

Author: Mark Guy Pearse (1842-1930)

Text type: Verse

Date of composition: 1902

Editions: 1902

Source text:

Pearse, Mark Guy. 1902. *West Country Songs*. London: Horace Marshall & Son.

e-text

Access and transcription: March 2011

Number of words: 13,712

Dialect represented: Cornwall

Produced by Aitor Macia Maqueda

Revised by Maria F. Garcia-Bermejo Giner

Copyright © 2011- DING, The Salamanca Corpus, Universidad de Salamanca

VNIVERSITAS
STVDII
SALAMANTINI

WEST COUNTRY SONGS

by

MARK GUY PEARSE

LONDON

HORACE MARSHALL & SON

1902

[NP]

To
MR AND MRS F. W. LAWRENCE
THE MASCOTTE, HOLMWOOD
SURREY

[vii]

PREFACE

THE characteristics of Cornwall and the Cornish are rapidly passing away. More than a hundred years ago its language died. Now its dialect is dying. It is useless to deplore it, for it is inevitable. The Celt, in England at any rate, is doomed to be absorbed by the Saxon. To us Cornishmen, who love so passionately the county that is our own, there comes a heartache as we think of the Cornwall of our fathers lost.

Moved by such a feeling I have sought to recall the Cornwall that I knew, and that I love with a love that grows with the years. I have tried to recall something of its humour, for the Western Celt carries ever a great laugh in his heart; something of its pathos, for its humour lies hard by the fountain of tears; its quaintness, something too of its

[viii]

religion; and, by no means least, its love, for that is the music of their life.

I have not attempted to reproduce its dialect. Phonetic spelling is to most of us an irritating puzzle. I have been content rather to indicate than imitate it.

So in the hope that to Cornishmen the wide world over this little book may revive sweet memories and treasured associations of the dear old home, I venture to send forth these songs of the West Country.

[NP]

CONTENTS

CORNWALL....	1
A CORNISH WEDDING DAY....	4
VECHAN'S BIRTHDAY....	9
THE GRANDMOTHER....	14
A CRADLE SONG....	18
THE LOCAL PREACHER....	21
THE STORY OF THE YELLOW HAMMER....	30
A PORTRAIT....	35
A SONG—"O WIND FROM OUT OF THE WEST"....	38
A SONG—"I MET LOVE ONE DAY"....	40
A SONG—" MY LOVE IS COMING FROM OVER THE SEA"....	42
A LI'LL SUM....	44
A DAY ON THE TAMAR....	47
IS FISHING CRUEL?...	52
THE MINER IN FOREIGN PARTS—CALIFORNIA....	56
AUSTRALIA....	60
KLONDYKE....	65
FATHER EARTH....	71
A FISHERMAN'S SONG—"I'M SITTIN' IN MY LITTLE BOAT"....	75
JEHOSAPHAT ROW....	78
A GENTLEMAN—FOR A TIME....	88
THE " <i>MOSES DUNN</i> "....	93
A CHRISSYMAS DAY....	103
[x]	
THE LAMENT....	113

THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM.... 115
A HOMELY COUNSEL ON CARE.... 117
A FISHERMAN'S SONG—"WHAT DO 'EE SAY, MY LITTLE
MAID".... 122
THE HOPELESS DAWN.... 124
A REQUIEM.... 127
YET ABIDETH LOVE.... 129
THE NEW YEAR.... 131

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

A HOPELESS DAWN.... Frontispiece
By Frank Barmley, A.R.A.
"NO CLIFFS LIKE THOSE THAT GUARD THE WESTERN
SHORE".... Facing page 2
By Mark Guy Pearse
"SLEEP, MY LITTLE ONE, SLEEP".... Facing page 18
By F. Mabelle Pearse
"THEY WAS DOWN 'PON MEVAGISSEY QUAY".... Facing page 44
By J. Ley Pethybridge
A DAY ON THE TAMAR.... Facing page 48
By J. Ley Pethybridge
IS FISHING CRUEL?... Facing page 52
By S. A. Praeger
"SHE BROUGHT IT INTO THE LIGHT".... Facing page 62
By N. Denholm Davis
"WITHIN A GARDEN, BY HER COTTAGE DOOR,
SITS AN OLD MOTHER KNITTING BUSILY".... Facing page 118
By F. Mabelle Pearse

CORNWALL

Thou hardy Mother of a hardy race,
Cornwall, thy hosts of sons are proud of thee;
Scattered abroad in many a distant place,
Our deep, our stedfast love is true to thee.

We count no skies so fair as those at home;
No cliffs like those that guard the Western shore;
We see again the tossing billows foam,
We see the golden furze about the moor.

We know the valleys sloping to the sea;
The wooded sides about the winding stream;
The dripping mill-wheel with its greenery;
Wet sands aglow with crimson sunset gleam.

[2]

As doth the eagle, when her young can fly,
Break up the nest that they may know their power,
And learn to soar into the utmost sky,
And sweep defiant of the storm and shower,

So dost thou seek to make thy children brave:
The engine-house is silent on the hill;
The rubbish-heaps are grass-grown as the grave;
The kibble thrown aside, the chains are still;

And now wherever hide the veins of ore,
There toil thy sons with brain and skilful hands;

The Salamanca Corpus: West Country Songs (1902)

From Spain and Africa to Chili's shore
They give the world the wealth of far-off lands.

The lonely dweller 'mid the city's host,
Where no man greets his brother in the way,
Thrills with new life in vision of the coast
Where the wild billows break in showers of spray.

