherwell did not consider it important enough to include in his printed collection. This is the version which is extended to forty-one stanzas in Buchan's *Mss*, I, 90, and Motherwell's *Ms*, 671. Child refused to admit this amplified text to his collection, but he says this is the ballad referred to by Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe in Stenhouse' edition of the Museum, IV, *300. ¹¹

Although this text has a simple beauty in many of its lines, a jarring note is added by the wooer from the west, who frankly admits he intends to marry Barbara for her money:

It is not for your bonny face,
Nor for your beauty bonny
But it is all for your tocher good,
I come so far about ye.

(Child C)

Barbara replies:

10 Child, English and Scottish Popular Ballads, II, 276.

11 Ibid. See Chapter II of this thesis for Stenhouse' remarks.

If it be not for my comely face,
Nor for my beauty bonny,
My tocher good ye'll never get paid
Down on the board before ye.

Barbara always goes to the dying lover and tells him his condition. Usually he acknowledges his condition stating that it is due to Barbara Allen's refusal. Sometimes he asks a kiss. Barbara always refuses in an incremental stanza, or, if this stanza is missing, the refusal is implied by subsequent events. The stanza in which he turns to the wall and bids farewell to all is usually present and his last words are more frequently a blessing (Be kind to Barbara Allen) than a curse (Woe to Barbara Allen). In many texts he merely bids her, adieu, farewell, or goodbye.

Barbara's accusation that she has been slighted, although not universal, is the rule rather than the exception in American texts. An incremental stanza in which the young man justifies himself by concluding that he gave his love to Barbara Allen is found more frequently than not. Rarely, he merely accepts the accusation.

The stanzas bequeathing valuables to Barbara are found in tradition in three English texts, six Midwestern texts, in only two Virginia texts, two Kentucky texts, and in three from New England. The bequest of a basin of blood or a napkin of blood is found more frequently, occurring in five English texts,

one American text which is derived ultimately from Ireland, the two Virginia texts which have bequests of valuables, one Canadian text and all New England Texts which have bequests of valuables. Money is the bequest in one text each in these states, South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia.

Phillips Barry,¹² in discussing the negro version from Brownville, Maine, traces the blood letting trait to Ireland on the basis of internal evidence. Davis T, a Cape-Breton Island text, has its setting in Dublin, and two unpublished texts in the Vermont archives¹³ which have this trait are descended from Irish tradition.

It is logical to inquire into the meaning of this bequest of blood. Gerould believes that the blood is preserved for no sinister purpose but is "bequeathed by the man simply because it is somehow regarded as a symbol of his personality."¹⁴

12 P[hillips] B[arry], note in Folk-Song Society of the Northeast, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Bulletin No. 10, 1935, 23

13 Flanders Ballad Collection, Middlebury College, Middlebury, Vermont. A letter from the Curator, Marguerite Olney, Feb. 27, 1956, states that the collection is unavailable at present.

14 Gerould, The Ballad of Tradition, 155.

Barbara is usually admonished or warned by bells, or birds, or both, although the admonition may be given "by her own heart."

The corpse is usually met with a request to "lay him down that I may look upon him." And, although her reaction in the texts closest to print is hysterical laughter, in tradition the almost universal reaction is weeping.

The crowd of his or her friends or relatives who accompany the corpse and, like a chorus in a Greek Tragedy, point their finger in scorn at Barbara, is almost entirely lacking as the texts become more completely traditional.

Barbara usually shoulders the blame for the tragedy, but in a few texts she blames her mother, both parents, or her other kin. A more frequent addition is the stanza in which the mother also dies. A composite of various texts would probably be something like this:

The young man died on Saturday night
 Barbara died on Sunday,
 The old lady died for the love of them both,
 She died on Easter Monday.

The rose-brier motif, although not found associated with the early texts, or in print, has come to be an integral part of the ballad in tradition. It is found in four English texts and most American versions. It may have been borrowed from the ballad of "Lord Lovell," but more probably "Fair Margaret and

"Sweet William" is the ultimate source of the borrowing for the name William has been consistently substituted for the nameless young man, in American tradition.

Child says of this ballad commonplace:

The idea of love-animated plants has been thought to be derived from the romance of Tristram, where it also occurs; agreeably to a general principle somewhat hastily assumed, that when romances and popular ballads have anything in common, priority belongs to the romances. The precedence in this instance is an open one, for the fundamental conception is not less a favorite with ancient Greek than with medieval imagination.¹⁵

Wimberly¹⁶ adds that this shows belief in the transmigration of the soul, a belief held by many civilized and primitive peoples.

Percy's "warning to all virgins," stanza is not found frequently in traditional texts.

It is natural to ask, "How much does a ballad change in oral transmission from generation to generation?" When a ballad is recorded which the singer declares was known to one of his ancestors, what chance is there that his song is that of his ancestor. Obviously, there is little opportunity to make such a comparison. Mr. Samuel Harmon of Cades Cove, Tennessee, knew

15 Child, English and Scottish Popular Ballads, I, 98.

16 L[owry] C[harles] Wimberly, Folklore in the English and Scottish Ballads, Chicago, 1928, 208.

"Barbara Allen." His daughter, Mrs. Hiram Proctor of Cades Cove, sang a version of "Barbara Allen" in August, 1928 (Henry B) which she learned from her father. Mrs. Sam Harmon of Varnell, Georgia, a former resident of the mountains of East Tennessee gave the ballad to the collection of Geneva Anderson. Mrs. Harmon is, presumably, the mother of Mrs. Proctor and we can assume she learned the ballad from her husband. A comparison of these texts--recorded by different collectors--shows them almost identical. The stanza peculiar to this version is:

I courted her for seven years
 I asked her if she would marry,
 With a bowed down head and a sweet little smile,
 She never made no answer.

(Henry B, Anderson A)

"Lovesick" is the word for his master's illness which the servant uses in each, and on her way to the death-bed "She slightly talked and slowly walked." A difference is noted in Barbara's remarks:

For the love of me, your darling (Henry B)

For the love of Barbey Ellen (Anderson A)

and:

But you slighted me, your darling. (Henry B)

But you slighted Barbra Ellen (Anderson A)

Barbara's remark on seeing the corpse is in the form of direct address:

Young man, young man, you died for me today.

Henry Clay Oliver, also of Cades Cove, sang the first two stanzas of this version. His text is reported in Henry's Songs from the Southern Appalachians.

In July 1929, Miss Mary Franklin of Crossmore, North Carolina, sang a version of Barbara Allen (Henry C) which she had learned from her grandmother. A year later the song was recorded from the singing of Miss Franklin's grandmother, Mrs. William Franklin (Henry D). It is interesting to note that Miss Franklin sang a full text of sixteen stanzas, whereas her grandmother was able to recall only five and a half stanzas of the same version. The older woman was obviously improvising some of the lines for they lack the rhythm of the ballad. A couplet from each text will illustrate this point.

You handed wine to ladies all
But you slighted Barbara Allen. (Henry C)

You hand a drink to all the young ladies
And slighted Barbara Allen (Henry D)

It is, of course, possible that the younger woman's text had acquired lines from another version.

Minor variations in the thought and wording of traditional texts will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter V.

CHAPTER V

MINOR VARIATIONS IN THE BALLAD

There are few details of any ballad which will be found unmodified in oral transmission. Those characteristics which remain relatively unchanged usually remain so through folk preference, or because they are integral to the story. The most consistent trait in "Barbara Allen" is the remark of Barbara to the young man when she finds him dying:

Young man, I think you're dying.

This line is found almost unchanged in every complete text. However there are a few modifications even of this.

Sometimes the phrase is softened:

I am afraid you are dying (Davis X)

Young man, I fear you're dying (Scarborough G)

Poor boy, I'm sorry you are dying (NYFQ II)

Kind Sir,
You are pale looking. (Scarborough E)

She is more vindictive in the following:
Young man, I hope you're dying! (Randolph E)

Her speech is lengthened in:

Are you so sick, so very sick
Ah who are those that grieve you?
Ah speak an' let the worst be known,
Oh speak an' I'll releive you. (Randolph D)

Young man, young man, you're a-goin' to die
Cause you slighted Barbry Allen. (Randolph B)

Percy contemplated the change of dyan to lyan in his "Scotch" version, but satisfied himself with a note that "'Young man you are lyand' would be very characteristical."¹ The following year a Dublin edition appeared in which the change was printed.² The change also appears in the Child C version from the Motherwell MS. It may be this flippancy which caused Motherwell to exclude it from his collection of traditional ballads.

