Dear Companion

Appalachian Traditional Songs and Singers from the Cecil Sharp Collection

PREFACE

THIS publication represents the second and enlarged edition of folk-songs and ballads collected by Cecil Sharp and Olive Dame Campbell from the Southern Appalachian Mountains.

The original edition[1] comprising 122 songs (323 variants) included a selection of the material collected by Cecil Sharp during his first visit to the mountains in 1916, together with 32 songs (42 variants) from the collection of Olive Dame Campbell[2]—mainly songs and ballads from Kentucky (Clay, Knott, and Lee Counties) and Georgia (Habersham and Rabun Counties) noted by her during the years 1907 to 1910.

In the present publication the contents of the earlier edition are reproduced,[3] in addition to songs and ballads subsequently collected by Cecil Sharp.

Except for a few minor omissions, Cecil Sharp's Introduction to the 1917 edition is reprinted in full. Written after a brief sojourn of only nine weeks in the mountains, it is necessarily an incomplete survey of the work which requires some amplification in view of later experiences, but, nevertheless, it gives a true and vivid picture of the more remote mountain people as they were some twelve to fifteen years ago, and sums up the main characteristics of their songs.

Cecil Sharp spent a total period of 46 weeks in the mountains—9 weeks in 1916, 19 weeks in 1917, and 18 weeks in 1918. I accompanied him throughout his travels, collaborating with him by taking down the words of the songs whilst he recorded the tunes. In this way, we noted songs from 281 different singers, obtaining a total of 1,612 tunes, representing about 500 different songs. For practical reasons it was not possible to publish the whole collection[4] in these volumes, and so those songs and variants which are of minor interest, or which show but slight variation from the published versions, have been excluded.

[1] *English Folk Songs from the Southern Appalachians, Comprising 122 Songs and Ballads and 323 Tunes*, collected by Olive Dame Campbell and Cecil J. Sharp: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1917. *Out of print.*

[2] The songs collected by Olive Dame Campbell are Nos. 3 B, 3 C, 4 D, 7 E, 10 B, 13 B, 18 E, 18 F, 19 B, 19 J, 19 K, 20 B, 23 D, 23 G, 24 A, 24 B, 24 C, 24 F, 25 C, 35 C, 39 B, 44 F (no tune), 49 C, 56 C, 65 B, 65 C, 76 B, 80 E, 94 D, 95 A, 101 A, 102, 103, 104 A, 105, 117 B, 118 B, 123 A, 207 B (no tune), 207 C (no tune), 216 A, and 217 A.

[3] Three songs which appeared in the first edition, viz. versions of 'Lady Isabel and the Elf Knight', and 'The Bird Song', and 'Sing Said the Mother', have been excluded from this collection: the first two for the reason that they were collected outside the Southern Appalachian area, and the third because Cecil Sharp discovered after its publication that it was not a genuine folk-song.

[4] Cecil Sharp's original manuscript collection is in the Clare College Library at Cambridge, and there are also complete copies in the Harvard College Library, Cambridge, Massachusetts, and in the New York Public Library.

The following table shows the distribution of the tunes between the various States and the time spent in each:

State	*Number of weeks*	*Tunes collected*
North Carolina	14½	559
Kentucky	15	524
Virginia	12½	407
Tennessee	3½	116
West Virginia	½	6

And a closer geographical analysis is shown by the following tabularized itinerary:

Date	*State*	*County*	*Place*[1]	*Number of Tunes*
1916 July 25	N. Carolina	(Buncombe)	(Asheville)	
27	,,	Madison	White Rock	
	,,	,,	*Alleghany*	9
30	,,	,,	Allenstand	
Aug. 5	,,	,,	(White Rock)	44
7	,,	,,	Alleghany	37
	,,	,,	*Carmen*	
12	,,	,,	White Rock	1
14	,,	,,	Big Laurel	
	,,	,,	*Rice Cove*	38
18	,,	,,	(White Rock)	
19	,,	(Buncombe)	(Asheville)	
23	,,	Madison	Hot Springs	29
25	,,	(Buncombe)	(Asheville)	
26	,,	(Madison)	(White Rock)	
28	,,	,,	Alleghany	
	,,	,,	*Carmen*	20
30	Tennessee	Unicoi	Rocky Fork	
	,,	,,	*Flag Pond*	58
Sept. 5	N. Carolina	Madison	Alleghany	
	,,	,,	*Carmen*	9
	,,	,,	*Spillcorn*	
7	,,	Buncombe	Asheville	
	,,	,,	*Swannanoa*	6
11	,,	Madison	Hot Springs	66
16	,,	(Buncombe)	(Asheville)	
18	,,	,,	Black Mountain	26
20	Virginia	Albemarle	Charlottesville	
	,,	,,	*Woodridge*	42
	,,	,,	*Brown's Cove*	
1917 April 11	Tennessee	Knox	Knoxville	2
14	,,	Sevier	Sevierville	4
16	,,	,,	Mount Smoky	24
20	,,	,,	Sevierville	6
21	,,	(Knox)	(Knoxville)	