[3]

Amid the hard and grasping ways of life
Comes a sweet breath as of some better clime,
A holy spell that calms the fevered strife,
In thought of those who fill that happier time.

Though scattered wide throughout the busy earth,
No matter where the Cornishman may be,
We love and bless the country of our birth;
Our Mother, One and All are proud of Thee.

[4]

A CORNISH WEDDING DAY

Aw, Vechan, here's your finery
And dresses all so gay;
They're praising up the looks of 'ee,
So sweet as flowers in May;
And your man, so brave and proud of 'ee,
Is comin' on his way;
But your Mammy, poor old Mammy,
She don't know what to say.

I can mind 'ee all so little,
A-curl'd up at my breast;
I can mind the first sweet smile of 'ee,
A-lyin' in your nest;

[5]

I can feel the little hand o' 'ee,
Against my neck at rest;
And to have 'ee and to hold 'ee,
No heaven was so blest.

I can see 'ee comin' home long
Through the winter rain and sleet;
I take 'ee 'pon my lap again
And warm your little feet;
And the times when you was poorly—
I can feel your little head;
You could sleep on Mammy's bosom
When you couldn't rest in bed.

In your little bits o' troubles
And your little bits o' fears,
When the blessed little eyes of 'ee
Was swimmin' with their tears,

[6]

I can mind how Mammy's hand on 'ee
Would charm them all away,

The Salamanca Corpus: West Country Songs (1902)

An' the blessed little eyes o' 'ee
Was shinin' like the day.

My Vechan, little Vechan,
I've a-had 'ee all your days;
I've a-watched 'ee goin' and comin',
I've got used to all your ways;

I've thought of 'ee and tended 'ee,
And made 'ee all my care.
Aw, dear, it will be lonely
When my Vechan isn't there.

I can hear the bells a-ringing
For the joyful wedding-day—
There was never no such weddin
So the oldest folks do say.

[7]

I could wish 'ee nothin' better
Than the man you walk beside,
And the round world couldn't find 'en
Not a sweeter maid for bride.

Forgive your silly Mammy—
O' course, I know 'tis true,
That thirty years ago and more
I went and did like you—
But your Mammy's heart is achin',
For you've left an empty place;

The Salamanca Corpus: West Country Songs (1902)

And your Mammy's heart is breakin'
For the loss of your dear face.

I'm very glad you've got 'en,
And I know he loves 'ee well;
And I'm sure the Lord will bless 'ee
With more than I can tell;

[8]

And there, I must not keep 'ee,
You must go along your way;
But your Mammy, poor old Mammy,
She don't know what to say.

God send 'ee, my own Vechan,
A little one to be
Such comfort and such blessing
As you have been to me.
So brave and true as he is,
So honest and so wise;
So beautiful as you are,
And with your own dear eyes.

[9]

VECHAN'S BIRTHDAY

Aw, Vechan, 'tis your birthday;
I'm longin' for 'ee, dear;
To think the place is full of 'ee,
And yet you are not here;

The Salamanca Corpus: West Country Songs (1902)

To think how plain I see 'ee,
And hear 'ee all the day—
But when I go to speak to 'ee,
To find you are away!

It seems so short a time ago
I had 'ee at my breast;
I sang my little songs to 'ee
And hushed 'ee off to rest;

[10]

And then I set 'ee in your bed
And watched your eyes go home,
For there was bakin' to be done
And washin' up the cloam.*

But aw, my Vechan darling,
Your Mammy thinks to-day
If once she had 'ee in her arms
The world might go its way—
If once she had 'ee back again
She'd be afraid to stir,
Lest she should turn and look for 'ee
And find you wasn't there.

Aw, Vechan, Vechan, darling,
There's times come back to me,
When Mammy she was busy
And spoke out sharp to 'ee;

* earthenware.

[11]

I see again those tearful eyes,
I hear the quivering sigh,
And like a ghost it haunts my soul,
My little Vechan's cry!

Aw, could I but go back again
And have 'ee here with me,
What tenderness, my awn dear maid.
What love I'd bring to 'ee;
What joy I'd count it if I could
By look, and words, and ways,
With song and sunshine fill your soul,
With sweetness fill your days.

My arms are tight about 'ee,
As I dream of 'ee by night;
And when I wake without 'ee, chull,
I start up in a fright.

[12]

And scores of times, ray awn dear maid—
I can't tell how I hear—
I wake myself with calling 'ee,
" *Aw, Vechan, Vechan, dear!* "

There's times that I remember—
How I wish they'd come again!

The Salamanca Corpus: West Country Songs (1902)

When I'd got 'ee wrapped against me,
All sheltered from the rain;
The basket it was heavy
As I went along the road,
And your Mammy's arms was achin',
For you was a tidy load.

I'd go that way all gladly,
And count that heaven was here,
If I could ache like that again,
With that sweet load, my dear;

[13]

For though I'm bidin' quiet
Beside the cottage door,
Your Mammy's heart is achin',
The emptiness weighs more.

But 'tis a shame, my Vechan,
Your Mammy should be sad.
I think of him who loves 'ee well,
And then my heart is glad;
And then my soul doth bless the Lord,
That when your Mammy's gone,
The love of his brave heart will hold
My Vechan for his awn.

[14]

THE GRANDMOTHER

The Salamanca Corpus: West Country Songs (1902)

Aw, Vechan, my awn, let me sit by your side,
With the baby asleep on my knee.
'Tis just like as if my awn little maid
Had come back once more to me;
I don't feel a bit like a granny, my dear—
It is all as it used to be.

