

A Ballad Reconstructed

The Child/Baring-Gould collaboration was limited to the good reverend mailing the American professor copies of some ballad texts that he had collected in Devon. One can only speculate what the two men could have achieved had they worked together for an extended period. Child had little interest in ballad tunes, but he insisted on total accuracy in printing song *texts*. Baring-Gould was cavalier in his approach to editing texts, but he was an energetic songhunter in the field and he was committed to preserving traditional *tunes* with absolute fidelity. As partners they would either have fought like cats or compiled and published *the* definitive ballad collection in which genuinely

traditional tunes were wedded to authentic texts. As an example, let us take Child ballad # 219, "The Gardener". Baring-Gould noted from the singing of Joseph Paddon of Holcolme Burnell a variant titled "Dead Maid's Land". He printed it with a different tune in *Songs and Ballads of the West*, and he made alterations to the original text. However, he also printed Paddon's tune, equipped with new words of his own. Child, on the other hand, printed the text exactly as Baring-Gould had sent it to him. We can therefore reconstitute the original, as sung by Paddon, by recombining Paddon's tune and the text printed by Child.

Dead Maid's Land (The Gardener)

Anon
Sabine Baring-Gould

Folksong

A gard-en was plant-ed a-round....., with
flow-ers of ev-ery kind..... I chose of the best to
wear in my breast, The flow-ers best pleased my mi -
nd....., The flow-ers best pleased my mind.

A gardener standing by I asked to choose for me,
He chose the lily, the violet, the pink, but I liked none of the three,
But I liked none of the three.

A violet I don't like, a lily it fades so soon,
 But as for the pink I cared not a flink, I said I would stop till June,
 I said I would stop till June.

The lily it shall be thy smock, the jonquil shoe thy feet,
 Thy gown shall be of the ten-week stock, thy gloves the violet sweet,
 Thy gloves the violet sweet.

The gilly shall deck thy head, the way with herbs I'll strew,
 Thy stockings shall be the marigold, thy gloves the violet blue,
 Thy gloves the violet blue.

I like not the gilly-flower, nor herbs my way to strew,
 Nor stockings of the marigold, nor gloves of violet blue,
 Nor gloves of violet blue.

I will not have the ten-week stock, nor jonquils to my shoon,
 But I will have the red, red rose that flowereth in June,
 That flowereth in June.

The rose it doth bear a thorn that pricketh to the bone,
 I little heed what thou doest say, I will have that or none,
 I will have that or none.

The rose it doth bear a thorn that pricketh to the heart,
 O, but I will have the red, red rose for I little heed its smart,
 For I little heed its smart.

She stooped to the ground to pluck the rose so red,
 The thorn it pierced her to the heart, and this fair maid was dead,
 And this fair maid was dead.

A gardener stood at the gate, with cypress in his hand,
 And he did say, Let no fair may come into Dead Maids Land,
 Come into Dead Maids Land.

The next task is to compare this reconstruction with the “fair copy” of the song in “The Personal Copy”, the recently discovered Baring-Gould manuscript book of over six hundred songs that he collected in the field. That requires a trip to Killerton House, near Exeter. But perhaps if Martin Graebe, the English authority on S B-G, happens to see this, he might send us a copy that we could print in a future edition of the *Bulletin*.