And so slowly as she could say,
"I think young man you're lying." (Child C)

"Young man, I think ye're lian."
(Percy's Dublin editor)

The statement is indirect in the following:

She found her true love dying. (Cox F)

The young man's reaction to Barbara's statement that he is dying is usually a simple acknowledgement that he knows he will die if he can't have Barbara Allen.

Oh yes, I'm sick, I'm very sick
And death is in me dwelling.

He uses the term lovesick in several texts:

I'm love sick here a lying, (Hudson J)

1 Percy, Reliques, 125.

2 [Percy] , Reliques, Dublin, 1766, 111.

My master is love-sick

(Henry B)

I'm love-sick and a-dying.

(Davis L)

Low condition expresses his sickness in Belden D, Randolph B, Hummel A,B, Thomas B, Cox G,K, Adventure [A]. In Hudson A and D, Brown O, and Davis Z, he is merely low, while in Sharp C and Scarborough B, he is mighty sick.

Although the line is usually,

Death is in me dealing (or dwelling)

or,

Death is o'er me stealing,

some variations are:

Cold death is on me dwelling.

(Cox D)

Death is hovering near me.

(Davis AA)

I know my heart is sinking

(Davis W)

The pain of death's upon me

(Davis Y)

For love of you I's dying

(Cox F)

And death is in yon dwelling

(Davis X)

And this will be my calling

(Belden H)

And the following unique understanding of the situation:

And death is with me, darling

(Perrow A)

I feel my cold corpse coming

(Brewster G)

And all the doctors can't cure me

(Perrow B)

But bitter for thee I'm sure to be

(Brown H)

The first person beginning found in English texts and in many texts related to print has been dropped from the usual American text, or, since it is not an integral part of the story, it may never have been a part of these versions. The usual beginning is the spring setting, specifically in "the merry month of May," a phrase used by Percy but also a commonplace in English love songs. A few unusual beginnings have been noticed:

J. J. Smith and it is my name,
 New Alban is my station,
 This is my dwelling here
 Also my respectation. (Brown K)

There is no clue to the meaning of respectation. The idiom seems to be Irish.

The theme, which is repeated later in the ballad, introduces one text:

Sweet William was down to his dwelling today,
 He's down at his dwelling a drinking,
 He passed his wine to ladies all
 He slighted Barb'ra Ellen (Sharp D)

The following variation in the first person beginning probably owes its start to lyric poetry, perhaps to Poe's "Annabel Lee."

In Scarlet town where I war born
 There was a maid a-dwellin!
 Whom all men knew and you may know
 By the name of Barbara Ellen. (Grapurchat)

This beginning is similar to the common opening phrases of a limerick:

There was a young man who lived in our town,
 His given name was William;
 He was taken sick and very sick
 And death was in his dwelling. (Perrow [A])

The springtime setting has no unusual variations and this characteristic has been adequately covered in Miss Walker's thesis.³

The incremental stanza with a month of June beginning which is found in several American texts, has replaced the May beginning in two texts (Eddy B and Davis H).

One more unique beginning has been recorded:

There once was a pretty fair maid
 And she lived on Lake Vitallon
 She'd be my own true bride, she said,
 And her name was Barbara Ellen. (Randolph C)

After the springtime setting the descriptive line introduced by "when" is almost universal. The line usually refers to the swelling of buds which may be wild buds, rosebuds, June buds, sweet buds, or red buds, and they may be springing, budding or growing. Flowers are frequently referred to in this line and they are growing, swelling, blooming or budding. The kind of flowers may be mentioned as roses, roses and pinks, or they may be little, gay, fair, or sweet. Trees may be "ripe and yellow" or "swaying." More rarely birds are mentioned and these are

³ Walker, Some Characteristics of Barbara Allen in America, 24.

little or merry birds singing.

The English texts usually keep the line:

When green leaves they were springing,

which is rare in American texts. No matter what the source the swelling of buds is the most accurate detail of an American spring and the folk have been alert to this fact in rural America where the ballad has been most vital.

The description is expanded in the following stanza:

All in the month, the month of May,
The green buds they were swelling,
They swelled till all pretty birds chose their mates,
And Barbary her Sweet William (Sharp E)

The first person of the introduction is carried into other stanzas of the ballad in some texts. The young man speaks:

I was taken sick, so very sick
Death on my brows were dwelling,
I sent for the only one I loved,
Her name was Barbara Allen (Kennedy)

I sent a boy down to her house
To the house that she did dwell in (Rawn E)

I wrote a letter on my death bed,
I wrote it slow and moving. (Henry E)

As I lay there on the dying bed,
I wrote my love a letter, (Davis D)

or Barbara speaks:

I never got but a mile from town
'Fore I heard death bells a-ringing. (Morris D)

.....

I looked to the east and then to the west
And saw the pale corpse coming.

followed by lines which sound like a square dance call:

I turned around to the ladies all
And wished to the Lord I had him.

(Morris D)

Barbara is prophetic in:

O bury him in the churchyard,
And bury me in the choir;
Out of him shall a red rose spread,
And out of me a green brier.

(Gox E)

She makes a simple request:

When I die you must bury me in the old church yard
Bury me beside William.

(Davis Z)

Although in the earliest references to the ballad the name of the heroine is "Barbara Allen" and the earliest printed texts, all widely circulated printed texts in fact, use either "Allen" or the Scotch spelling "Allan," there is strong evidence to support the contention that her name in tradition was originally "Barbara Ellen."

English folk singers insist that the name is "Ellen."

"There is no ballad that country singers are more fond of," says Sharp, "than 'Barbara Ellen' or 'Barbarous Ellen' or 'Edelin' as it is usually called."⁴ He comments further that "to sing

⁴ C[ecil] J[ames] S[harp], "Folk Songs Noted in Devon," Journal of the Folk-Song Society, London, No. 6, 1905, II, 3.

'Edelin' for 'Ellen,' when the melody provides a note for the extra syllable is in accordance with a practice frequently met in Somerset."⁵

Kidson adds a confirmation of this observation:

It is noticed that singers of the song in Yorkshire pronounce the name 'Ellen' not 'Allen!' With the Somerset confirmation this may after all not be a corruption.⁶

In another note Kidson cites a singer who remembered only one verse but was positive the name of the song was "Barbara Ellen," not "Barbara Allen." "Another confirmation," adds the editor, "that this is the truer title."⁷

Samuel Clemens, who had an accurate ear for dialects, gives an example of the singing mannerism which changes "Ellen" to "Edelin" noted by Sharp in Somerset. In Life on the Mississippi, Clemens includes an incident from the first draft of Huckleberry Finn which illustrates keelboat talk of his youth. Huck, having crept aboard a huge raft describes the rough singing of one man "who roared through his nose, and strung out the last

5 S[harp] , Journal of the Folk-Song Society, No. 6, 1905, II, 3.

6 F[rank] K[idson] , note in Journal of the Folk-Song Society, London, No. 6, 1905, II, 17.

7 Ibid., II, no. 7, 80.

word of every line very long. He then records another song:

There was a woman in our townd,
 In our townd did dwed'l (dwell),
 She loved her husband dear-1-lee, 8
 But another man twyste as wed'l.

Most of the traditional English texts use the name "Ellen." A note to a printed text of "Barbara Allen" which informs us that the singer called his song "Barbrew Annie,"⁹ leads us to suspect that "Allen" may sometimes be the choice of the editor.

In America "Ellen" is still sung in the most isolated districts of Virginia and Kentucky. Niles says it is widely known in North America as "plain Barbary Ellen,"¹⁰ and Shoemaker¹¹ remarks that she is generally called "Barbara Ellen" in North Pennsylvania.

