

# A SAMPLING OF BAWDY BALLADS FROM ONTARIO

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Gershon Legman states: "Sexual folklore is, with the lore of children, the only form of folklore still in uncontaminated and authentic folk transmission in the Western world"<sup>1</sup> and, more specifically: "The bawdy song is surely the only remaining kind of song in English that can seriously be called 'folk' " (p. 426). Some may feel that he overstates his case, but few will deny that most types of traditional folk song are fast disappearing, while bawdry continues to flourish like a green bay tree. Mr. Legman goes on to describe how collectors have suppressed, expurgated, or revised bawdy songs. The resulting lack of reliable texts from oral tradition has prompted this sampling from Ontario.

Although I have made no particular effort to find bawdy songs, I have taped a number in the course of my general collecting. The most interesting came from four singers, and as these four are of varying ages and backgrounds, their songs are surprisingly representative of the different types of bawdy ballads. They also illustrate the two main categories Mr. Legman describes as "the erotic folksongs of the soil, and those of industrial cities, army barracks, and other unnatural human displacements" (p. 366).

The first of the four men is O. J. Abbott, the finest of the older traditional singers I have recorded. He learned most of his songs in his youth when he worked on farms and in lumber-camps in northern Ontario during the 1880's and 1890's. Out of some 120 songs he sang for me, 11 might be called bawdy if the term is used very broadly to cover those in which sex is treated a little more freely than in songs normally published in most collections. These made up about ten per cent of his repertoire, but they included some of his best tunes. This is a point perhaps worth emphasizing: the fine tunes characteristic of bawdy songs induced several English collectors to publish the tunes even though they suppressed the texts.

Several of Mr. Abbott's songs were straightforward descriptions of sexual encounters, like the common "Foggy Dew" and the rarer but still fairly widely known "An Old Man He Courted Me" and "Nellie Coming Home from the Wake." Similar in theme but less widely known is "No, My Boy, Not I," which adapts to a shantyboy context the English song Sharp collected as "No, My Love, Not I." More unusual were three songs of sexual symbolism: "The Bonny Bunch of Rushes Green," "The Mower," and "The Weaver." The first is a translation of a Gaelic song that is widely known in Ireland and has been collected at least twice in England: by Lucy Broadwood in Waterford,<sup>3</sup> and by George B. Gardiner in Southampton.<sup>4</sup> "The Mower" has been collected fairly frequently in England but the text has not been published from tradition,<sup>5</sup> although it appeared on several nineteenth-century broadsides. "The Weaver" is much rarer: I have found no other report of it from tradition, but a version appears in the Jones-Conklin manuscript of an American sailor which Kenneth S. Goldstein is preparing for publication. Both "The Mower" and "The Weaver" Mr. Abbott learned from Dan Leahy, a farm laborer of Irish descent, in Marchhurst, Ontario, around 1890, when Leahy would have been about seventy years old. "Nellie Coming Home from the Wake" he got from Patrick Whalen, the son of a neighboring farmer, and "An Old Man He Courted Me" from another Irish farmer, Johnny Hopewell.

All of the above describe sexual adventures that were obviously enjoyable, although some had undesired results. Of a somewhat different type is "A Young Man Lived in Belfast Town": the ribald tale of a lad who falls into the crockery ware when looking for his sweetheart's room. Broadly comic

on the literal level, it is the kind of incident that offers Freudians a fine field for interpretation. Such songs, which turn upon the farcical elements of sex, belong to what Mr. Legman calls "The far older roistering humor concerning full-bodied men and full-fleshed women, with large sexual appetites and larger buttocks, of the kind that Chaucer and Dunbar had already handled centuries before" (p. 236), in contrast to the more grotesque and usually unpleasant modern songs about sexual misadventures and perversions.