I can feel 'ee again so close to my side—
On earth there was nothing so blest;
I can feel the sweet breath of my awn little maid,
As I fold 'ee again to my breast;
And the gladness of tending 'ee all day and night
Was better to me than my rest.

[15]

Aw, Vechan, there's days that your Mammy can
mind
Of sorrow or gladness or pain;
But of all the days of my life there is one
That stands in my mind the most plain:
'Tis the day of your comin', my awn little maid,
The day that has come back again.

'Twas October, you know, and the winds had been
wild,
The dead leaves were swept from the tree;
But that day, my Vechan, the sky was all blue,
And the sun shone on land and sea;
And the birds were a-singin' as if they all knew
The joy God had given to me.

Aw, Vechan, my Vechan, I tell 'ee that day
The greatest on earth it was I.

[16]

'Twas strange to think that I held in my arms,
What the gold of the world could not buy;
And for joy of havin' my awn little maid
My heart was a laugh and a cry.

I used for to think that the angels of God
Came crowdin' from heaven to see
That sweet little face as you lay in my arms,
Or was lyin' asleep on my knee;
And I thought that there never was one of them all,
But would like to change places with me.

I mind how I slept though the winter winds howled,
And the thunder crashed in the sky;
'Twas nothing to me, all the roll of the streets
When the waggons went rumblin' by—
But, Vechan, your Mammy was up with a start
At the first little sound of a cry.

[17]

Do 'ee look at the dear little face of her now—
'Tis the image of how you once lay;
And, Vechan, she've got your very awn eyes,
And just your awn pretty way.

Aw, Vechan, my Vechan, the good Lord be praised
That I've lived for to see this day.

[18]

A CRADLE SONG

Sleep, my little one, sleep.
A cradle of pure gold I have made,
Of Ophir gold,
Shaped as was shaped the ark of old
Where Moses was laid:
Set with pearls and rubies aflame,
And precious stones of every name.
It is fashioned out of my heart's true love,
The yearning and burning and learning of love
Sleep, my little one, sleep.

Sleep, my little one, sleep.
I have fitted with softest down thy bed:

[19]

An angel's wing
Yielded for thee this offering,
For thy dear head.
Lay thee down,—may thy dreams be sweet.
God Himself guard thee from head to feet.
Thy bed is within thy mother's breast.
At rest and all blest in thy mother's breast,
Sleep, my little one, sleep.

The Salamanca Corpus: West Country Songs (1902)

Sleep, my little one, sleep.
I have woven a dainty gown for thee,
Dainty and white.
It is made of the morning's light
And is fair to see:
In every thread is wrought a charm
To hold thee safe from evil and harm.
It is fashioned out of my evening prayer,
My care that goes forth in an eager prayer.
Sleep, my little one, sleep.

[20]

Sleep, my little one, sleep.
I wrap thee round in a coverlet,
Finest of silk,
Red as the rose and white as the milk;
And on it is set,
The story tapestried all fair,
Of angels descending the golden stair.
It is fashioned out of my heart's true love,
The bliss and the kiss of my true love.
Sleep, my little one, sleep.

[21]

THE LOCAL PREACHER

OF course the Squire was Church—strict Church—
There was nothing else for he;
The Church was the only place, you know,
For to worship properly,

The Salamanca Corpus: West Country Songs (1902)

At any rate, for gentle folks
And people with property.

The Miller Penrose went forth to preach—
A Brianite "Local "was he.
"I can just go forth to tell the folks
Of the love of God to me;
It can't do nobody not no harm,
And may do some good," said he.

[22]

The Sexton came up, and the Squire told:
" Aw, your honour, I've heerd 'em say,
That Miller Penrose goeth forth to preach
'Most every Sabbath Day.
And seemin' to me 'tis a terrible thing
For he to go on that way.

" 'Tis bad enough to stay home from church,
But 'tis dreadful, seemin' to me,
For a man like that to preach to folks—
A ignorant owl like he,
As never had no larnin' at all;
—Such things ought not for to be."

" Indeed," says the Squire, a-lookin' black,
" The Miller a preacher is he! "
" Iss fy, your honour, 'tis true enough,
And I hope your honour will see,
And put a stop to such ghastly ways;

'Tis terrible, seemin' to me."

[23]

But now you must not go for to think
The Squire was that ill-bred
That he wanted the world to hold its tongue
'Till it 'greed with what he said,
And counted the narrow way was just
To follow where he led.

A gentleman born his honour was;
You might search the country round,
And a kinder-hearted man for sure,
There wasn't above the ground!
A fairer and squarer than Squire Tolcarne
There was not to be found.

But the words of the Sexton haunted en:
" Penrose a preacher "!" says he,
And it seemed to the Squire a serious thing
That an ignorant man like he
Should set hisself up for to tell the folks
What the way to heaven might be.

[24]

It wasn't long before Miller Penrose
Come up to the Squire's place;
He'd finished the talk he'd come about
When he seed by Squire's face

The Salamanca Corpus: West Country Songs (1902)

That something he'd done—he didn't know what—
Had brought a bit o' disgrace.

Then the Squire he shut the office door;
"Penrose," the Squire began,
" I'm amazed to hear that the Brianites
Have put your name on the plan.
Now really, you know, you must admit
You're a terribly ignorant man."

" Aw, terrible, iss, your honour, that's true,
If I don't know nawthen beside,
I do know I don't know nawthen, sir—
I wish it could be denied.
I can't make out them lamed books
Though fine and often I've tried."