[1] Settlements visited while staying at another centre are printed in italics.

Date	*State*	*County*	*Place*	*Number of Times*
1917 April 24	Tennessee	Claiborne	Harrogate	22
30	Kentucky	Bell	Pineville / *Wasioto*	20
	,,	,,		
May 4	,,	Harlan (Bell)	Harlan (Pineville)	0
5	,,	Knox	Barbourville	65
6	,,	Madison	Berea	81
19	,,	Bell	Pineville	30
31	,,			
to June 6				
July 26	N. Carolina	Buncombe	Asheville	1
27	,,	Madison	Hot Springs	7
28	,,	Jackson	Balsam	7
31	,,	,,	Sylva	0
	,,	,,	*Dillsboro'*	1
Aug. 1	,,	,,	Balsam	0
	,,	Haywood (Buncombe)	*Clyde* (Asheville)	5
3	,,	Knox	Barbourville	7
6	Kentucky	Clay	Manchester	29
9	,,	,,	Oneida / *Teges*	38
16	,,	,,		
	,,	,,	Manchester	16
22	,,	Knox	*Barbourville*	7
	,,	Bell	Pineville	7
25	,,	Harlan (Bell)	Pine Mountain (Pineville)	36
28	,,	Fayette	Lexington	2
Sept. 1	,,	Lee	Beattyville / *St. Helen's*	42
3	,,	,,		
4	,,	Breathitt	Jackson	4
	,,	Lee	*St. Helen's*	14
9	,,	Perry	Hazard / *Krypton*	5
	,,	,,		
13	,,	Knott (Perry)	Hindman (Hazard)	62
	,,	Leslie	Hyden	48
17	,,	Breathitt	Jackson	0
24	,,	Lee	*St. Helen's*	11
28	,,			
Oct. 10	,,			
to 14	,,			
1918 April 16	Virginia	Shenandoah	Woodstock	0
18	,,	Rockingham	Harrisonburg	1
22	,,	Nelson	Afton	20
	,,	Albemarle	*Greenwood* / *Crozet*	10
	,,	,,		
29	,,	Rockbridge	Buena Vista	21
May 3	,,	,,	Natural Bridge	0
6	,,	Nelson	Massie's Mills	0
7	,,	,,	Nash / *White Rock*	37
to 10	,,	,,		
17	,,	Albemarle	Charlottesville	1

Date	*State*	*County*	*Place*	*Number of Tunes*
1918 May 19	Virginia	(Nelson)	(Afton)	
20	,,	Nelson	Nellysford	27
24	,,	,,	Beechgrove	18
25	,,	,,	(Afton)	
27	W. Virginia	Greenbrier	Ronceverte	0
	,,	,,	Lewisberg	3
29	,,	Summers	Pence Springs	3
31	Virginia	(Alleghany)	(Clifton Forge)	
June 1	,,	Botetourt	Blue Ridge Springs	16
to 19	,,	Bedford	*Villamont*	87
	,,	,,	*Montvale*	
	,,	,,	*Dewey*	
24	,,	,,	Peaks of Otter	20
31	,,	,,	Reba	2
Aug. 2	,,	,,	Montvale	5
5	,,	(Roanoke)	(Roanoke)	
8	,,	Montgomery	Crockett Springs	1
9	,,	(Franklin)	(Rocky Mount)	
12	,,	,,	St. Peter's	67
21	,,	,,	Endicott	27
23	,,	,,	Shooting Creek	0
24	,,	Patrick	Woolwine	3
26	,,	,,	Stuart	2
27	,,	,,	Meadows of Dan	16
30	N. Carolina	Forsyth	Winston Salem	5
Sept. 2	,,	McDowell	Marion	49
	,,	,,	*Clinchfield*	
	,,	,,	*Garden City*	
11	,,	Yancey	Burnsville	199
to Oct. 10	,,	,,	*Micaville*	

