

Reel 112B

FSG30
23.252.2
MF249.502

- 1-3. The Ship's Carpenter, sung by Mr. Bert Power, East Ship Harbour, 2 vs; interesting tune; sings like real old timer; this is my 7th variant.
- 3-8. The Babes in the Wood, sung by Mr. Power; this is the English story; singer so effected he cried and had to stop; concludes by telling the story in prose; sings 6½ vs; see also reel 70.
- 8-8½. Two Lover's Conversation, sung by Mr. Power; 2 lines only; have full text in mss; from Guysborough Co.
- 8½-10. The Chickadee, sung by Mr. Power; 4 vs.; very nice for children
- 10-24. Stories told by Mr. Power; good for both stories and dialect; subjects: step dancing; anecdote of priest and colored boy; local anecdote; ghost yarn, a personal experience; unexplained light, also a personal experience.
- 24-end. The Dying Soldier, sung by Mr. Power, 8 vs. good variant, quite well sung; this is my 4th variant.

In Gosper's fair city a damsel did dwell,
For wit and for beauty none could her excel,
When a young man he courted her to be his dear,
And he by his trade was a ship's carpenter.

2

He says, "Dearest Mary if you will agree
And give your consent love for to marry me,
Your love it will cure me from sorrow and care
Consent then to marry a ship's carpenter."

3

She says, "Dearest Willie to wed I am young,

Sung by Mr. Bert Power, East Ship Harbour, and
recorded by Helen Creighton, July 30, 1953.

"Now brother," said the dying man,
 "Look to our children dear,
 Be good unto our boy and girl,
 No friends else they have here.
 To God and you we do commend
 Our children night and day,
 A little while before we have
 Within this world to stay.

2

"You must be father and mother too
 And uncle all in one,
 God knows what will become of them
 When we are dead and gone."
 It was just then the mother spoke,
 "O brother dear," said she,
 "You are the one to bring our babes
 To wealth or misery.

3

"And if you treat them kindly
 God will you then reward,
 But if otherwise you seem to deal
 God will you disregard,
 With lips as cold as any stone
 She kissed the children small,
 God bless you both my babies dear,"
 And then the tears did fall."

4

It was just then the brother spoke
 To this fit(?) couple there,
 "The keeping of your boy and girl
 Sweet sister do not fear,
 God never prospered me nor mine,
 Or aught else that I have,
 If I do wrong to your children dear
 When you are laid in grave."

5

The parents being dead and gone
 The children home he takes,
 He took them home into his house
 And much of them he makes.
 He had not kept those pretty babes
 A twelvemonth and a day
 When for their wealth he did devise
 To take their lives away.

6

He bargained with two ruffians strong,
 Two men of furious (?)
 That they should take those children young
 And slay them in the wood.
 He told his wife and all his friends
 He did the children send
 To be brought up in fair London
 By one who was his friend.

7

Then away then went those pretty babes
 Rejoicing with the tide,
 Rejoicing with a merry mind
 They should on cock horse ride (singer weeps in sympathy)

(Singer explains: I have sang it before ladies and they got their handkerchiefs out and that got in my system somehow and I couldn't help it. So you know - and the saddest part hasn't come yet. See. Anyway the babes wasn't killed then. Those two men - ruffians - they took the babes away and they fought over it, in the woods with the babes lookin' at them, tears ~~xxxx~~ dryin'. And the feller's milder mood, he slayed the other feller - he killed him. Then he took the babes by the hand and he told them to come with him, and he led them two miles and they complained for food. They were hungry. He said, "Stay here; I'll bring you bread when I come back."

(Singer's grandchild interrupts: "And he didn't do it. Didn't bring it back, so.")

(Singer again: "No he didn't do it. No. And they were running up and down waitin' for the man to come back.")

(Grandchild: "And he didn't come back.")

(Singer: "And he didn't come. And when the darksome night come they sat down and cried. And in one each others arms they died. (Clock strikes) He never come back. And they never had no burial Robin Redbreast covered them with leaves. And so it went on from that. Everything fell against the uncle. His conscience went to hell and everything else. Everything left him and he died in jail.")

Sung by Mr. Bert Power, East Ship Harbour and recorded by Helen Creighton, July 1953

True Lover's Conversation

Reel 112B8-8½

Qnaxpiazaxxntxaxxpinkaxxnx

One pleasant evening as
Together chanted their notes so true

Fragment sung by Mr. Bert Power, East Ship
Harbour, and recorded by Helen Creighton, July
1953.

(Have words from another singer)

The ground was all covered with snow one day
When two little ~~children~~ sisters was busy at play,
When a snowbird was sitting high up on a tree
And merrily singing his chickadee dee, chickadee dee
And merrily singing his ~~ch~~ickadee dee.