Almost all of Mr. Abbott's songs spring from a pre-industrial society in which people mowed, wove, and cut rushes by hand, and used crockery ware instead of water closets, but he did sing one that recognized the coming of the industrial era: a ballad about Daniel O'Connell making babies in Dublin by steam. (They say that after Stephenson's Rocket ran from Manchester to Liverpool in 1829, O'Connell petitioned the Lord Lieutenant to build a railway, saying, "If we only had a steam engine in Ireland, it would be the making of future generations.")<sup>6</sup>

The most modern of Mr. Abbott's bawdy, or semi-bawdy, songs is "The Keyhole in the Door," a mild example of the sexy numbers popular on nineteenth-century music-hall and vaudeville stages. Here the forthright approach of the older folk songs is replaced by a rather adolescent delight in a strip-tease. He prefaced this by saying: "It's a little spicy, you know."

### **The Keyhole in the Door**

It was on a summer's evening I met a maid so fair.  
She was a glorious creature with waves of chestnut hair.  
We conversed there together, though we never met before,  
And afterwards I saw her through the keyhole in the door.

We left the parlor early—I'm sure 'twas scarcely nine—  
And by a strange coincidence her room was next to mine.  
I resolved like old Columbo new regions to explore,  
And took my observation at the keyhole in the door.

Then down upon the carpet and kneeling on one knee,  
My eye right to the keyhole to see what I could see,  
She first took off her collar and it fell upon the floor.  
I saw her stoop to find it through the keyhole in the door.

Oh, first this lovely maiden took off her pretty dress,  
Likewise her undergarments—some fifty more or less.  
To tell the truth exactly, I know there was a score,  
But I couldn't count correctly through the keyhole in the door.

Then down upon the carpet she sat with graceful ease  
And pulled her snow-white garments above her lovely knees.  
A dainty sky-blue garter around either leg she wore:  
It made a glorious picture through the keyhole in the door.

She went to the fire her pretty feet to warm  
With nothing but her shimmy on — I viewed her every charm.  
Says I, "Take off that shimmy and I'll ask for nothing more."  
By hell I seen her do it through the keyhole in the door!

Through the keyhole in the door, through the keyhole in the door,  
By hell I felt like jumping through the keyhole in the door!

This text is shorter but has been more modified by tradition than the one E. C. Huntington gives in *Songs the Whalemen Sang*.<sup>7</sup> His nine-stanza version (from a logbook of the Andrew Hicks out of New Bedford in 1879) lacks Mr. Abbott's first stanza, but adds four others. Mr. Huntington notes that "The melody given is the one I have always heard it sung to," but Mr. Abbott's is quite different, resembling one commonly used for "The Texas Rangers." Other texts appear in *Immortalia: An Anthology* (New York, 1927), and a mimeographed collection of Air Force songs from Guam, 1956-1959, in the files of the Institute of Sex Research, University of Indiana.

One of Mr. Abbott's songs not printed elsewhere shows how bawdy ballads are composed. When he was working on John O'Malley's farm in the Ottawa Valley, he, O'Malley, and another hired man made up these verses about a neighbor:

It was on a Sunday morning, Mike Remington being from home,  
That notorious Hughie McCann went walking out alone.  
He went down to Mike Remington's as quick as he knew how,  
And invited out the servant girl to help to lift the cow.

She being young and innocent, not knowing of his plan,  
Willingly consented to lend a helping hand.  
"You'll be of great assistance, love, if you will only try.  
While you are putting in the bait, sure I'll lean on the pry."

"Oh, Hughie, dearest Hughie, what are you doing now?"  
The answer that he made her, he was lifting up the cow.  
"It's little I thought you'd use me so when you'd get me here alone,  
But remember you will pay for this when Michael he comes home."

Hughie being contented and a little more at ease,  
Said wherever he would go he would do as he would please;  
Said wherever he did go and wherever he might roam,  
That he'd molest every pretty girl that he caught out alone.

When I asked how they came to compose this, Mr. Abbott said: "Well, we were sitting around and we heard that this thing had happened, so we were working at the house, and we put in a word now and again, and one would say something else, and after a while we composed the song." Although it lacks the poetic qualities of some of his older songs, it is sufficiently akin to them in phrasing and spirit to suggest that the traditional ones may have originated in much the same way.