On the whole, the most fertile ground was on either side of the big mountain range (known as the 'Great Divide') which separates the States of North Carolina and Tennessee, and this was, perhaps, to be expected, for it was in this region that the most primitive conditions prevailed. It was, however, in Kentucky that we obtained the best ballad-texts despite the intrusion of industrialism consequent on the finding of coal and oil; and the finest tunes came, perhaps, from Virginia, although the general progress of civilization had made further advances there than in the other mountain areas which we visited. West Virginia, where we spent only a few days, did not appear to be a promising field of research. Songs and ballads were undoubtedly to be found (see John Harrington Cox's *Folk-Songs of the South*), but owing to the disturbance of rural life by the big coal industry, they did not lie so ready to hand as in the other States.

As prophesied by Cecil Sharp, the lives of the mountain people have greatly changed during the last twelve years, and it is doubtful whether there now exists any corner of the mountains, which is wholly free from the influences

of commerce, where may be found those ideal conditions for the preservation of folk-song, of which we read in the Introduction.[1]

It is surprising and sad to find how quickly the instinctive culture of the people will seem to disappear when once they have been brought into touch with modern civilization, and how soon they will imitate the manners and become imbued with the tastes of 'polite Society'. As one of our singers contemptuously remarked of the people living in a near-by settlement where a coal-mine had recently been opened, 'They have got rich before they have any money.' And the singing of traditional songs is relegated almost immediately to that past life, which has not only been outgrown, but which has no apparent bearing on the present existence. The explanation of the Kentucky women, who, when asked for songs, said that where she was 'raised' they were sung only by the common, rough people, a class to which she did not belong, was typical of the general attitude in certain districts, as was also the remark, 'We make it a rule never to swear, and never to sing love songs before the children.'

This attitude is no doubt encouraged by the normal educational system, but mention should here be made of the few enlightened schools, of which the Pine Mountain Settlement School is perhaps the most shining example, where a real endeavour is being made to maintain a sense of continuity in the lives of the people by strengthening, instead of destroying, their traditional culture, and grafting on to it those intellectual acquirements which are demanded by our present-day mode of life.

The innate courtesy and good breeding which Cecil Sharp extols in the people of the Laurel Country were not peculiar to them. Throughout our travels we were never once asked what was our business, nor did any one ever show the slightest sign of curiosity or surprise at our visits, even when the appearance of strangers was a rare, if not a unique, event.

During our travels in 1917 and 1918, we sometimes benefited by the hospitality of a school or missionary settlement, as during our first visit to the mountains, but more often we were out of reach of any such institution and had to find lodgings amongst the mountain people. At the county seat there was usually a house rather larger than the rest, which was glorified by the name of 'hotel', and there it was the practice to accommodate travellers, or 'take care' of them, as the expression went. In other settlements we had to depend upon the kindness of those who were willing to extend to us the

[1] For other accounts of the mountain people see *The Southern Highlander and his Homeland*, by John C. Campbell: Russell Sage Foundation, New York, 1921; *Our Southern Highlanders*, by Horace Kephart: Outing Publishing Company, New York, 1916 (first printed 1913); *The Land of Saddle-bags*, by James Watt Raine: Council of Women for Home Missions and Missionary Education Movement of the United States and Canada, New York, 1924; *Folk-Songs du Midi des États-Unis* by Josiah H. Combs: Les Presses Universitaires de France, Paris, 1925.

hospitality of their homes, and, except on one occasion when rumour had it that we were German spies, the mountain people were always willing and glad to receive us and give us of their best.

The following entry in Cecil Sharp's diary written at the end of a week's stay in a very humble home indicates what was our normal experience on these occasions:—'We said good-bye with genuine reluctance. They are thoroughly nice people with nice feelings. They never did anything snobbish, or affected, or unpleasant, and were not in the least shy or overawed. They took us as we were and were obviously interested in our lives, which were so different from their own.' That is one side of the picture: the other was given me by our hostess, who remarked, 'I could go on listening for hours to Mr. Sharp talking. He is so educating.'