[25]

" Well, well, now Miller, if that is so,
I really am bound to say,
It's an awful thing for you to try
To teach other folks the way.
Think what a solemn thing it would be
If you led a soul astray."

" Well, Squire, forgive me, I've thought of that,
And there never passes a day
But with all my soul and strength I lift
My heart to God and pray
That He will give me His heavenly grace

For to teach me what to say."

It chanced that the map of the Squire's estate
Lay there on the table spread;
The fields and woods all painted green,
The houses a staring red;
And there was marked each road and path,
And the places where they led.

[26]

Then a bit of a twinkle shone in his eye
As the Miller turned around,
"That the map of your estate, is it, sir?
You know it well, I'll be bound;
Of course, you're using it constantly,
And got to go over the ground."

" Of course, of course, I know it by heart,"
Says the Squire. The Miller says he,
" You do know each road and waterway,
And where each path may be? "
" Of course, of course," the Squire replied,
" I know it all perfectly."

" Now, excuse me. Squire, I know you're one
To give a man fair play.
Can you mind when you was down to the mill—
'Twas only the other day—
You asked little Mary to come with you
And show your honour the way? "

[27]

" Oh, yes," said the Squire, " she showed me the path
That turns in there by the gate;
I was very much obliged to her,
It led to the highway straight;
And but for the service she rendered me
I should have gone home late."

" Well, now, your honour, 'tis like this here—
Or so it seems to me—
Little Mary would hardly know the name
Of what a map might be;
And certainly would not know 'pon the map
The place where she lives, you see.

" My Mary isn't a scholar, I'm 'fraid,
But excuse me if I say
That she was able to show you, sir.
The place where the footpath lay,
'Cause your honour knew it on the map.
But she walks in it every day.

[28]

" So, your honour, if I don't know the map
So well as some folks may,
I do thank God I know one thing—
That He has shown me the way;
And I trust by His grace I've found out how
To walk in it every day."

So the days went by. The Squire he watched
And saw that the Miller was true,
And he heard of many a kindly deed
That the Miller used to do;
And how, when a bit of trouble came,
He would help a neighbour through.

And it chanced one day the Squire fell ill,
The Doctor sat by his bed:
" Now, Doctor, tell me just how it stands;
Am I going to die? " he said.
" I want you to tell me how it will go."
But the Doctor shook his head.

[29]

" If I'm going to get well, I'm quite content
If the Vicar comes and goes;
But I tell you what I want to have
When my life draws near to its close—
*I want my people to send and fetch
That good old Miller Penrose.*"

[30]

THE STORY OF THE YELLOW HAMMER

'T WAS Uncle Jan, a queer old chap,
Who knew the ways of things;
One half a witch, the people said,
Could charm your warts and stings.

The Salamanca Corpus: West Country Songs (1902)

Could tell 'ee all about the time
When maidens should be wed;
And passles of the strangest things,
By planets overhead.

The sounds of beasts and insects' buzz
He seemed to understand;
He whistled and the crowding birds
Would feed out of his hand.

[31]

He used to wander through the woods,
And all the night would lie,
And watch the stars and things he loved—
He wouldn't hurt a fly.

His eyes and all the touch of en,
They had a kind of spell;
And all us children loved en dear,
He had such tales to tell.

It was one summer's evening
We sat beneath a tree,
And on the rail there perched a bird,—
" Aw, my dear life! " says he,

" Can 'ee hear his song, my darlings?
Six notes just all the same—
And then that long-drawn sorrow;

—A *gladdy* is his name.

[32]

" Can 'ee see his golden feathers
That trick en out so gay?
Can 'ee hear his note so plaintive?
I know what he do say.

" Once 'pon a time, 'twas long ago,
He used to be a lark;
Went soaring right up to the sun,
And sang from dawn to dark.

" But then there came a spirit ill;
A wicked lie he told—
' You're such a poor old homely thing
You should be dressed in gold.'

" ' Sell me your song, my dear,' says he,
' And I will make 'ee gay;
You sha'n't go out in suit o' brown,
But decked so bright as day.'

[33]

" This evil spirit offered en
Gold for his breast and wings;
' This here is yours if you'll give me
The soul that soars and sings.

The Salamanca Corpus: West Country Songs (1902)

" ' All dressed up in a golden suit
They won't think you're the same;
And since the folks won't know 'ee 't all,
I'll give 'ee a new name.'

"And so the bargain it was struck;
He did as he was told;
And thought hisself a gentleman
All decked out in his gold.

" But, my dear life, his heart is broke
For what he used to be,
When he went soaring to the sun
And sang so joyfully.

[34]

" And now he flies from hedge to hedge—
Hark to his plaintive cry!
In place of song and soaring 'tis
' What—a—poor—rich—thing—am—I! "

[35]

A PORTRAIT

So he stood, a man among us:
He the fearless, he the friendly;
He whose genius was in service;
More than king because a brother;
More than conqueror in his love.

'Twas away out on the Moorland
That we found his fittest image:
Rose a solid mass of granite,
All aglow with hues of sunset,
Robed as if in richest purple,
Crowned as if with purest gold;

[36]

Softened was it by the mosses,
Softened by the patch of lichen;
High above it rang the lark's song;
And around it flew the swallow;
And about it clung the ivy;
And within the cleft a flower bell
Found a home and nourishment;
Deeper in its heart a wild bird
Had her brood all snugly sheltered,
Safely hidden in the nest.