Mr. Abbott's songs are fine examples of the old-time bawdy ballads that treated sex lightly and directly. Although they are more outspoken than those printed in most collections, none is in any sense obscene. Mr. Abbott himself recognized this distinction: it took very little persuasion to get him to sing these, which he obviously enjoyed, but he resolutely refused to sing (to me, at least) what he termed "bad" songs—presumably ones that contain four-letter words or are unpleasantly obscene— although he had, apparently, learned some of these at one time, despite their "bad"ness. The second Ontario singer who contributed some unusual bawdy songs is Tom Brandon, a young man born in 1929, who spent a number of years working in lumber-camps and on: lake boats before taking a job with the Canadian Pacific Railway. Although he knows only about a third as many traditional songs as Mr. Abbott, he still knows more than any other Ontario singer of his generation. The thirty-odd songs he has sung for me include three bawdy ones, all rather unusual. Interestingly enough, this again represents about ten per cent of the total.

The oldest is "Derby Town," which appeared as "The Maid of Tottenham" in Choyce Drollery in 1656,8 and in a slightly different form as "Tottingham Frolick" in D'Urfey's Pills to Purge Melancholy.<sup>9</sup> Tom's version is more closely related to an Irish one that Cecil Sharp collected in Packington in 1903 as "The Hazelbury Girl",<sup>10</sup> and has many phrases in common with "Jackie Rover" as given in Louis W. Chappell's Folk Songs of Roanoke and the Albemarle.<sup>11</sup> Milder relatives are noted by Cazden,<sup>12</sup> and Creighton.<sup>13</sup>

Derby Town

As I rolled down through Derby town one early morn in May  
I met a pretty young lassie, boys, and she was on her way.  
She was on her way, my lads, with butter and eggs to sell,  
So we jogged along together singing pretty fa-la fa-lil.

We jogged along together side by side,  
And by some misfortune her garter came untied.  
Her garter came untied, my lads, one inch above the knee,  
So we jogged along together singing pretty fa-la fa-lee.

"Now would you be so kind, young man, or would you be so free,  
Would you be so sweet as to tie my garter for me?"  
"I'll tie up your garter when we reach the yonder hill,"  
So we jogged along together singing pretty fa-la fa-lil.

Now up on yonder hill, me boys, the grass was long and green,  
The tying of her garters the likes you've never seen.  
She rolled out her lily-white legs and I rolled in between,  
And I played the damndest tune on her hairy old tambourine.

"So now you've had your fun, my lad, and you've also had your tail.  
Tell me what your name is, and where from here you hail?"  
"My name is Jack the Rover, and from Kalamazoo I hail.  
I'm a ralloping galloping son of a bitch and a bastard after tail."

"I've just come back from Derby town, my butter and eggs unsold.  
I've lost my maiden treasure, mum, and it makes my blood run cold.

I gave it to a young man: he's the man that I adore.

He's a ralloping galloping son of a bitch, and I'm his fancy whore."

That is quite widely known in one form or another, but "The Long Peg and Awl" (i.e., peggin' awl) is rarer. Like "The Mower" and "The Weaver," it belongs to the large group of sexual ballads based on trade symbols and metaphors. Several songs describe the amorous adventures of cobblers and the sexual symbolism of their tools, but the only other version of this particular one I have located comes from the fine English traditional singer, Harry Cox (on Caedmon TG 1143). Of the five stanzas he sings, 1, 2, and 5 correspond roughly to 1, 3, and 4 of Tom's version.

### The Long Peg and Awl

It was a beautiful morning, a beautiful morn in May,  
I spied a pretty young schoolmarm, and she was on her way  
So boldly I stepped up to her and downward she did fall,  
For she longed to be playing with my long peg and awl.

When apples, pears, and peaches, when they're ripe they must be plucked.  
When you meet a pretty young schoolmarm, she surely must be tucked.  
Come old girls and young girls, old women and all,  
You'll all take a liking to the long peg and awl.

So come my lass, oh come my lass, and come along with me!  
Ill take you to a happy home in a far-off counteree.  
I'll treat you to fine dances, assembly, and ball,  
And in the evening I will treat you to the long peg and awl.