2

It had not been singing its tune very long
When Emily heard him, so loudly he sang,
"O sister look out of the window," said she,
"There's a dear little bird singing chickadee dee, chickadee dee,
There's a dear little bird singing chickadee dee."

3

"He hasn't no home or nothing to eat,
He neither has stockings or shoes on his feet,
I pity him so, how cold he must be,
But still ~~he~~ keeps singing ~~his~~ chickadee dee, chickadee dee,
And still ~~he~~ keeps singing ~~his~~ chickadee dee.

4

"Now mama come buy it some stockings and shoes,
A nice little hat and a dress as you choose,
Then I wish you'd come into the parlour and see
My dear little bird singing chickadee dee, chickadee, dee,
My dear little bird singing chickadee dee."

Sung by Mr. Bert Power, East Ship Harbour, and
recorded by Helen Creighton, July 1953.

I'm a step dancer, if I say it myself, and a step dancer's got no business on the floor unless he fits the floor. He's got to be togged up or he can't dance. Best clothes; clothes that would suit the floor. Otherwise there's no use for him to go out. Well, that's the same comparison that I got no business to try to sing when I know I can't. See? Same comparison - so - you understand me don't you.

In Halifax at the foot of Inglis Street there's a park there and a trail - a short cut, that you don't have to go down around the street but you cut across that. Inglis Street in Halifax. Well there was a priest - you know I'm Catholic - There was a priest that used to come across that park on that trail every morning. That was his walk, and there were two little boys that size (pointing to children in room) a colored boy and a white boy, that used to go down and sit on that curb ~~Sunday~~ sunny mornings, two chums. The priest come along and he talked to the little white boy. He didn't pay no attention to the little nigger. And when the priest started off the white boy said, "Good-bye father," and the priest was gone. Well then the little nigger says, "Is he your father?" "Oh well, he's everybody's father." Well, the little nigger thought so. The next morning the little nigger was there and the little white boy wasn't there, and the priest come along; the priest come along and paid no attention to the little nigger - walked past him. And when he was walking past the little nigger says, "Good-bye father." The priest turned back and looked down on him. "Are you a Catholic?" "No, by Jesus, it's bad enough to be a nigger."

But remember, every one of them stories has got a little round black spot in 'em. Well now. Years ago in my time - I guess Mr. Palmer might a read the ad, but in your time you didn't hear it. There was a dreaming doctor over in the United States, Marble head, Massachusettes is where he lived and his name was Peter J. Barrett (or Barron). I read his ad a dozen times, see, and all you had to do - he was a dreaming doctor - send him you age, your weight, your complexion, and your name, and above all a lock of your hair. You had to send him a lock of your hair. I never tried it, but Mrs. Dan McPherson in Sheet Harbour was a widow woman. She was miserable so she thought she'd try it. She wrote him this letter. She wrote and told him everything. Her age, her weight and her name, and above all she had to send a lock of her hair. She had jet black hair. She goes down to the barn and cuts a fine lock of hair off a two year old black heifer, to fool him. Takes it up, presses it up,

puts it in her letter and sent it to him. She got an answer back, she'd have a calf the tenth of May. He recognized the lock of hair.

This ghost yarn I'm tellin' you about, and I don't know whether it's a ghost or not for I don't believe in ghosts. Never did. But me brother -in-law Joe Martin - I don't know whether you know him or not; he's married to my sister and they lived up here where Walter Monk lives now. Anfd they got diptheria. The family died out, and I used to do their doctoring - go for the doctor, you know, and I couldn't go in the house, and the doctor told me if I had rum or brandy before I went in I wouldn't be very apt to take the disease, see. I was chumed up here with a nam named Dun Murphy, right down here, Alan Murphy's brother, Will Chisholm drove the coach with horses and the post office was way up (?). I said to Dun, this Dun Murphy, let's send in to Halifax by Will Chisholm for a gallon jug of brandy. We took the money and went up and sent in to Halifax for the brandy by Chisholm, Now Monday - he went three times a week, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Wednesday we went for the brandy and he had forgot it. Now Friday Dun Murphy said to me, "Bert, I'm goin' away Friday/." He had a boat, you see, goin' ~~away~~ down to Spry Bay. "You go and get the brandy." All right, I went up Friday night, and still the brandy didn't come. Now comin' down the road I was alone walkin' down, not skeered or nothin'. They were a dog, a spotted dog layin' in the wheel rut and I walked right up to him. He never moved. Looked right up at me and I never thought of kickin' him or anything. I walked around him, and I went about fifty yards when the same dog wash in the centre of the road and a chill come over me. I walked around him again.