Joyce recalls two lines of an Irish version sung by a young girl, Ellen Ray, in which the death bell tolled:

8 Samuel Langhorne Clemens, Life on the Mississippi, New York, 1929, 20-21.

9 L[uey] E. B[roadwood], note in Journal of the Folk-Song Society, London, I, no. 5, 1904, 266.

10 John J[acob] Niles, More Songs of the Hill Folk, New York, 1934, 6.

11 Henry W. Shoemaker, North Pennsylvania Minstrelsy, Altoona, Pennsylvania, 1919, 107.

"I died for you Barbara Ellen."¹²

Although Allsopp says the name is sometimes "Allet,"¹³ I have not found a confirmation of this in any text I have examined.

In only one text examined for this study has the heroine a name not derived from "Barbara." Helen Flanders reports a New England version in which the name is "Mary Alling." The name "Alling" may be a corruption of "Allen," but since the internal evidence of the basin of blood points to an Irish origin, the suggestion of an informant who has lived in Ireland, that this is an anglicized form of the Irish descriptive term aluin meaning lovely, seems more plausible. The English equivalent would be "lovely Mary." There is, besides, a fragment of one stanza (Sharp M) in which the name is "Mary Ellen."

Variations of the name "Barbara" only reflect the dialect of the singer. These variations found in a cross-section of American texts have been tabulated by Miss Walker in her thesis.¹⁴

12 Patrick Weston Joyce, Ancient Irish Music, London, 1873, 79.

13 Fred W. Allsopp, Folklore of Romantic Arkansas, New York, 1931, II, 212.

14 Walker, Barbara Allen in America, 26.

The interchanging of the names Ellen and Allen in the printing of closely related texts makes it impossible to tell which was meant by the singer. The vowel shifting which has taken place in the English language since the seventeenth century and the closeness of short e and short a in the phonemic range of most Americans add confusion to the problem. In one printed text (Davis Z) the first stanza ends with the usual "Barbara Allen," but thereafter the heroine is referred to as "Miss Ellen."

The use of the name Allen or Allan in all printed versions may have been taken over by folk singers who became aware of the printed versions. The increase of literacy, especially in the Middle West, with its emphasis on authority in spelling and pronunciation, undoubtedly gave prestige to the printed versions, and folk singers probably modified their songs according to the printed words. This could easily account for the tenacity of such phrases as,

When green buds they were swelling,
a line from Percy's "English" text which is found in many texts otherwise unrelated to print.

The name of the young man in the story is not so stable as that of the heroine. In the earliest versions he is nameless. Ramsay seems first to have given him the name of Sir John Graeme in 1740, and in texts related to this printed version the name

is frequently Graham. Percy used the name "Jemmy Grove" in his "English" text and in traditional texts related to this text he is Jimmy, James, or Jemmy with the surnames of Green, Graves, Grey, Grew--the variations are endless. Derivations of this name persist in about thirty traditional texts otherwise unrelated to print. In an equal number of texts the young man is still nameless, but in most American texts which have consistently borrowed the rose-brier ending from "Lady Margaret and Sweet William" the name William has been substituted in the opening stanzas of the ballad. It will be noted, however, that Barbara always addresses her dying lover as "young man."

In a few texts a local name seems to be used. He is Willie Harrell (Brown O), Weary Willie (Anderson A), William Hilliard (Scarborough I), William Aarom (Perry), Jim Rosee (Hudson J), Young Belfry (Randolph B, E, Allsopp). He retains a title in Gardner A where he is "Squire Grey," and in Eddy F, where he is "Lord Thomas." In Davis P the name "William Ryley" is borrowed from one of the ballads about that character.

She looked upon him with a scornful eye
 And bursted out crying,
 Adieu, adieu, to all friends on earth
 And woe to William Ryley.

(Davis P)

In every complete text Barbara is sent for by her dying

lover. Usually it is a servant who goes for her, "To the town where she was dwelling" or simply "to her dwelling," and says words to the effect that "My master sends for you if you are Barbara Allen."

In two texts Barbara is dwelling in the tavern:

He sent his man unto her then,
Unto the tavern where she was dwelling.

(Davis N,V)

She is sought in the taverns of the town:

He sent his servant to the town
To search in every tavern.

(Davis U)

The servant is named:

He sent his servant John to town,

(Scarborough B)

Other unconventional variations include:

He sent his servant down to tell
The town where she was dwelling.

(Belden O,
Macintosh B)

He sent his servant through Charleston.

(Brewster G)

He sent his servant from the field.

(Morris B)

He called unto his serving man
To go and get his gelding;
Make no delay till he got there
And bring him Barbry Ellen.

(Davis Q)

He sent his butler to the place.

(Cox E)

He sent him down to Strawberry town
For to fetch him Barby Ellen

(Cox D)

He sent his name all in the town

(Scarborough G)

He sent his servant to the country
Where she was dwelling,

(Davis P)

The following words spoken by the servant suggest a
Biblical interpretation of the word "master":

My master he doth call on thee
If thy name be Barbara Ellen.

(Cox B)

The following stanza has the cadence of a familiar
game-song:

He called his servant to his bed
And lowly he said to him,
Go bring the one that I love best
And that is Barbara Ellen.

(Davis A)

The message entrusted to the servant is unusual in:

He sent his servant to the town
Where she'd been lately dwelling,
Saying "Bring to me those beautiful cheeks,
If her name be Barbey Allen."

(Belden D)

In the following the nephew is sent to say:

My uncle's sick and very sick,

(Davis AA)

Some little cousins are at hand to help along the
affair:

They said, "Your uncle's got some little ones
 To run the way to Ellen,
 To run the way to Ellen town,
 And bring you Barbary Ellen."

They ran and they ran till they could not run,
 Until they reached her dwelling,
 They said, "Your master's sick and sent for you
 (If) your name be Barbara Ellen."

(Adventure [B])

The meeting place is different in the following:

Rise up, rise up, and go to my store
 If your name be Barbara Ellen.

(Davis L)

Barbara is sent for by letter in sixteen traditional texts. He may send the letter by servant, however:

He wrote a letter on his deathbed,
 He wrote it slow and moving,
 Go take this to my pretty little love
 And tell her I am dying.

(Sharp K)

He wrote a letter to the town
 To the town where she was dwelling;
 He wrote it wide and wrote it long
 Addressed to Barbara Ellen.

(MacKenzie B)

The first person is carried from the introduction in this stanza:

As I lay there on the dying bed,
 I wrote my love a letter.

(Davis D)

The same stanza in the third person is:

As he lay all on his bed side
 He wrote his love a letter,

(Davis E)

Other variations include:

He wrote her a letter on his death-bed;
He wrote it slow and mourning;

(Morris D)

He den sen' out his waitin boy
Wid a note for Bobree Allin

(Davis C, Smith F)

I wrote her a letter on my deathbed,
I wrote it slow and moving,

(Henry E)

He lingered long on his sick bed
He wrote to her a letter,

(Perry A)

They set the table at his bedside
He wrote her out a letter

(Anderson F)

He sent a letter through the town
To Barbary Allen's dwelling,

(Sharp E)

They sent a message to her house,
They sent it to her dwelling,

(Dobie A)

The commonest stanza in which a letter is sent is derived from the printed version of the Forget-Me-Not Songsters and other early American songbooks. The following are from closely related texts:

Oh, if I had a man, a man!
A man within my dwelling,
I'd write a letter with my blood
And send to Barbara Allen

(Davis O)

Who'd write a letter with my blood

(Larkin,
Adventure [C])

A man without my dwelling

(MacKenzie A)

The stanza has found its way into texts not based on this printed version:

If I was a man and a mighty man,
A man of my own dwelling,
I would write me a letter of my own heart blood
And send to Barbara Allen.

(Carter, Cox I)

The stanza is also in Davis R, the only text of this type which can be traced to an earlier source than these song-books.

Sometimes the message sounds like a paged call:

Love there is a call for you

(Sharp F, Brown G,
Wheeler, Wyman)

Fair maid there is a call for you

(McGill)

Here's a message for the lady fair

(Henry C)

Saying there is a call for you

(Scarborough H)

In one text Barbara softens her refusal by a proposal to postpone the decision:

He courted her six months and more
And thought to gain her favor;
But she said to him: "Let's wait awhile,
For a young man's mind will waver."