Now mother, dearest mother, it's you, you that are to blame,  
For when you were young that you dearly loved the same.  
You left your home and country, your family, friends, and all,  
And you followed dear old daddy with his long peg and awl.

Now sister, dearest sister, you also are to blame,  
For when you were young that you dearly loved the same.  
He fooled you and he screwed you, why the devil he knows it all-  
He got you into trouble with the long peg and awl.

So come my lass, oh come my lass, and come along with me.  
I'll take you to a happy home in a far-off counteree.  
I'll take you to fine dances, assembly, and ball;  
In the evening I will treat you to the long peg and awl.

Both those songs, like most of Mr. Abbott's, are typical of the older traditional folk songs that dwell on the pleasures of sex. Some of the phrases are cruder than anything Mr. Abbott sang, and the "all the boys together" obscenity seems a little out of key in the pastoral lyrics (Tom admits that the obvious modification in the sixth line was in deference to my sex). Still the mood is light-hearted and lusty, and the songs will offend none but the overly prudish.

Quite different in mood and style is the third of Tom's bawdy songs, "The Ralloping Galloping Dandy O." It illustrates clearly the contrast between the ballads that treat sex as fun and those that treat it as unpleasant or repulsive.

The Ralloping Galloping Dandy O

As I was walking down the street  
Singing ti-ri ferandy O,  
A couple of whores I chanced to meet  
With my ralloping galloping dandy O.

One was Sue and the other was Kate,  
Ho ro my dandy O,  
So I says to old Sue, "I'll bugger to you,"  
With my ralloping galloping dandy O.

She gave me the crabs, I gave her the clap,  
Singing ti-ri ferandy O.  
Straightway to the doctor I did go  
With my ralloping galloping dandy O.

Oh, he threw me down on a hardwood block,  
Ho ro my dandy O,  
And he chopped four inches off my cock,  
Off my ralloping galloping dandy O.

Then along came a witch with a needle and rag,  
Singing ti-ri ferandy O.  
She sewed the cock and tied up the bag  
Of the ralloping galloping dandy O.

Then I went out upon the street  
Singing ti-ri ferandy O.  
Who but old Sue I chanced to meet,  
With my ring dang galloping dandy O.

Away she went with a thud and a thump,  
Singing ti-ri ferandy O.  
I came after her wagging the bloody old stump  
Of my ralloping galloping dandy O.

This song, of the type of "The Gay Caballero" or "Spanish Nobilio," with its emphasis on disease and castration-as-punishment, may be considered a prime example of the kind Mr. Legman was thinking of when he wrote: "Bawdy song in a mechanical century became a dirty, then a nasty thing, more particularly connected with the life of industrialized cities: with factories, counting-houses, brothels, music-halls, barrack-rooms, and the disjointed sexual sensibilities of men forced off the land, out of all contact with nature, and largely without normal relations with women or normal relations with anything else" (p. 236).

Unlike Mr. Abbott, Tom could not remember exactly when or where he learned these songs. He says he heard them on the boats or in the lumber-camps, and that he didn't learn them all at once, but pieced them together from hearing different people sing them. Ordinarily he will not sing bawdy songs before women, but the night I recorded these (in November, 1958), he had had a few drinks, and was willing to sing them because my husband was with me. Later he regretted having sung the last one, saying that he must have been trying to shock me because he does not like the song. When I asked why he had learned it, he said that as a youngster coming out of a strict Catholic home he had gone overboard in trying to prove himself "one of the boys." He had heard other songs of the same kind, but this is the only one he had remembered, perhaps because it was one of the worst. Also, despite its unpleasant lyrics, it has a lilting tune which would serve to keep it in the memory.

The third man from whom I recorded bawdy songs was Gordon Howard, a Toronto sports writer and broadcaster, who was born in Toronto in 1898. He went to school in Gravenhurst, a small Ontario town, and then worked for the Canadian Pacific Railway and travelled through the prairie provinces. In 1921 he settled in Ottawa and later moved to Toronto, thus living a more urban life than either Mr. Abbott or Mr. Brandon.