Now the old house I lived in then was down the field and when you before you've got to the back door, the path circles so you can see the lower gate and somethin' caught me eye. Now it was after dark, you know, something caught me eye at the lower gate. I stood and watched it, and a barrel rolled up the hill, right in front of me. I could of picked the barrel up, and I walked in. Me father was living. He said, "What's wrong?" "Nothing." I took off me coat and hung it up and he says, "There's somethin' wrong." I said no. I didn't want him to bother me. I put on me coat and started off again and I got that scared I had to go home and go to bed and I never slept all night, and the next morning the first news I got me chum was drowned, drowned. He was drowned. And I never went any more for the brandy, and I don't know anything about it.

Now I don't understand why them dogs appeared, but the barrel could a heen a barrel of brandy. Something like that. It wasn't a dream; it was a ghost yarn, and he was drowned ~~off~~ on Friday, Thursday night, Friday morning they found him, Saturday morning they found him. He was drowned on Friday, right alongside of his own door.

It happened to me on Friday night; Friday he got drowned, Friday evening, and they got him Saturday morning - they found him. It was the very night he got drowned it happened to me, the same time, Friday night. (clock strikes) So I don't believe in ghosts but there was something come - something to it.

Now it's funny things will happen. I lived on the west side of the harbour one time. I lived in Wes O'Brien's house, see, and I was workin' up at the head of Ship Harbour, and the missus was home in the house and I used to come home week-ends, see. It was a foggy night in winter time and she said, ~~xxxxxx~~ "Bert," she said, "I saw a ghost." "Go away/ What did ye see? ~~xxxxxx~~" We had the big room screend off. Our bed was in back of that screen.

She said, "Last night there were a light. I turned over and there were a light outside the screen, on the floor."

"What kind of a light?"

"It looked like a candle light."

"Oh," I said, "the missus - that woman up there - her light's shinin' out the window."

"No," she said, "it wasn't." She said, "I looked at it awhile and I turned over with me back to it and I couldn't turn that way. I had to come back and the next time it was inside the screen. See."

I talked her out. Well, the very next night - we used to get our water down what they call the spring over the side of the road, and there was white steps there and I had to go before we went to bed for a bucket of water. This light was on the gate post. It was. This very light was on the gatepost. I could have picked it off. I walked right up to it. Nothin' happened. Nothin' happened. Now what was that? It was about the size of a candle. Yea, nothin' happened; nothin' happened. I kept thinking, expecting something. Any more than that Wes O'Brien's boy was drowned in the harbour, and they found him and his watch and some of his clothes was into a trunk and we shifted that trunk and I thought of that and I put the trunk back again. But that wouldn't - I don't think that would be anything, would it? Not likely. It makes you think, that's all.

Told by Mr. Bert Power, East Ship Harbour,
and recorded by Helen Creighton, July 1953.

The sun was sinking in the west
 And filled with evening ray,
 Through the branches of a forest
 Where a dying soldier lay,
 His comrades and companions
 Were kneeling by his side
 Trying to stop the flowing blood
 But alas in vain they tried.

2

A group had gathered round him,
 His comrades in affright,
 A tear rolled down each man's cheek
 As he bid his friends good-night,
 Up speaks this dying soldier
 Saying, "Weep no more for me
 For I'm crossing the dark river
 Where all beyond is free.

3

"Oh comrades I am dying,
 There is something I will say,
 There's a story I'll relate to you
 E'er my spirit pass away,
 Way down in dear old England shore
 Near a pine tree she does stay,
 There is one who waits my coming
 Broken-hearted I'm afraid.

4

"She's a fair your girl, my sister,
 My darling and my joy,
 She was my own in boyhood,
 I had no other besides,
 I loved her as a sister,
 Watched her with a father's pride,
 And it's for my darling sister
 I am content to die.

5

"When our country was invaded
 And called for volunteers
 She threw her arms around my neck
 And burst into tears,
 Saying, "Go my dearest brother,
 Drive those traitors from our shore,
 Though my heart did need your presence
 Our country needs you more."

6

"I've no father, I've no mother,
 There's only Nell and me,
 My father he lays sleeping
 Beneath the deep blue sea,
 My mother she lays sleeping
 Beneath the churchyard sod,
 And it's many many years have passed
 Since her spirit went to God."

7

Then the soldiers spoke together
 In one voice that seemed to fall,
 "We'll be to her as brothers,
 Yes brothers one and all."

With one bright smile of gladness
The soldier's brown was spread,
And with one quick manly motion
The soldier boy was dead.

8

On the banks of sweet Britannia
We laid him down to rest
With his knapsack for his pillow
And his fife on his breast,
With a jewel sweet with flowers
And a sunny southeran sky
Far away from his New England home
We laid him down to die.

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