Cecil Sharp refers in his Introduction to the use of certain words in an archaic sense, and bearing this in mind I would quote a remark that was made by an old lady from whom we were taking our leave. She said: 'My husband and I are sorry you are going. We like you—you are so nice and common.' That was a compliment which Cecil Sharp treasured above all others. That he never 'talked down' to the people, but met them always on an equal footing, was perhaps one cause of the happy relationship which existed between him and the singers, ensuring a complete readiness on their part to reveal to him their store of treasured songs.

How great was the mountain people's love and appreciation of their songs can, perhaps, be shown by relating two incidents.

The first occurred whilst we were noting songs from Mrs. Wheeler at Buena Vista, when her family of thirteen children—seven of her own and six step-children—were present as eagerly interested spectators of the strange proceedings. They listened quietly for some time until their mother started 'The Green Bed' (see No. 58 D). Then almost as though impelled by some unseen power they softly joined in the singing of this beautiful air, and the haunting loveliness of their young voices, subdued to an undertone so as not to disturb their mother's singing, was an unforgettable experience.

On another occasion when we had been listening to the ballad of 'The Death of Queen Jane' (see No. 32), Mr. Sharp told the singer some of the historical facts which are referred to in the ballad. 'There now', she said triumphantly, 'I always said the song must be true, because it is so beautiful.'

The singers often expressed their appreciation of our endeavours to perpetuate their songs. 'Singing is a great power in the world', said one of them 'and you are doing a noble work.' The pleasure and bewilderment with which they regarded the process of notation is described by Cecil Sharp, but one particular instance must be recorded, when an old man was shown the musical notation of the song which he had just sung. 'There is your song', said Mr. Sharp, handing his note-book, and the old man, who could neither

read nor write, peered thoughtfully at the page of manuscript, carefully scrutinizing the blobs, dashes and dots, and then, shaking his head, said, 'Well, I can hardly recognize it.'

Cecil Sharp refers to the decadence of dancing, but at that time he only knew by hearsay of the 'set-running', for it was not until August, 1917, that he saw an actual performance. This, although the only form of dance that is known to the mountain people, has an infinite variety of figure and is a finely constructed dance expressive of great beauty and forceful emotion. A full description is given elsewhere,[1] and it is therefore unnecessary to give further details here, except to add that a modified and sophisticated form of this dance is to be found in other parts of America.[2]

The instrumental tunes which were played as accompaniments to the dance were of little value. A few dance-tunes were noted by Cecil Sharp, but these apart from the method and style of their playing have but little interest, and so I have not reproduced them.

Of greater interest were the Jigs (see Nos. 240–54), which were sung often as ditties on their own account, but their primary purpose was apparently to serve as an accompaniment to step-dances, or 'hoe-downs', as they were called, and for this reason, perhaps, they were frowned upon by certain sections of the community. The words appeared to be chosen from a large stock of phrases and fitted at random to the tune.

It may be that some of the songs classified under Play-party Games (see Nos. 255–74) are actually Jigs. Only in a few cases did we see a performance of the Games, but from the words and the descriptions which were given us it is apparent that they have but little dramatic action and are in the nature of dance-games, though the actual dance-movements are elementary and insignificant. In the majority of games the main interest centres around the 'choosing' of partners.[3]

The dulcimer, which is described in the Introduction on p. xxvii, we saw and heard only in some of the Kentucky mountains-schools and never in the homes of the people, where it is evidently but rarely to be found. The history of its introduction into the mountains is obscure, but it may be noted that a similar instrument, catalogued as a German zither of the eighteenth century, is exhibited in the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art,[4] and if this classification is

[1] *The Country Dance Book*, Part V, by Cecil J. Sharp and Maud Karpeles: Novello and Co., London, 1918.

[2] See my article, 'Some Additional Figures for Set-Running' in *The Journal of the English Folk-Dance Society*, 2nd series, No. 3, 1930.

[3] For a further description of the Play-party Game see *The Play-Party in Indiana*, by Leah Jackson: Indiana Historical Commission, Indianapolis, 1916; and two articles in *The Journal of American Folk Lore*, viz. 'The Missouri Play Party', by Mrs. L. D. Ames, vol. xxvii, p. 289; and 'Some Play-Party Games of the Middle West', by Edwin F. Piper, vol. xxviii, p. 262.

[4] Crosby Brown Collection of Musical Instruments, No. 988.

correct it is possible that the instrument was introduced by the early German settlers, who drifted into the mountains from Pennsylvania.