So he stood: a man among us.
Solid, settled, made of granite,
Yet aglow with summer sunshine.
His the beauty and the sweetness
Of a gentleness unfailing;
Trusty, tender; deep within him
A great love whose joy was service,
Love that was a strength and refuge.

[37]

The Salamanca Corpus: West Country Songs (1902)

Most a man because a brother;
Most a saint because a servant;
Most divine because all human;
Full of sunshine and of song.

[38]

A SONG

O WIND from out of the West,
Thou art singing the song of the blest;
At the break of the day
Thou wert coming her way,
Thou hast seen her, compassed her, heard her to-day,
O wind from out of the West.

O wind from out of the North,
Thou art wings to me sweeping me forth;
Like the seas in the spray
Thou dost bear me away;
Thou art wings that to her do bear me away,
O wind from out of the North.

[39]

O wind from out of the East,
Though the gold of the sunshine has ceased,
Here is charm, here is spell,
Here are sweet things to tell,
Find her, and sing to her things that I tell,
O wind from out of the East.

The Salamanca Corpus: West Country Songs (1902)

O wind from out of the South,
Thou art very breath of her mouth;
Her spirit thou bringest,
Her sweet note thou singest,
Thy tenderness hers, her spirit thou bringest,
O wind from out of the South.

[40]

I MET Love one day,
A-going on his way,
A light in his eyes,
And his laugh it was gay;

His locks were all trim,
His wings were all prim,
A glow on his cheek
And rounded each limb;

A voice like a flute,
Attuned to his lute;
He danced on his way,
As he sang of his suit.

[41]

I met Love again,—
His face was in pain;
The lute it was silent;
The string snapped in twain.

His eye it was dim,
His mouth it was grim,
All hollow his cheek,
And wasted each limb.

"What ails you?" I said.
Then Love shook his head,
—" It is more than a month
Since poor Love was fed."

[42]

My love is coming from over the sea,
Over the sea;
A thousand things I've got for to tell her,
Merrily, merrily;
A thousand things I've got for to give her,
Tenderly, tenderly.

My love is a-come from over the sea,
Over the sea;
But the holy hush of the joy is mine,
Silently, silently,
I can only feel that my love is here.
Here by me, here by me.

[43]

My love, my love from over the sea,
Over the sea;
I've nothing to say and nothing to give

The Salamanca Corpus: West Country Songs (1902)

Unto thee, unto thee;
Words are so empty and gifts so poor,
Here with thee, here with thee.

[44]

A L'LL SUM

THERE was Jim Treglown, a brave chap was he
As ever shot pilchard nets out to sea.
He could tell 'ee clean off what ought to be,
Could Jimmie Treglown.

And 'twas Pedder Polsue from Plymouth way—
He was always ready to have his say.
" I am more than a match for Jim any day,"
Says Pedder Polsue.

They was down 'pon Mevagissey Quay,
A passle of chaps, when Pedder says he,
" Now, Jimmie, my son, here's a sum for thee,"
Says Pedder Polsue.

[45]

" I'll give 'ee two minutes to do it, come—
'Tis a fine and easy little sum,
And 't isn't a failin' o' yours to be dumb,"
Says Pedder Polsue.

" A chap took three herrin's out of a cask,
'Three ha'pence,' says he, 'is the charge I ask.'

The Salamanca Corpus: West Country Songs (1902)

How much for a shilling? and that's the task,"
Says Pedder Polsue.

" 'Tis Devon 'gainst Cornwall, so now fair play,
Two minutes I'll give 'ee, so hurry away;
Lev us gone for to see who'll win the day,"
Says Pedder Polsue.

Now Jimmie Treglown he scratched his head,
" Don't let en beat 'ee," the Cornishman said.
Poor Jimmie, the face of him turned quite red,
Did Jimmie Treglown.

[46]

"Two minutes is up and Jimmie don't know,"
Says Pedder Polsue. Says the Cornishman " Aw! "
And Jimmie Treglown scratched his head, and " Law! "
Says Jimmie Treglown.

And Pedder Polsue he laughed with glee,
" 'Tis a half-penny each, and don't you see
That's eighteen for a shilling, seemin' to me,"
Says Pedder Polsue.

Then Jimmie turned round, " Was it *herrings* you said?
I know that *o' herrings*, of course, but instead
Of herrings 'twas *pilchards* I got in my head,"
Says Jimmie Treglown.

[47]

A DAY ON THE TAMAR

GOOD Mr Ford a fisher was
Who loved to catch the trout;
With Mr Bridge, on Tamar's bank,
He came to pull them out.

The Dartmoor streams he knew full well,
And whipped the pools with vigour,
But though he'd taken many a score,
He longed to take a bigger.

Said Mr Ford: " Yes, Dartmoor's good,
I don't wish to defame her,
But there the fish are very shy
Whilst here the trout are Tamar."

[48]

Together thus they worked away;
But did not get a rise,
Except indeed the blisterings
Of gnats and stinging flies.

At lazy noon they sought the shade
And sat at their repast.

Said Mr Ford to Mr Bridge
" We've got a bite at last! "

Said Mr Bridge to Mr Ford
" We must try something new,

Come let us make the claret fly,
Set off" with smoky blue."

Said Mr Ford to Mr Bridge
" I haven't seen a fin,
I think I'll find another top
And see if I can spin."

[49]

Then for a brace of hours more
Those fishers flung the fly,
Till Mr F. caught Mr B.
And hooked him in the eye.

" Oh Hooker injudicious! "
Cried writhing Mr B.

" If this is what you joking call,
The point I cannot see."