(Brown Y)

From West Virginia comes a similar stanza with a different third line:

"Young man, young man," said she to him,
"Young men has mines (minds) to waver."

(Cox F)

And from South Carolina:

When she says, "O wait, young man, do wait,
For young men's minds do waver."

(Smith E)

She surely deserves the epithet cruel if she implies that she is in love with another:

"O wait, o wait, o wait," she said,
"Some young man's gained my favor."

(Brown F)

Although Barbara always heeds the request to go to her dying lover, she usually goes slowly. The usual line in English texts is:

So slowly, she put on her clothes.

(JFSS I [C])

In American texts the usual line is:

So slowly, slowly she got up

The English idea is found in several texts in which the garments she put on are specified:

Very slowly, she put on her wraps

(Davis Z)

And slowly, slowly she rose up
And got her bonnet and started.

(Davis H)

She could not have gone any more slowly than,
 Slowly she arose, put on her clothes,
 How long she was a going;
 She was one long, long summer day
 And just one mile a-going.

(Gardner A)

In a few texts Barbara goes in haste:
 Quickly she got her coat and hat
 And then she left her dwelling,

(Adventure [B])

In one text she dresses quickly but takes her time
 going:

So quickly she put on her clothes
 So slowly she rode to him.

(Greenleaf)

This is reversed in:

Then slowly, slowly got she up,
 And swiftly she went to him
 She softly walked the chamber round--
 Young man, I think you're dying.

(Davis J)

In one text she runs to his bedside:
 She came, she came a running.

(Sharp D)

The milk white steed, found in other texts when Barbara
 is leaving the bedside of her dying lover, is here used to carry
 her to him:

She mounted upon her milk-white steed
 And went through town a-flying;
 And all she said . . .

(Brewster H)

Come bridle me a milk-white colt
 Come saddle me a pony,
 That I may ride to his bedside
 And see if he is dying.

(Greenleaf)

The Scotch traditional text has this line:

So softly aye as she put on.

(Child C)

This text shows that the singer did not understand the words for they have become nonsense syllables:

La, lo, la, lo, oh! she got up
 La, lo, la, lo she came near him.

(Davis B)

Contenders for the superiority of the "Scotch" version of the ballad have generally stressed the absence of motivation for Barbara's conduct in the "English" version. There is, however, strong evidence that Barbara's accusation of her lover belongs to English tradition. The accusation is found more frequently than not in the southern mountains where tradition has probably been handed down with less change than in England where stall prints have been circulated at every village fair until recent years. The plentiful survival of the ballad in this area argues for a deep-rooted tradition. A contributor to the Brown collection said, "I have yet to find a mountain singer who didn't know Barbara Allen."¹⁵

15 Hudson, Folk Songs of North Carolina, 124.

Luther¹⁶ says that there were fifteen thousand English in Virginia in 1648--eighteen years before Pepys' reference to the ballad.

This stanza is not lacking in English tradition but it has not been found frequently in recent years. When in 1904 a text with the slight in the "Alehouse" was printed in the Journal of the Folk-Song Society, it was accompanied by a note calling attention to this rare stanza.¹⁷

A folk singer, Mrs. Bodell, wrote a letter of protest, which I will include at this point because it shows the traditional character not only of the accusation but also that the young man's defense of his action was familiar to an English folk singer long before it was discovered in an isolated district in Virginia in 1912.

Honoured and Dear Sir, . . . I venture to write that I knew a long time ago that Barbara's conduct was due to His, for He was a Sir of the West Countree And he courted Barbara Allen and he became very ill And he sent for her and when she came into his House or chamber she said By the pallor or your face I see young man your dying. And he asked her to get down a cup from a shelf which held the tears he had shed for her. And she then said Do you remember the other night when

16 Frank Luther, Americans and Their Songs, New York, 1942, 17.

17 L[ucy] E. B[roadwood], note in Journal of the Folk Song Society, London, I, No. 5, 1904, 266.

when at the alehouse drinking That you drank the health of
 all girls there But not poor Barbara Allen He replied I do
 remember the other night when at the Ale house drinking I
 drank the health of all that was there but my love was
 Barbara Allen. And when she walked near four cross roads
 she met his corse a-coming, put down put down that lovely
 corse, And let me gaze upon him. Oh Mother Mother make my
 bed and make it long and narrer for my true love has died
 to day I'll follow him tomorrer . . .¹⁸

The slight to Barbara is usually associated with
 drinking. The neglect may be in not passing the wine to Barbara,
 or in not toasting her. The printed versions use the word
 "tavern" in describing this scene and it is found in twenty-nine
 American texts, exclusive of those obviously based on print.
 American singers, however, do not always understand the word as
 will be seen by the following line:

. . . in yonder taber drinking.

(Haun)

The three English texts in which this scene occurs use
 the word "alehouse" which is found also in a Louisiana fragment
 reported by Davis, and in Greenleaf's text. In two American
 texts the slight takes place in the "bar room" (Davis L and Hudson
 D). And the "grocery store," source of general supplies in early
 rural America, is the scene of drinking in a stanza supplied by
 a bystander as an alternative in Belden C.

¹⁸ L[ucy] E. B[roadwood], in Journal of the Folk Song Society, II, No. 6, 1905, 17.

Other American customs are reflected in:

Ah don't you remember last New Year's Eve
Way down at yonder drinking,

(Cox B)

Remember on last Wednesday night
When we were at a wedding,

(Perrow [A])

Don't you remember on a wedding night

(McDonald)

More common in American texts is a scene in a town or dwelling,

Don't you remember in yonder town
When we were at your dwelling,

Variations of this include:

Ah, now remember when you were well
You rode around my dwelling,

(Davis W)

Don't you relect [sic] the other church day
When we were on our dwelling.

(Hudson P)

Don't you remember last country day
While at your table drinking,

(Davis Q)

A hint of sarcasm may be detected in the phrasing of the accusation in these texts:

Remember the time that you passed the merry wine.

(Davis AA)

You brought your wine and strewed it round

(Davis K)

You drank the glass and tossed it around

(Eddy B)

Sometimes the slight is in dancing. The dance may be a grand ball as:

Do you remember that night at the ball
With the lights about us gleaming,
You danced with many a pretty fair maid
And you slighted Barbara Allen.

(Davis' Louisiana text)

or what seems to be a country dance:

Ah don't you remember the other day,
When we were at the station;
You passed your hands to the ladies all around,
And slighted Barbara Allen.

(Rawn [B])

But the slight may be in gift giving or in treating to sweets. In this text recorded in 1921, the slight has become petty indeed, perhaps as a result of the eighteenth amendment, which was then in force:

* * * * *
You were buying cakes and candy
You gave a treat to the ladies all around
And slighted Barbara Allen.

(Davis CC)

In this Mississippi text the nature of the gift is not mentioned:

In a gathering over yonder,
You gave your gifts to all around,

(Hudson A)

More than a single incident is implied by the following:

Recollect, recollect, recollect young man,
When I boarded at your tavern,
You drank, you walked with the ladies round
And you slighted Barbara Allen.

(Scarborough I)

Jealousy of one lady is implied by,
 You drank a health to the lady there
 But slighted Barbara Allen.

(Brewster I)

Only twice has the line introduced by Allan Cunningham
 been found in tradition:

When the red wine you were filling

(Gardner A, McGill)

Since the discovery of the text of Davis A, in 1912,
 when the young man's vindication of himself first appeared in
 print in America, many American versions have been discovered
 with this stanza. It is usually in the form of an incremental
 stanza ending with the line:

But my love to Barbara Allen.

Variations of this are:

And respected Barbara Allen

(Morris A, Hudson D)

But I never seen Barbara Allen

(Randolph F)

I drank my health in the greatest of wealth
 And I drank yours, Barbara Allen.

(Davis H)

Within my heart was Barbara Allen.

(Davis P)

But I dreamed of Barbara Allen.

(Davis' New Orleans text)

A sinister undertone may be detected in the following
 variation of the reply to Barbara:

I'll drink my health with my living friends
And my love to Barbara Allen.