Of the nine songs Mr. Howard sang for me in May, 1960, six were more or less bawdy. They included the old and widely known "Foggy Dew" and "The Old Man Came Home One Night" (Child 274), along with four more recent pieces. Of most interest is "Boring for Oil," a modern counterpart of the many older songs using trade symbolism, which he sang to the tune of "Villikens and His Dinah":

I arrived in Calgary October the tenth  
And a week in that city on pleasure I spent—  
A week in that city prospecting the soil  
In search of a spot to go boring for oil.

One bright sunny day as I strolled down the street  
A pretty fair damsel I happened to meet.  
Said I to this damsel: "Your family I'll foil  
If you'll show me a spot to go boring for oil."

Oh, the damsel looked up and she says: "I declare  
Oh, I know of a spot and I've watched it with care,  
And no one has seen it since I was a child,  
And if you go there I am sure you'll strike oil."

So I fondly embraced her on the very top floor.  
I hugged and I kissed her a thousand times o'er,  
And I lifted her garments for fear they might soil;  
Then she showed me that spot to go boring for oil.

Well, I scarcely had bored in six inches or more  
When the oil from her well so freely did pour,  
And she looked up at me and she said with a smile:  
"Come down on your auger—I'm sure you've struck oil."

Although comparatively modern, that follows a traditional folk-song pattern, and was probably composed by an Irishman: the "child" and "smile" rhymes indicate that oil was pronounced "ile." Mr. Howard said he had heard it in Drumheller, Alberta, in 1919. Ellen Stekert collected it in 1958 from a man in his eighties living in Steuben County, New York, who thought he had learned it in the lumberwoods of northern Pennsylvania. His seven stanzas included a first and a last one that Mr. Howard did not sing, but the others were quite similar. Frank Hoffman collected it from Hiram Cranmer, an ex-lumberjack from north central Pennsylvania, who had learned it from other lumberjacks before World War I. Both the other versions mention "Oil City" in place of Calgary as the locale.

While at school in Gravenhurst in 1913, Mr. Howard learned two other pieces: a spoken parody of "The Burial of Sir John Moore" beginning:

"Not a sound was heard but the sofa shook  
And the maid was all in a flurry  
As between her legs my place I took  
And Sir John I quietly buried ..."

and "The Minister's Trip to Heaven," sung to the tune of "Joe Bowers." It uses the meter and rhyme pattern of "Our Goodman" to tell how the minister seduces "a simple village girl" under the pretext of showing her the golden shore, only to be told . when his conscience troubles him:

"Why, you poor old fool, you're thick as mud, and very soon you'll see  
That you have got the same old dose your son John gave to me.  
Then when your Tommy's in a sling, go to your wife, pray tell  
That you took a trip to heaven but landed plump in hell."

Mr. Howard also contributed an example of another type: the "tease"-song in which a decent word is substituted for the indecent rhyming word expected:

Come all children, gather round, there's bread and cheese for supper.  
If one man sleeps with another man's wife, he's a fool if he doesn't—

Send his kids to school and rule them with a stick,  
The best thing for a nice young lady is a man with a big long-  
Peter Murphy had a dog, and a very fine dog was he.  
He took it to a lady friend to show it her— (\*)

Country lasses are the best for lying in the grass.  
They open wide their lily-white drawers and show their—  
Artificial music boxes. Now buy one if you can.

\* (There appear to be two lines missing here: judging from other texts, it should run something like this:

"He took it to a lady friend to show her how to—  
Play with that naughty dog that runs all around to hunt,  
Runs his nose up Mary's clothes so he can smell her—.")



Such mock-innocent songs were popular in both English and American music halls in the nineteenth century, and are still fairly common in oral tradition. Bruce Jackson collected a similar one, "Run Your Daughter Off to School," from a Negro convict in Texas in 1964, and Richard A. Reuss gives other versions in "An Annotated Field Collection of Songs from the American College Student Oral Tradition."<sup>14</sup> Different ones appear as "The Clean Song" in Oscar Brand's *Bawdy Songs and Backroom Ballads*,<sup>15</sup> and as "A Clean Story" in Count Palmiro Vicarion's *Book of Bawdy Ballads*,<sup>16</sup> The genre also turns up in children's rhymes.