Then Mr Ford threw down his rod,
And loudly cried " Alack! "
"You see one really cannot help
What's done behind one's back."

Then groaning Mr B, replied,
" Oh, what a dreadful smart!
'Tis all my eye to say that this
Is such a gentle art "—

[50]

" Those ladies who like piercing eyes
This may suit... and all such;
To my mind this drop-fly of yours
Had had a *drop* too much."

Cried Mr Ford to Mr Bridge

" If once of this you're rid
I vow I never will again
Try fishing on that Lyd."

Now not far off the river's brink
The doctor hurried by,
And pulling out his lancet sharp
He soon unhooked that eye.

Then spake the doctor solemnly,
" No mischief I descry,
This casting line, it *might* have left
A sad cast in his eye."

[51]

" Oh! dear," cried Mr Ford distrest,
That hook is in me still,
Though Mr Bridge has lost his pain
I really feel quite ill."

But Mr Bridge, he laughed aloud,

" Don't blame your want of art;
'Twas all that showy fly of yours;

I felt it very smart."

[52]

IS FISHING CRUEL?

THE other day by Tamar's banks
We two sat down and lunched:
There came a roguish youngster by
And watched us as we munched;
His waders and his rod and creel
Proclaimed the fisher lad:
In friendliness we turned and asked
What sort of sport he'd had.

" How many fish? " he answer made;
" An easy thing to ask,

[53]

But if you'd count the fish I've caught
It is a stiffish task."
The youth put on a solemn look,
" Pray, listen, sirs," he said;
" I grieve to say I've caught six fish,
But six... without a head! "

" I need not tell you, gentlemen,
Their fate I much bewail!
But what is quite as bad to tell,
I've nine without a tail."
" Without a head! " my friend replied;

The Salamanca Corpus: West Country Songs (1902)

" Without a tail! " cried I. "
Pray let us see." The youngster said:
" You shall see by-and-bye.

" But kindly wait a little while: "
The youngster heaved a sigh,
" Alack, dear sirs, ten fish I've caught,

[54]

But ten without an eye! "
" I've not done yet," the youth went on,
" Most horrible to view,
Besides all these I've caught eight more.
But eight... all cut in two! "

Our heads, they drooped! Our lunch, it fell
Untasted from our lips!
Such cruelties had rent our hearts,
Our hands sunk to our hips.
And this is sport! Ah, who think so
Might take another view.
Without a head! Without a tail!
If *they* were cut in two!

The youth, he laughed and showed his creel.
" Forgive my bit of fun,
A headless 6, a tailless 9,
And 1-less 10 is none!

[55]

And double none is still the same,
So don't bewail their fate,
Two nothings is the residue
When cut in two is 8."

[56]

THE MINER IN FOREIGN PARTS

CALIFORNIA

" Aw my dear life! well, iss, of course,
'Tis very fine, you're right,—
A hundred miles and more of plains,
And then the mountains' height;
The valley and the waterfall,
Beside the towering tree.
But bless 'ee, 't isn't nothin', sir,
To that which I can see.

"A stretch of furze bush all ablaze.
Another stretch of fern;
A patch of purple heather bloom,
And then you take a turn;

[57]

You pass great piles of rubbish heaps,
You pass a bal * that's knacked;
And then a whitewashed cottage peeps
From where the corn is stacked.

The Salamanca Corpus: West Country Songs (1902)

" I see the garden through the gate,
I hear the hum of bees.
The butterflies are everywhere,
The birds sing in the trees.
The flowers—that's the sort I love,
Sweet Williams pink and red,
The boy's-love grows beside the door;
The jessamine's overhead;

" The fuchsia blooms most all the year,
The happy roses creep
About the window of the place,
Where my dear maid do sleep;
* A mine abandoned.

[58]

To think they greet her at the dawn,
To think that their sweet bloom
Should breathe about my awn, my awn,
And fill that little room!

" I see her standing at the gate
When milking time is done;
And all the sea and sky is red
With setting of the sun;
The golden glory of it all
Is shining in her hair.
The flowers at her bosom
Are not more sweet or fair.

" Aw, my dear life, I tell 'ee what,
When I do think of she
Your gold is but a little thing—
The only gold for me

[59]

Is just enough to make a ring,
To tell the world she's mine;
And diamonds—I'd rather see
Her blessed eyes ashine.

" The glory of your scenery
Sinks all into the shade
Beside the thought of her I love,
My awn sweet little maid.
How poor a thing it seems to me
To be a millionaire,
Beside a kiss from those dear lips,
My little maid so fair! "

[60]

THE MINER IN FOREIGN PARTS

AUSTRALIA

" ZACKY, my boy, come here and sit down,
Lev us touch a pipe for a bit;
The heat is enough to kill a chap
Down there in the stifflin' pit;
Come under the shade of the big gum-tree—

'Tis a purty place for to sit.

" Had any news from home, have 'ee, then?

A paper you used to receive."

And Zacky was still for a brave long time,

Then he gave a sigh and a heave:

" I ha'n't heard now for ever so long,

But 'tis my fault, I believe.

[61]

" You see, I been goin' from place to place,

And 'twas hard to find time to write,

And when you've been working all day long,

You're 'most too tired at night."

And Zacky was still again for a while—

" Here, comrade, give me a light.

" And so they didn't know where to send,

It must be three months or so;

But let me see—why, 'tis more than that.

Well, how quick the time do go!

'Tis nearer six months since I wrote home;

The post's so far off, you know.