(Davis Z)

In one text the young man defends himself although
the accusation is missing:

For don't you remember the other day,
In yonder taber [sic] drinking,
I lent my help to the ladies all
And love to Barbara Allen,

(Haun)

We read that Barbara Allen was used as a dance in early
America, and this stanza with its incremental answer could easily
be used for a call:

You drank your health in the greatest of wealth,
You drank to the ladies all round you,
You drank your health in the greatest of wealth,
And slighted Barbara Allen.

(Davis H)

The following stanza is found in four traditional texts
at the point in the story where Barbara enters the presence of
the dying young man:

He reached out his lily white hand
This to tell her howdy,
"No, oh no, kind Sir," she said,
And she would not go about him.

(Perry A, Smith F,
Morris C, Sharp K)

A similar stanza found in nine texts at the same point
is:

He reached forth his pale white hand
 Aiming for to touch her
 She slipped and danced all over the floor
 And says, "I will not have you."

(Brown G,H,J)

He stretched out his pale white hand,
 Expecting to touch hers,
 She hopped¹⁹ and skipped all over the floor,
 And, "Young Man, I won't have ye."

(Anderson E, Pound B,
 Smith B, Duncan D)

She skipped, she hopped all over the floor,
 She turned her back upon him,
 Saying, "None the better will you ever be,
 For you'll never get Barbara Allen."

(Scarborough I)

These stanzas may have been borrowed from another song.

A similar line is found in "Sweet William's Ghost," (Child 77A).

She stretched out her lilly-white hand,
 And for to do her best,

Other lines from traditional ballads, which are similar
 to lines found in texts of "Barbara Allen" are:

Shee turned her back unto the room
 Her face upon the wa,

(Willie and Lady Maisry,
 Child 70 A)

O huly, huly rose she up
 And huly she put on, (The Lass of Roch Royal,

Child 76 A)

19 Jumped) Sharp B.

O huly, huly raise she up

(Willie and Lady Maisry,
Child 70 B)

Lady Margaret (died) on the over night,
Sweet William died on the morrow,
Lady Margaret died for pure, pure love,
Sweet William died for sorrow,

(Lady Margaret and Sweet William,
Child 74 B)

Lady Cuncebell died on the yesterday,
Lord Lovill on the morrow,
Lady Cuncebell died for pure, pure love,
Lord Lovill died for sorrow,

(Child 74 A)

"Open the winding sheet," he cried,
"That I may kiss the dead;
That I may kiss her pale and wan
Whose lips used to look so red."

(Child 74 B)

A bequest of valuables and blood is found in several texts which can be traced to Ireland. Almost identical wording is found in English texts with this detail. Typical stanzas are:

You look to the head of my bed
There is a napkin hanging;
Into it is my gold watch and chain--
It's all for Mary Alling.

You look to the side of my bed,
There is a basin standing,
It quite overflows with my heart's blood
I shed for Mary Alling.

(Flanders)

Similar pairs of stanzas are found in NYFQ II, FSSNW, Greenleaf, C. Smith, Rawn, Williams[A], Davis T, Sharp 100. JFSS II[E] and Gardner A have only the bequest of blood. It is a

"pool of blood" in JPSS II [E] ; a bowl of blood in William [A] , Sharp 100, Rawn [A] , and a gold watch and chain in the other texts. Bequests of money are made in seven texts. Three of these are almost identical:

When I am dead, look under my head;
 You'll find two rolls of money,
 Go share them around with the fair young girls,
 And share with Barbara Allen.

(Smith E, Brown F)

Cox F is a negro version in which three rolls of money are bequeathed. In Cox K and Cox G gold and silver are bequeathed; in Davis T the amount is "ten thousand pounds," and in Davis S "he counted out five thousand pounds."

It was pointed out in Chapter IV, that the bequest is found in a very long printed version which is related to a text which can be traced to Ireland. In purely traditional texts the bequest of blood is common in England.

Oh, you look down at my bed-feet
 You'll see a bowl a standing,
 With the drops of blood I shed for thee,
 For I loved thee Barbara Allen.

(Williams [A])

If you look down at my bed's foot
 You will see a bowl a standing,
 And in it is the blood I've shed
 For the sake of Barbara Ellen.

(Sharp 100)

Here is a dish of my heart's blood,
 I shed for Barbara Allen.

(Barry C)

In one English text Barbara refuses the bequest:

That shant be mine, and I won't be thine,
So fare thee well sweet Edwin,

(Williams [A])

In Mrs. Bodell's letter to the secretary of the Folk Song Society, in which she outlined the story of Barbara Allen, we note that "he asked her to get down a cup from a shelf which held the tears he had shed for her."²⁰

Another reference to his tears is:

O cross, my love, to the window light,
And see the tears come wellin':
The tears I cannot choose but shed,
For love of Barbara Ellen,

(Sharp and Marson)

Greig's C version contains a bequest of "a china basin full of tears."

The ringing bells are a familiar detail of the ballad of "Barbara Allen." The bell is usually called the "dead bell" although the term is not universal. Bells have been associated with funeral customs in many ways. The custom of having a beadle perambulate the streets with a bell and announce the death of an individual was reported as surviving in Barrowstones, Linlithgow,

²⁰ B [roadwood] , Journal of the Folksong Society, London, II, No. 6, 1905, 17.

as late as 1796. The beadle also walked before the corpse to the churchyard, ringing his bell.²¹

In 1883, Charlotte Burne declared that the Edgement custom of "ringing the dead home," namely, of chiming all bells instead of one while the funeral was on its way to the church, was astonishing to strangers.²²

Wimberly believes that the dead bell of "Barbara Allen" is probably the passing bell rung immediately upon a person's death or during his passing from life to death.²³ This makes the immediacy of the bell more logical although this logic is not necessarily to be expected in a ballad.

The bells are called "corpse bells" in Sharp D, and "church bells" in Cox D, Davis X, D, Smith B; and "she heard strange bells a-ringing" is the phrase of Smith C.

Barbara is usually admonished by the bells. The words she hears are usually "Hard Hearted Barbara Allen," "Unworthy

21 John Brand, Brand's Popular Antiquities of Great Britain, ed. C. Carew Hazlitt, London, 1905, II, 253.

22 Charlotte Sophia Burne, Shropshire Folk-Lore, London, 1883-1886, 301.

23 Charles Lowrey Wimberly, Death and Burial Lore in the English and Scottish Popular Ballads, University of Nebraska Studies in Language, Literature and Criticism, No. 8, Lincoln, Nebraska, 1927, 89-90.

Barbara Allen," or "Woe to Barbara Allen," but the following variations are found:

Farewell to Barbara Allen. (Dobie B)

Cruel Barbara Allen. (Anderson A,D, Grabtree B)

Stop there, Barbara Allen. (Henry A)

Stop thou, Barbara Allen. (Brown F)

Unearthly Barbara Allen. (Davis N)

Reminiscent of Dick Whittington is,
Turn back, Barbara Allen. (Brown G)

The warning has become subjective in most American texts so that the line reads:

They sang so sweet they seemed to say, (Brown U)

Every bell appeared to say, (Henry E)

And as they rung she thought they sung, (Cox I)

or the subjectivity is carried further:

They rang so clear unto her ear
That she commenced lamenting. (Sharp C)

One interesting variation is:

And every stroke hit spoke her name, (Niles)

In one text the young man tells the bells to warn

Barbara:

"Ring, death-bells, ring," says he;
Say, "Cruel Barbara Allen!"

(Hudson P)

Barbara is warned or admonished in other ways, too. The most common warning is by singing birds. It is a "swamp bird" in Hudson I. Other variations are:

She thought she heard her own heart say,

(Davis Z)

She mounted on her milk white steed
And she rode through town a-sailing,
And every house that she passed
Said, "Woe unto Barbara Allen."

(Brewster B)

She jumped into her fine carriage
And through the town she travelled,
And every tavern she passed by
"There goes Miss Barbara Allen."

(Davis U)

She mounted to her stage on high
And through the town went sailin'
And every door as she passed by
"Hard Hearted Barbara Allen!"