The fourth singer, Woody Lambe, was a student at the Ontario Agricultural College at Guelph when I met him in May, 1963. A friend had told me that he knew many unusual folk songs, but when he came over one evening I found that he had learned most of them from records. The only songs he had learned from oral tradition were the bawdy ballads he heard at rigger parties, so we recorded his stock of these, ranging from such widespread ditties as "The Ball of Kirriemuir" and "Roll Me Over in the Clover" to obscene parodies of several well known songs.

Most of his songs are fairly modern, but he knows good versions of two of the oldest bawdy ballads: "Our Goodman" and "Mr. Fisherman." "Our Goodman" is, of course, very widely sung in more or less bawdy forms, and Woody's version follows the common "Four Nights Drunk" pattern. The "H.M.S." in the first stanza indicates an English origin, in contrast to the American "John B. Stetson," and the "zipper in a dishrag" must have been added since the 1920's when zippers were invented.

### **Our Goodman**

When I got home the other night my loving wife to see,  
I spied a hat upon the rack where my hat ought to be,  
So I said to my wife, the light of my life: "Explain this thing to me.  
Whose is that hat upon the rack where my hat ought to be?"

She said: "You're drunk, you skunk, you silly old skunk, you're drunk as a skunk can be.  
'Tis only a saucepan my neighbor left with me."  
Now in all of my years of travelling, a million miles or more,  
An H.M.S. on a saucepan I never have seen before.

When I got home the other night my loving wife to see,  
I spied some pants upon the rack where my pants ought to be.

So I said to my wife, the light of my life: "Explain this thing to me.  
Whose are those pants upon the rack where my pants ought to be?"

She said: "You're drunk, you skunk, you silly old skunk, you're drunk as a skunk can be.  
'Tis only a dishrag my neighbor left with me."

Now in all of my years of travelling, a million miles or more,  
A zipper in a dishrag I never have seen before.

When I got home the other night my loving wife to see,  
I spied a head upon the bed where my head ought to be.

So I said to my wife, the light of my life: "Explain this thing to me.  
Whose head is that upon the bed where my head ought to be?"

She said: "You're drunk, you skunk, you silly old skunk, you're drunk as a skunk can be.  
'Tis only a baby my neighbor left with me."

Now in all of my years of travelling, a million miles or more,  
A mustache on a baby I never have seen before.

When I got home the other night my loving wife to see  
I spied a knob upon the job where my knob ought to be  
So I said to my wife, the light of my life: "Explain this thing to  
Whose is that knob upon the job where my knob ought to be?"

She said: "You're drunk, you skunk, you silly old skunk you're drunk as a skunk can be.  
'Tis only a rolling pin my neighbor left with me."  
Now in all of my years of travelling, a million miles or more  
A foreskin on a rolling pin I never have seen before.

That ballad has followed the same pattern for at least two centuries, for one of the Child texts comes from Herd's manuscript of 1776. "Mr. Fisherman" is even older: Gershon Legman calls it "the song having the longest unbroken genealogy of any bawdy song in English" (p. 413). As "The Sea Crabb," dating from about 1620, it appears in Loose and Humorous Songs from Bishop Percy's Folio Manuscript,<sup>17</sup> and was probably old then.

Woody's version is surprisingly close to the Scottish form Arthur Argo sings as "The Lobster" on Prestige International 25039. Both have almost the same chorus, and both lack the vagina-dentata climax found in the older versions. This is the way Woody sang it:  
Mr. Fisherman

Hey, Mr. Fisherman, how are you?  
Have you got a lobster you can sell to me?

CHORUS: Singing um tiddle-ee-um, piss or bust,  
Never let your ballocks dangle in the dust.  
Yes, sir, yes, sir, I have two,  
And the biggest of the bastards I will sell to you.

So I took the lobster home, and I couldn't find a dish,  
So I put it in the pot where the Missus used to piss.

Now in the middle of the night I will tell to you,  
The Missus she got up for to use the so-and-so.