The endeavour has been to present the tunes in these volumes as far as possible in accordance with the system of modal classification which Cecil Sharp adopted in the earlier edition (see pp. xxx–xxxiv of this volume). That involved two decisions: (1) the position of the 'weak' notes in hexatonic and heptatonic tunes; and (2) the position of the tonic.

(1) It will be seen from the chart given on p. xxxii that the hexatonic and heptatonic scales are given as derivates of the pentatonic and that they are formed by filling in the 'gaps' which occur in the latter scales. This in the earlier edition was done in two ways: by making the mediate note of the upper gap either B♭ or B♮, the mediate note of the lower gap remaining constant as E♮ in both cases. But in order to allow for the classification of tunes collected at a later date, Cecil Sharp afterwards found it necessary to add to these two possible combinations a third, in which the lower gap of the pentatonic is filled by E♭ and the upper by B♭. With this expansion of the system it will be seen that heptatonic tunes will be classified thus according to the position of the 'weak' notes:—

Heptatonic.	*'Weak' Notes.*	*Pentatonic Mode.*
Ionian	3rd and 7th	1
	4th and 7th	3
Dorian	3rd and 7th	1
	2nd and 6th	2
	3rd and 6th	4
Phrygian	2nd and 6th	2
	2nd and 5th	5
Lydian	4th and 7th	3
Mixolydian	3rd and 7th	1
	4th and 7th	3
	3rd and 6th	4
Aeolian	2nd and 6th	2
	3rd and 6th	4
	2nd and 5th	5

But since in a given tune it is often difficult to determine which are the 'weak' notes, I have refrained from making a decision, and accordingly this part of Cecil Sharp's scheme has not been applied to the hexatonic and heptatonic tunes which do not appear in the first edition.

(2) The position of the tonic is more vital, because on that depends a good deal of the musical feeling of the tune. In most cases the position is obvious, but in a few others it has to be a matter of individual judgement. I have given mine for what it may be worth, indicating it by the key-signature, and

also by a superscription when—as often occurs—the final note is not the tonic.

The list of those to whom we are indebted has greatly increased since Cecil Sharp wrote the concluding paragraph of his Introduction, and space forbids the inclusion of the names of all who helped us in our work, but of the many friends who gave us hospitality I would acknowledge the kindness of Mr. and Mrs. Guy Corbett of Afton, Va.; of Mr. and Mrs. Storey of Mount Smokey, Tenn.; and of the Principals and Staff of the following schools and colleges :— Lincoln Memorial University, Harrogate, Tenn.; Berea College, the Hindman, Oneida, and Pine Mountain Schools in Kentucky; and St. Peter's School, Virginia. Nor can I refrain from mentioning my gratitude to Dr. Packard and the late Mr. John Campbell, who made a two days' journey over the mountains to come to my assistance on one of the several occasions on which Cecil Sharp was suddenly stricken with fever and lay seriously ill.

I would also acknowledge my indebtedness to Mr. Fox Strangways, Miss A. G. Gilchrist, and Dr. Vaughan Williams for their help and advice in the preparation of these volumes, and finally, to Mr. Percy Grainger, to whose generosity the publication of this work is largely due.

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Dear Companion

Appalachian Traditional Songs and Singers from the Cecil Sharp Collection

Compiled and edited by Mike Yates, Elaine Bradtke, and Malcolm Taylor

Cecil Sharp, a music teacher from south London, is England's most renowned collector of folk music and dances, noting down nearly five thousand tunes on his travels throughout England and the Appalachian states of North America up until his death in 1924. The previous volume in this series, *Still Growing*, demonstrated the richness of the song tradition that he found in his native England. But perhaps the most significant part of his vast collection is that assembled during the First World War years in North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia, and Kentucky. At the instigation of American enthusiast Olive Dame Campbell, he embarked with assistant Maud Karpeles on a truly remarkable journey through America's Southern uplands, to discover a living tradition of songs and ballads, largely of British origin, which had all but died out back home.

Dear Companion is a collection of fifty-three songs and ballads from Sharp's American collection. An authoritative introductory essay by collector Mike Yates, together with biographical sketches of the singers and notes on the songs, are copiously illustrated by previously unpublished photographs, extracts from diaries, letters, and biographical writings.

Dear Companion is a celebration of the close links between the musical traditions of Britain and North America.

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