(Davis H)

She mounted on her milk-white horse
And she rode through town a sailing,
And all the folk that she rode by
Said "Woe to Barbara Allen."

(Morris A)

His death cold features say to me,
"Hard-hearted Barbara Allen."

(Fuson)

And every tear he shed appeared
 "Hard-a hearted Bobree Allen."

(Smith F)

The young man hears his own death bells:

Adieu, adieu to the ladies all
 I hear my death bell ringing,
 And all that I can hear it say,
 "Hard hearted Barbara Allen."

(Haun)

In another text the birds merely say:

"Sweet William now is dying."

(Davis X)

In printed texts a crowd is present to admonish Barbara when she meets the corpse; this is rare in traditional texts.

A few examples can be cited:

All her friends cried out, "For shame,
 Hard-hearted Barbara Allen."

(Adventure [A])

All her friends cried out, "Amen."

(Davis N)

Until the girls did all cry out,
 "A shame on Mary Alling."

(Flanders)

The warning has been modified in the following:

As she was returning home,
 She heard the death bell ringing,
 And oft she stopped and listened while
 The mourners still kept coming.

(Davis Q)

More frequently than not Barbara meets the body of her dead lover and asks to look upon him. The word "corpse" is

common to most texts, but that the singer is not always familiar with the word is shown by the fact that it is treated as plural in such phrases as "those ice cold corpse" (Hummel A, B, Thomas E, Cox C), "Those cold corpse" (Davis P), "those pale corpse" (Randolph N) and,

As I got about a mile from town
I saw some corpse a coming.

(Davis D)

Lay those corpse before my eyes
That I may look upon them.

(Belden D, Pound A)

"Lay down, lay down those corpse," she cried.

(Morris E)

The wording of a few texts suggests that the singer understood the corpse to be acting on its own power. She addresses the corpse directly in the following English text:

As I was going through the street
I saw some corpse a coming,
You corpse of clay, lay down, I pray,
That I may gaze all on thee.

(JFSS II [E], Sharp-Somerset)

American texts with the same suggestion are:

Lie down, lie down, you pale corpse you,
Let me take my last look upon you.

(Scarborough E)

Lie down, lie down, you pale corpse you
Till I can smile upon you.

(Davis A)

Gerould tells us that in ballads a ghost is sometimes

referred to as a "corpse" as in Sir Hugh (Child 155 A).

And at the back o merry Lincoln
The dead corpse did her meet.

He states, further, that "the balladist does not distinguish clearly between body and spirit, or at least is unable to convey of spirit without body."²⁴ In the light of this statement we may suppose that sometimes the singer believes the corpse to be a revenant.

In the earliest recorded texts Barbara meets the corpse as she is crossing the field. The fact that the corpse was carried into the country may reflect a pre-Christian custom reported by W. Barnes, who states that it was "unlawful to bury the dead within the cities but they used to be carried out into the fields hard by."²⁵

Such lines as the following clearly indicate burial outside of town:

As she was walking through the fields,

(Burne)

²⁴ Gerould, The Ballad of Tradition, 140.

²⁵ Brand, Popular Antiquities, 82.

Barbara is usually on foot and going "through the fields," up or down the street, through the town. The fields may be wooded or open. Some variations are:

. . . down the long piney walk
(Henry E)

. . . on her highway home
(Brown U, and others)

. . . near four cross roads
(JFSS II [E])

The distance from town may be given as a mile, three miles, five miles, or ten miles. She is sometimes riding:

. . . out from Scarland town
(Cox I)

. . . toward her home
(Henry and Matteson)

She may leave by descending stairs:

As she went down the lone stair steps
(Sharp K)

In the Minish manuscript Barbara is seen leaving his dwelling and arriving at her own:

As she went down his own from steps
A goin' back to her own dwelling.
(Minish)

The most frequent introduction to the meeting with the corpse is the couplet found in many texts:

She looked to the East, she looked to the West
She saw the pale corpse coming.

This line, found only in American texts, is probably a commonplace borrowed from some forgotten song game. In the author's youth a game called "Little Sally Waters" had the line:

Turn to the East, Sally, turn to the West,
Turn to the one that you love best.

An unusual stanza is found in one text:

She looked to the East an' she looked to the West,
She seen the chariots a comin',
With two gray horses a-workin' in the breast,
And Willie's corpse behind 'em.

(Randolph F)

Rarely does any time elapse between the death of the young man and his burial. An exception seems to be implied by the following:

As she returned from church one day,

(Davis E)

As she returned from church next day
She met the corpse a-coming.

(Davis V)

Although Barbara weeps at the sight of the corpse, or laughs in those texts closely related to print, she shows utter confusion in the following:

She stopped and looked up and down the street
And saw his coffin coming;
She cried, "Oh, Lord, what shall I do,
Shall I go and meet his coffin?"

(Morris C)

The melodramatic speech and actions of the following is

uncommon in ballads:

She looked to the East, she looked to the West,
 A-wringing her hands and crying,
 "He once was red but now he's dead,
 All his beauty has left him."

(Smith E)

"Corpse" is not the only word used in this situation. The more familiar "funeral" is found in Gardner A, Barry A. In Flanders' version she sees the "hearse" coming while she stands at her father's gate; in Brewster B she "spied the cortege coming" and his "coffin" in Sharp A, M, Morris A, In Sharp B she sees "his pale face" coming.

Her directions at this point vary slightly. In Niles she directs the bearers to put him down, and in Thompson's text she sees the "barriers dressed in mourning." The word barriers is probably a folk combination of the word bearers and bury stemming from a misunderstanding of the function of the bearers. The word is spelled "buriers" in MacKenzie B but obviously the spelling is not the singer's.

Charlotte Burne says that within her memory the choice of bearers was a matter for careful consideration on the part of sick folk near to death and that young men were borne to the grave by young men.²⁶

Whether fickleness of affection is to be imputed to

26 Burne, Shropshire Folklore, 300.

Barbara by the following excerpt or not, it implies that young men are carrying the corpse:

She says: Come around, you nice young men
And let me look upon you.

(Sharp F, Wheeler)

Some variations of Barbara's directions are:

Driver, drive over to my side
That I may gaze upon him.

(Davis Y)

Lay down, lay down that deathly frame,

(Henry and Matteson)

Barbara's request is usually merely to gaze upon him,

but in a few stanzas she asks to kiss the corpse:

And then she kissed those tear cold cheeks
That she refused when dying.

(Belden D)

Unfold, unfold that lily-white sheet
And let me kiss my darling.

(Morris C)

"Lay down, lay down the corpse," she said,
"That I may kiss upon him."

(Arnold)

The winding sheet is sometimes mentioned at this point:

Take off, take off that winding sheet
That I may look upon him.

(McGill)

Fold down, fold down, those linen white sheets
And let me gaze upon him.

(Cox H)

Unfold, unfold that milk-white sheet.

(Smith C)

The request to "hand me down" the corpse is frequent in southern texts. Miss Walker suggests that this phrasing is borrowed from the song "Hand me down my walking cane."²⁷

Hand my down that corpse of clay.

(Smith B, Duncan D)

Hand down, hand down that corpse of clay.

(Sharp B, Randolph K)

The meaning seems to be confused in these related stanzas:

She scarcely came to her dwelling place,
 She saw his corpse a-coming,
 "Pray hand to me that cold lump of clay
 And let me lie upon it."

(Morris B)

And when at last she reached her home
 With eyes that were red with crying,
 She says, "Hand me down those corpse of clay,
 And let me gaze upon them."

(Adventure [B])

Barbara's insistence on seeing the corpse may be related to a belief held in Shropshire and elsewhere that if a person who sees a corpse does not lay his hand upon it he will dream of it afterwards. Miss Burne suggests that this touch may once have been a proof that the visitor was guiltless of the death by violence or spells, and that whoever shrank from this action

27 Walker, Barbara Allen in America, 30.

"would be haunted by the dead man as if he had been his murderer."²⁸ This surmise would surely justify the heartlessness of the crowd that cries "out amain, Hard hearted Barbara Allen."