Well, first she gave a groan, and then she gave a pop,

And there's the bloody lobster hanging from her box.

Well, she hit it with the saucepan, she hit it with the broom,  
And she knocked the bloody lobster clean across the room.

Woody also contributed a long monologue, supposedly the spiel of a barker for "The Wild West Show." Spoken sections describing strange birds and animals were linked by this innocent refrain:

We're off to see the Wild West show,  
The elephant and the wild kangaroo.  
Never mind the weather, as long as we're together,  
We're off to see the Wild West show.

The interspersed monologue, adapted from one about "The London Zoo," deals largely with the sexual and scatological habits of the creatures in question: for example, "Now in this cage, ladies and gentlemen, you see the Kiki Bird. The Kiki Bird is a bird that lives in the very northern part of this country on the icebergs, and every spring in the mating season he rides down on his ass screaming:

'Ki-ki-Christ! It's cold!' " Mr. Legman refers to this as "The Hamburg Show" or "Larry, Turn the Crank" (p. 372), noting a text printed in *Immortalia* (p. 153), and a "not-altogether expurgated version" in John Ashton's *Modern Street Ballads* as "Humours of Bartlemy Fair."<sup>18</sup> Another version appears in *Bibliothèque Erotique*, Vol. II, n.p. (probably Detroit, 1926).

The other songs Woody Lambe sang were mostly parodies of familiar numbers. His "Old King Cole" makes ingenious use of many trade metaphors which turn up in other songs, using this pattern:

Old King Cole was a merry old soul, and a merry old soul was he.  
He called for his wife in the middle of the night, and he called for his fiddlers three.  
Now every fiddler had a fine fiddle, and a very fine fiddle had he.  
There's none so fair as can compare with the boys of the O.A.C.

CHORUS: (spoken)

How's your father? All right.

How's your mother? Half tight.

Had any lately? Last night.

(sung) Over, over, stick it up your jumper,

"Fiddle fiddle dee fiddle dee," said the fiddler,

Merry, merry men are we,

For there's none so fair as can compare

With the college ruggger team.

Succeeding stanzas feature a juggler with a ball, a fisherman with a pole, a tailor with a needle, a butcher with a chopper, a coal-man with a sack, and a dentist with a drill, with sayings culminating in the final stanza:

"Get it filled now when you can," said the dentist,

"Want it in the front or the back?" said the coalman,

"Put it on the block, chop it off," said the butcher,

"Poke it in and out, in and out," said the tailor,

"I've got one this long," said the fisherman,

"Toss my balls in the air," said the juggler,  
"Fiddle fiddle dee, fiddle dee," said the fiddler,  
Merry, merry men are we,  
For there's none so fair as can compare with the boys of the O.A.C.

Another parody on "The Twelve Days of Christmas" is less ingenious, ranging through "Twelve twitching testicles, eleven lecherous Lesbians, ten tired trollops, nine naughty nuns, eight useless eunuchs, seven sex-starved spinsters, six convicted vicars, five queer choir boys, four Girl Guides, three Boy Scouts, two virgin maids, and my Lord Montague of Burleigh." It appears that this has literally travelled around the world. The Lord Montague reference indicates that it was composed in England in the early 1950's when a scandal involved the nobleman in question. Then it was carried to Australia, and an Australian student brought it to Canada, where Woody learned it. Reuss reports that American college students also sing it (pp. 144-146).

A parody of the Welsh ditty about "Cosher Bailey" provides another example of the "tease"-song. This is a different form from the one Oscar Brand gives as "Crusher Bailey" (pp. 66-67), as this sample indicates:

Now I had a brother Matthew who's a cleaner-up of statues,  
And one day when cleaning Venus he fell off and broke his elbow.  
Did you ever see, did you ever see, did you ever see such a silly sight before?