" But I wrote to mother yesterday "—

And Zacky wiped off a tear,

" And I sent her a present, a lumpin' sum

That will keep her half a year;

I know it will make her old heart sing—

God bless her, I wish she was here.

[62]

" 'Twas a dream I had—'twill do 'ee good
For to hear what I've got to say—
For all I do feel a bit ashamed,
I'm feelin' better to-day;
And you know, comrade, how easy it is
To forget when folks is away.

" Well, you mind the little place at home,—
There's just a bit of a lane
Going down from the road, the left-hand side, —
I could see it all so plain.
And mother, she stood in the cottage door,
And her face was full of pain.

" The garden was all in sun and shade,
'Twas such a beautiful day;
The lark sung up in the blue, blue sky;
I could smell the scent of the hay;
And the postman was comin' down the lane,
A-hurryin' on his way.

[63]

" And mother, she lifted up her face,
And waited till he come near;
But he went on. ' There's nothing for you.
I'm sorry, Mrs Tregear,'
For he saw the grief that filled her eyes—

The Salamanca Corpus: West Country Songs (1902)

God bless 'ee, mother dear.

"And then she went into the little room,
And she stood by the fireplace—
Her hair 's turned grey, and the lines gone deep
Since last I saw her face.
And then she lifted her hand and took
A photograph out of a case.

" 'Twas a thing that I sent her years ago,
And she brought it into the light;
She looked at it with a bitten lip,
And I saw that her face was white,
And she sighed as she kissed it tenderly,
' *I wonder if he's all right!* '

[64]

" So I wrote to mother yesterday,"
And Zacky wiped off a tear,
" And sent her a present, a lumpin' sum,
That will keep her half a year,
And I'm going to write her again next mail—
God bless 'ee, mother dear! "

[65]

THE MINER IN FOREIGN PARTS

KLONDYKE

FLING a log on the hearth, will 'ee, Jackie, my dear,
'Tis terrible cold. Thank 'ee; come over here.

The Salamanca Corpus: West Country Songs (1902)

Comrade, what was it the doctor said?
I fancy I heard it, " *So good as dead!* "

Comrade, come nearer and give me your hand—
'Tis lonely to die in this far-off land.
'Twill be lonely for you when I am not here;
We have stood by each other for many a year.
You've been always the same to me—more than a brother;
And, Jack, I been thinkin' that, somehow or other,

[66]

I'll tell Them above that I want to go back
Now and then to do a good turn for old Jack.
I'll tell Them about 'ee; I warrant they'll set
Theirselves for to help to pay off my debt.
But now you must go, there's things for to do—
What, going to stay by me! Well, that is like you.

Been asleep, have I, Jack? I s'pose 'twas a dream;
I was back home again; and it really did seem
As if I was only a child of three,
And kneeled at my prayers by mother's knee.
I saw her sweet face, felt her hand on my head,
As I kneeled by the fire all ready for bed,
With clasped hands and closed eyes, so plainly I heard
Her voice through it all—I can mind every word.
And I felt in my soul as if once again
Undressed for the night as I used to be then:
And mother she came and put out the light,
And sang of the angels who watch through the night.

[67]

Comrade, will 'ee open the chest over there,
There's a picture of mother. Will 'ee put it just where
I can see her dear face—a little this way.
When I look at her, comrade, I feel I can pray.

Will 'ee bring mother's Bible, 'tis there by the chair;
The leaves is got loose, and you'll have to take care.
Will 'ee please for to turn to her favourite bit—
The fourteenth of St John, you know where 'tis writ:

*" I am going to get ready a mansion for you,
Where I am, said Jesus, there you shall be too."*

When mother was dying, I sat by her bed—
She used always to ask for that to be read;
There was light in her eyes and a joy in her tone,
As if they sweet words was wholly her own;
And though when I read them my voice was achoke,
To her it was like as if Jesus had spoke.
Turn up the lamp, Jack, you can't hardly see,
And then will 'ee please for to read it to me?

[68]

What was it you asked me? What had I said?
Well, comrade, I'll tell 'ee. Come here by the bed.
'Tis strange the new thoughts that have come over
me
Whilst lying here quiet. I've come for to see
The things that puzzled me grown all so clear,

The Salamanca Corpus: West Country Songs (1902)

The clouds are all scattered, the stars do appear.

They revivals at home used to give me a fright,
As if saving your soul was a terrible fight,
A-sweatin' and groanin' for nights and for days,
A hell of despair, then a heaven of praise.
Well, p'raps they was right; but seeming to me
'Tis the hand of the child that do carry the key.
I am sure as I stood and knocked at the door
One said from within, "*Be a child once more.*"

God used for to speak in dreams of the night—
Well, I tell 'ee, 'twas all so clear as the light.

[69]

I saw myself lying a child, just new born;
A poor little helpless thing, forlorn;
Above me the empty stretch of sky;
About me the moors where none went by;
So lonely, so helpless, so little, so weak,
All want, knowin' nothing, unable to speak.
Then came in an instant—I don't know from where—
My mother—she took me with tenderest care.
Oh, the warmth of her bosom! The sweet and snug rest!
And she laughed in her joy as I lay at her breast.
So little, and yet because little so dear;
My need was my claim, and held her more near;
No heaven was sweeter than hers day and night,
A service where service was lost in delight.
Then, Jackie, my comrade, I stirred and I woke,

The Salamanca Corpus: West Country Songs (1902)

And I can't but believe 'twas the Saviour who spoke:

*" The love that greeted thy coming then
Is the love that waits to greet thee again."*

[70]

Fling a log on the hearth, Jack, 'tis terrible cold.
Dear comrade, will 'ee give me your hand for to hold.
Good-bye and God bless 'ee—you always was true.
Look, Jack, can 'ee see her? Why, mother, 'tis you!