Another almost universal characteristic is Barbara's request for her mother to make her bed. The usual wording is:

Mother, mother, make my bed,
Make it both soft and narrow.

Variations of this include:

- . . . smooth and narrow, (Davis L, Perry A)
- . . . safe and narrow. (Fauset)
- . . . safe for sorrow, (JFSS I [B])
- . . . neat and narrow. (Davis O)
- . . . fit to die on. (Kidson [A])
- . . . long and narrow. (Sharp A)

In some texts the word fix is used instead of make.

The request is for mother to "make my shrowd" in Cox C, Davis D,C, Smith F, Hummel A,B, and Adventure [A] ; a pillow is requested in Smith E.

28 Burne, Shropshire Folklore, 298.

The mother is requested to dig the grave in Smith D, Randolph F, Hudson N, Scarborough E, and Davis AA.

The request for father to "dig my grave" is usually in the form of an incremental stanza although it may stand alone.

Mamma is substituted for mother in only a few texts; Davis L, Pound A, Hudson N, Belden D, Morris D, Brown AA. If the father is mentioned in these texts he is referred to as "papa."

A variation of the usual direction is:

It's go make my bed in the far back room,
It's go make it long and narrow.

(Duncan B)

Sometimes Barbara requests to be carried home to die. Usually the request is made to her mother as in Brewster A,B,F, Eddy D, McGill, Mason, Anderson A, Crabtree A, Dobie B, Brown F,A, D,X, Neely and Lair.

In one text the request is made to her brother:

Oh mother dear, come find my head,
For pride has overcome me,
Oh brother dear, come carry me home,
For death has come upon me.

(Randolph D)

In this text both parents receive the request:

'Mother, father, take me home,
For mother, I am dying.'

(Davis Y)

Barbara assumes the responsibility for the tragedy in most texts, at least by implication. Her self approach is ex-

pressed in several ways. The "warning to all virgins" stanza introduced by Percy is found in all texts closely related to that version but is rarely in other texts. One traditional variation of this stanza is:

Come now, all you maidens of this town
 And listen to my story,
 O do not slight nor grieve your love,
 For 'twill surely blast your glory.

(Thompson)

The following type of self-reproach is found in the Roxburghe ballad, but texts with this characteristic usually show a wording nearer to Percy's text:

Hard hearted creature him to slight
 Who loved me so dearly!
 Oh had I been more kind to him
 When he was alive and near me.

(NYFC II, and MacKenzie C)

An English variation from tradition is:

Hard hearted girl I must have been
 To the lad that loves me nearly:
 I wish I had my time again
 I'd love that young man dearly.

(Sharp-Somerset, JFSS II [E])

More common in traditional texts is the curse of her name and nature:

Oh cursed be my only name
 And cursed be my nature,
 I might have saved that young man's life
 If I had done my duty.

(Anderson D, Sharp B)

The second line is "Cursed be my beauty" in Randolph L,

and Crabtree B.

Other variations include:

Cursed, cursed be my life,

(Davis A)

Cruel, cruel be my name,

(Hudson F)

In seven texts the last two lines are telescoped with another stanza, thus omitting the curse. These texts are Anderson F, Perry A, Morris D, Belden C, Brown A,W, Henry C, Henry and Matteson.

The word endeavor is tenacious in some versions. One wonders what it meant to the singer in such lines as:

For I might have saved that young man's life
By showing my endeavor.

(Randolph K)

If I'd a tried my true endeavor,

(Sharp E)

The lines are reversed by some singers:

Saying, "If I'd done my duty today
I'd saved this man from dying."

(Independent, Perrow [A])

The curse is more graphic in the following:

"Oh, hell must be my name," said she,
"Oh, hell must be my future,
I might have saved this young man's life,
By trying my endeavor,"

(Eddy A)

Minor variations are:

I once could have saved this poor man's life
Said cruel Barbara Allen.

(Hudson I)

And kept him from hard dying.

(Davis I)

She becomes melodramatic:

She fell up against his bed-side
A-screaming and a-rying,
"I might have saved this young man's life
If I only had been a-trying."

(Scarborough B)

In a few texts Barbara blames others for her denial. This characteristic has been noted in a Scotch text (Greig A) where in incremental stanzas Barbara blames her father, brother and sisters. In American texts her mother is usually blamed:

She went and stood in yonder door,
Till she saw her mother coming,
Oh mother, o, mother, you're the cause of this
You would not let me have him.

(Duncan A)

Another stanza begins:

She ran all up and down the street
Till she saw her mother coming.

(Duncan B)

The conclusion of the stanza is repeated in:

Oh mother dear, you caused all this,
You would not let me have him.

(Davis J)

The mother at least shares the blame in the following:

I might have saved that young man's life
But mother, you indulged me.

(Davis W)

The whole clan is blamed apparently in the following:

Go tell to my parents most dear
 Who would not let me have him,
 Go tell to the rest of my kin folk,
 Who caused me to forsake him.

(Sharp C)

Surely a matriarchal society is reflected in this ballad, for Barbara's mother is the most prominent figure in it besides Barbara and her lover. She is usually asked to make Barbara's deathbed, Barbara sometimes rushes home to her mother, mother is the one blamed for the tragedy if Barbara does not shoulder the blame herself and the mother goes to an early grave herself in a number of American texts.

Both mothers die for the lovers in Sharp C; and both of Barbara's parents die in two texts:

And both parents that Barbara loved,
 They died on Easter Monday.

(Smith D)

The parents died for loss of them both.

(Adventure [B])

Barbara's request is frequently followed by the statement:

Sweet William died for me today,
 I'll die for him tomorrow,

or,

Sweet William died for pure, pure love,
 And I shall die for sorrow.

Sometimes incremental stanzas make use of both endings.
The variations are slight, indeed. Examples are:

Sweet William died for me tonight,
(Scarborough F)

She cried and cried until she died,
For love of William Hilliard.
(Scarborough I)

Little Willie died with a pure heart,
And I will die for sorrow.
(Morris D)

Johnny Green died for the loss of his dear,
Barby Ellen died for sorrow.
(Cox D)

Willie was buried for me today,
And I'll die for him tomorrow.
(Cox B)

Sweet William died choked up in love,
I'll die for him in sorrow.
(Sharp P)

My true love died for me yesterday,
I'll die for him tomorrow.
(Sharp 100)

Young man, young man, you died for me,
I will die for you tomorrow.
(Henry B, Anderson B)

Sweet William died in grief for me,
I'll die for him in sorrow.
(Anderson G)

Sweet Willie died for love today,
And I'll die for grief tomorrow.
(Dobie B)

Sweet William died for me last night,
I'll die for him tomorrow.
(Duncan C)

The singing game quality noted in other stanzas of this ballad is in evidence here also:

Sweet Willie blue, Sweet Willie true,
Sweet Willie purple as a lily,
Sweet Willie died for me today,
I'll die for him tomorrow.

(Morris E)

In the Scotch traditional text the line is unique:

Och hone, oh hone, he's dead and gone
For love of Barbara Allen.

(Child C)

What is implied by the following stanza is left to the reader's imagination, but the phrasing suggests a stanza of "Mary Hamilton."

Last night I made my bed both wide,
Tonight I'll make it narrow,
Sweet William died for me last night,
I'll die for him tomorrow.

(Duncan A)

The rose-brier ending, common to most American texts, is obviously due to folk preference, for although this commonplace is lacking in printed texts and in most traditional texts from England, its appropriateness is felt by most American singers and is frequently included in remembered fragments even though little of the essential story is retained. It is usually a red rose that grows from William's grave and a brier from Barbara's, although this is sometimes reversed. The implication seems to be that the brier is a sign of her cruelty. This contempt for

Barbara is further shown in Belden E, where William is buried "in the old churchyard and Barbara in the mire." The plants usually spring from their graves but some exceptions are:

An' from her breast there sprang a rose,
An' from his feet a brier.

(Randolph D)

This is reversed in Sharp C where the brier grows from her feet.

Out of his heart grew a red rose.

(Wheeler, Niles)

Out of William's heart grew a red rose,
Out of Barbara Allen's a brier.

(Wyman)

There sprang a brier out of Lord Thomas' mouth.