Woody also knew the fairly widespread parody of "Kafoozelum" (originally printed in 1866 with words credited to S. Oxon), which became popular in its bawdy form among both British and American troops during World War I. Woody calls it "Kathoosalum," and his follows the pattern Oscar Brand gives,<sup>19</sup> although it has not been "tamed for publication." He also sang a bawdy form of Percy French's "Abdul Abulbul Amir": this is rarer than "Kafoozelurn," but a version appears in Count Palmiro Vicarion's *Book of Bawdy Ballads* (p. 109). Both these mock-Oriental pieces, which dwell on grotesque sexual incidents and accidents, have a certain humorous exaggeration that makes them less unpleasant than World War II songs like "The North Atlantic Squadron."

In summary, this sampling from four singers of different ages and backgrounds shows both the continuing appeal and the changing forms of bawdy songs. In the pamphlet accompanying the album, *Songs of Seduction*, in the series, "Folk Songs of Britain" (Caedmon TC 1143), Alan Lomax writes: "These lusty songs show a survival of Old European, pre-Christian attitudes about love—a gay and permissive spirit which Chaucer expressed, which the Elizabethans enjoyed, and which since then gradually sunk below the surface. There is little doubt, however, that this pagan spirit lingered on in the country lanes of Great Britain, long after the Puritans had driven it underground in the cities."

Mr. Abbott in particular has preserved both well known and unfamiliar songs of this lusty rural type. All the singers knew some such older songs, but in proportion to their contact with a more urban society they tended to sing more of the modern songs that stress the grotesque or perverted aspects of sex. (It should be noted that Mr. Abbott's and Tom Brandon's Anglo-Irish songs tend to contradict another of Mr. Lomax's statements in the same pamphlet: "Irish language singers are perfectly natural about sex, often using it as a subject of satire. Curiously enough, there is little in the Anglo-Irish folk song tradition of this sort, at least that the respectable Irishman will recognize.")

In addition to the contrast between the older rural and the more modern urban songs, another trend is evident. Where bawdy songs form only a small part of the repertoire of the first two men, who are typical of good traditional singers, they account for almost all the traditional songs known by the two more urban singers: a small piece of evidence supporting Gershon Legman's statement quoted in the first paragraph.<sup>20</sup>

#### Notes

1. The Horn Book (New York, 1946), 288. Further references to this volume will be given in the text of the paper.
2. James Reeves, *The Idiom of the People* (London, 1958), 108.
3. JFSS, III (1908), 17-21.
4. James Reeves, *The Everlasting Circle* (London, 1960), 118-119.
5. Rev. S. Baring-Gould gives a tune with rewritten words in *A Garland of Country Song* (London, 1895), 84-85.
6. "Nellie Coming Home from the Wake," "Daniel O'Connell," "A Young Man Lived in Belfast Town," "An Old Man He Courted Me," "The Weaver," and "The Mower" all appear in my *Traditional Singers and Songs from Ontario* (Hatboro, 1965) with other songs from Mr. Abbott. The first three may be heard on his Folkways record,

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FM 4051, and the fourth and fifth on a Prestige record, *Ontario Ballads and Folksongs*, INT 25014. "The Bonny Bunch of Rushes Green" will be in *A Garland of Ontario Songs*, and "No, My Boy Not I" in *Lumbering Songs from the Northern Woods* (to be published by Folklore Associates).

7. (Barre, Mass. 1964), 315-317.
8. Ed. Ebsworth (Boston, Lincs., 1876), 45.
9. Ed. of 1719, IV, 179-181.
10. Reeves, *Idiom*, 123-124.
11. (Morgantown, W. Va., 1939), 87.
12. *The Abelard Folk Song Book* (New York, 1958), 62.
13. *Maritime Folk Songs* (Toronto, 1960), 32.
14. Unpublished M.A. thesis, Indiana University (Bloomington, 1965).
15. (New York, 1960), 36-37.
16. (Paris, 1959), 25.
17. Ed. of 1868, 99-100. Guthrie Meade analyzes a number of texts in *Midwest Folklore*, VIII (1959), 91-100.
18. (London, 1888), 111-115.
19. *Bawdy Songs*, 20-21.
20. The music for "Derby Town" and "The Long Peg and Awl" was transcribed by Peggy Seeger; for the other songs by Bruce Whitehead.

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Toronto, Ontario

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