(Eddy F)

Out of his breast grew a blood-red rose,
Out of her bier a thorn

(Hudson C)

Only one text has the additional stanzas similar to the Child A version of Lord Level (Child 75 A):

And Barbara's mother stood around the place
She longed the girl's name for to save,
She pulled a root from the red, red, rose,
And set it on Barbara's grave.

(Haun)

One text closes with an announcement of the funeral:

Now those two, those two are dead,
Their parents grieve but no relief,
Their funeral will be preached tomorrow.

(Davis L)

Stanzas describing the burial places show little varia-

tion in wording. If Barbara and the young man are buried in separate places one is usually buried in the churchyard. Old, lone, new, upper, east, yon, high are descriptives used. In two texts (Cox I, Morris C) the King's Churchyard is the burial place, and in Davis B it is a green churchyard. The other lover, the young man if rhyme is retained, is buried "anigh her." Corruptions of the phrase are common, they include "attire" (Davis I), "next to the choir" (Davis D), "On top of Ohio" (Davis E), "in the asylum" (Morris D), "on the morrow" (Davis B), "in the squier" (Belden K), and "by the Baptist wall" (Anderson H).

Place names are included in:

He was buried in Edmondstone
And she was buried in Cold Harbor,

(Sharp 100)

Frequently the lovers are buried side by side and occasionally in the same grave:

They both were buried all in one grave,
And that was her desire,

(Greenleaf)

They tuck them both to the Van Cathellie Church,

(Scarborough B)

The red rose and the brier are the plants almost universally growing from their graves. A few exceptions are: "Lily white rose" (Anderson I, Ferrow[A], Randolph A), "leaf" (Davis K), "white rose" (Morris D), "milk-white rose" (Morris A).

A vine is planted in one version:

They placed 'em in the old churchyard,
Beneath the old church tower,
An' there they planted a true lover's vine,
For all fond hearts to admire.

(Randolph E)

Birds are substituted in one text:

On William' s grave a turtle dove,
On Barbara's grave a sparrow,
The turtle dove is the sign of love,
The sparrow was for sorrow,

(Sharp D)

Barbara's last request in one text is:

And on my breast place a mournful dove,
To prove to the world I died in love.

(Davis H)

Characteristics derived from print usually retain the wording of the original. Of the texts examined which approximate Percy's "English" text, the word printed is retained in all but five texts in the line:

And death is printed on your face.

The word is changed to painted in four of these---

Kincaid, Thomas [B], Brown D, Thompson, Written is the word in Neal's text.

Thirteen traditional texts not so closely related to print retain this stanza. In five of these (Crabtree C, Brewster B,F, Mason and Neely) the word painted is found. Slight variations are found only in the following:

Death is printed on his lips.

(MacIntosh B, Belden C)

I see death printed all in your face.

(Davis S)

For death is pictured on your brow.

(Eddy A)

The "warning to all virgins" stanza remains intact in most of the traditional texts which retain it. A slight variation is found in:

Come young and old both great and small,
And shun the fault I fell in.

(MacKenzie C)

An examination of minor changes in wording show that frequently a misunderstanding of the meaning is responsible for the change. When a word has been dropped from the language it may be retained in a ballad but as its meaning becomes obscure to the singer he may substitute one which has a meaning for him. In the line from the English texts--both Percy's and the Roxburghe ballad--

And all her friends cried out amain,

the word amain has been retained in most texts but some singers have changed it to "Amen" (Davis N, Cox F, Cobb, Brown D), "amazed" (Anderson I), "For shame" (Rawn, MacKenzie, Adventure [A], Cox C, Greenleaf), "again" (Brewster E), "in a moan" (Scarborough I), "a mine," (Eddy C).

Percy's line:

Made every youth cry wel-awaye,

is usually found intact in the near print texts that retain it, but the word wel-awaye, which seems to be Percy's corruption of weylawey has been changed to "well aware" (Brown D), "wail away" (Smith A), "well-a-day" (Cambiare, Thomas [B], Raine, Scarborough D).

Another source of minor change seems to be a "law of contradictions" which prompts singers to introduce details which are opposite to those they have heard.

Barbara asks her mother to make her bed soft and narrow, one singer changes it to "hard and narrow" (Davis O). The reaction of Barbara to the sight of the corpse is either laughter or tears; the servant is sent to the town where Barbara is dwelling, but in Davis P, he is sent to the country. Barbara goes slowly to her lover, but as we have seen, in a few texts she goes quickly. If the old churchyard is the usual burial place when the rose-brier ending is added to the ballad, texts can be found in which one of the lovers is buried in the new churchyard.

The usual red rose growing from one grave is replaced only by a white rose--never by a rose of another color. The young man is usually from the "west country" but other points of the compass are used, east (Scarborough E), north (Duncan A).

Barbara usually looks to the east and west when she sees the corpse, but in one text "she looked to the south" (Anderson D).

If the story usually begins in the pleasant or merry month of May, one text reverses this:

One cold and cloudy day in the month of May.

(Sharp C)

Perhaps the most unusual transformation of the text is the change of sex of Barbry Allen. In Ferrow B the law of contradiction is carried to an extreme. Except for this shift, however, it is a normal text of eight stanzas beginning in the month of May. A stanza will illustrate the change:

Slowly, slowly he got up
 So slowly, slowly he did go;
 And when he got there he said, "Dear girl,
 I'm sure you must be dying."

The same shift of sex occurs in a fragment sung by a negro woman in Texas:

When I wais a girl sixteen,
 I wais in love with Boberick,
 De othah girls did not see
 Why he did always follow me,

He walk to town an' den right back,
 To see if I wais on his track,
 But he could never fin' me dah,
 Becuz I was away somewhah.
 His name wais Boberick Allen.

(Bales)

It is difficult to see how this fragment is related to the ballad. It seems to have borrowed nothing but the name.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

It has been the purpose of this thesis to examine all available material on the ballad "Barbara Allen," (Child 84), with a view to establishing the origin, history and destiny of this ballad.

The esteem in which this ballad is held is still unquestioned. It is seen to be the most popular ballad in English and the best known by all classes of folk singers, throughout most of the English-speaking world.

The dichotomy of the "English" and "Scotch" printed versions has been investigated and it has been demonstrated that the "English" version was in print first, that the "Scotch" version, which appeared in 1740 in two separate works, has been printed in more literary anthologies than any other text of the ballad but that this version is relatively unknown in tradition except in versions which follow closely the printed text or show evidence of padding by hack writers for print. James Oswald has been suggested as the possible author of this text which shows evidence of literary reworking.

Hendren's statement that the "Scotch" version is found frequently in England and America whereas the English version is seldom found in Scotland, becomes meaningless when we see that the "Scotch" text has not been found in tradition, even in Scotland, except as it is closely related to print, and that a text which closely follows Percy's "English" version has been found even in Scotland.

The arguments of priority from the border names Graham and Allan become meaningless, also, when it is shown that in the earliest printed versions, the man was a nameless young man and that the English still cling to Barbara Ellen as the name of their heroine. Nor has the statement that the Scotch claim this as a "Scotch" ballad been corroborated. The reverse would seem to be the case since "Barbara Allen" was not included in the printed collections of Scott or Motherwell although texts were available to these collectors.

From the vigor of the American versions the story emerges as the folk prefer it--simple in its dramatic appeal, devoid of the pathos of hysterical laughter and inappropriate bequests of blood and tears and valuables. It is the story of Barbara Allen, whose wounded vanity causes her to refuse her lover though she believes he will die. It is Barbara's story; she is the center of the stage from the time she goes slowly to

his bedside until she takes her place in the churchyard with the brier growing out of her grave to cling to the rose which has grown from his.

Editors of anthologies and song books may continue to print Ramsay's "Scotch" or Percy's "English" version. The people will probably learn the song from one of the good recordings of folk music or from folk singers on radio or television and in these forms the song will live while the anthologies gather dust on library shelves.

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APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis submitted by Sister Mary Athanasius Riley, B.V.M. has been read and approved by three members of the Department of English.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts.

Jan. 15, 1957
Date

Marie Penille
Signature of Adviser (PK)