[71]

FATHER EARTH

OLD Father Earth was a grim old thing
No trace of beauty had he;
Across his face ran the furrows deep,
As brown and bare as could be.

Now it chanced one day that a tiny seed
Went driven along that way;
A tiny seed in a great big world,
On a shivering Winter's day.

This old Father Earth, beneath his crust,
A pitiful heart had he;
He whispered: " Little one, come, I pray,
Find rest and refuge with me."

[72]

The Salamanca Corpus: West Country Songs (1902)

The little seed turned, and trembling said:

" I'm so very small you see,
Whilst you stretch away for many a rood;
I'm afraid you won't care for me!"

" Not care for thee, little one?—Ha, ha! "
And the old brown Earth laughed he;
" If I am so big, the more room there is
In my heart of hearts for thee."

" What will you give to me, Father Earth,
Pray what will you give to me? "
Then the brown Earth folded the seed to himself,
And made answer tenderly:

" All that I have I will give to thee,
All that I can be is thine:
For thee the very seasons are set
And the very heavens do shine."

[73]

" What will you do with me, Father Earth,
Pray what will you do with me? "
" I will make thee root and flower and fruit,
And thou shalt be fair to see."

Then to rest the little seed sank down
In the love that held it tight;
He covered it up, and he tucked it in,
And bade it a sweet good-night.

So the time slipped by, and Father Earth
Held his treasure faithfully,
Till the seed sent down a tiny root,
And thrust up its head to see.

And day after day the sun it shone,
And gently fell the shower,
Until at last in its stateliness
There stood the perfect flower.

[74]

But still the fair face is downward bent,
And it whispers tenderly,
" Though my head is in heaven, dear old Earth,
I'm not going away from thee."

And the old brown Earth, he laughed again:
" Ah, what hast thou done for me!
I was but a clod all brown and bare,
And now I am part of thee.

" A thousandfold hast thou paid me back
The little 'twas mine to give;
Uplifted, transformed, and crowned in thee,
Thou hast shown me how to live."

[75]

The Salamanca Corpus: West Country Songs (1902)

I'M sittin' in my li'll boat;
The lines is to the stern;
And all my thoughts are full of 'ee
Whichever way I turn.

If you was this here li'll boat
And I was but the sea,
Aw, my dear life, I tell 'ee, though,
It should be fine for thee.

My curling waves around the keel
Should dance with happy light;
I'd bear 'ee past the sunken rocks
And bring 'ee home all right.

[76]

If you was this here li'll boat
And I was but the sky,
Aw, dear, what sunshine you should have—
The day should never die.

I'd bring 'ee such a gentle breeze
And fill the pretty sail;
Whichever way you want to go
The wind should never fail.

If you was this here li'll boat
And I was but the sea,
Aw, dear, what lovely fish and things
I'd bring to gladden 'ee.

What crabs and lobsters you should have
What lovely conger eels,
And now and then a salmon bass,
And then some salmon peels.

[77]

I'd send 'ee up a halibut;
The biggest of the prawn;
And 'pon your birthday you should have
A pet whale for your awn.

I'd make the mackerel jump aboard,
The pilchard and the hake,
The cod and great big flying fish
Should come up for your sake.

And scores of pretty mermaidens,
A-combin' of their hair,
Should bring 'ee gifts of pearl and shells
To deck 'ee all so fair,

I'm sittin' in my li'll boat;
The gulls is in the sky;
Aw, dear, if I was one of they,
I know which way I'd fly.

[78]

The Salamanca Corpus: West Country Songs (1902)

So nigh to a hedge-hog as man could be,
Was Jehosaphat Row.
The world couldn't show
Another like he.
Eyes like a haddock, sticking out of his head;
So thin as a hake;
A face like a gurnard, so long and so red;
A mouth like a cod, and teeth like a rake.
If you vexed en so much as the least little bit
He'd ill-wish 'ee with just a cast of his eye,
And your pig, or your cow, or something would die.
A proper old toad for the venom he'd spit.

[79]

The children at play
Would all run away
In a terrible fright
If Josh Row came in sight.
He was all that was bad.
And the money he had!—
Or so they all said,
Hid away in a stocking, or stitched up in his clothes.
And the rags that he wore, holes at elbows and
toes.
To church or to chapel he never would go.
A proper old heathen was Josaphat Row.

Now next door or so
To Josaphat Row
Lived Miss Susan Crocker, a sour old maid.

The Salamanca Corpus: West Country Songs (1902)

So sharp with her tongue even Josh was afraid.
Where she'd a-come from nobody knew.
There was all sorts of tales that might have been
true,

[80]

That she once was a lady, and quite well to do.
Never troubled so much as to do up a shoe,
Had a carriage and pair,
And servants a score
For to open the door,
And a maid just for nothing but do up her hair.
She was poor enough now, and yet here and there
Were odd bits of finery that made the folks stare.
She went on her way
With never so much as a passing good-day,
And if she did speak
'Twas a snort and a shriek,
And a snap,
Like the teeth of a trap.

Well, one winter's night—'twas a terrible gale,
Pitch dark and a-pelting with wind and with hail,
And the cold was so cruel
That much as he grudged it Josh needed more fuel,

[81]

—Though the furze and peat and the bundle of
sticks

He got it for nothing, always up to his tricks—
Well, he opened the door
To go out for some more,
While the beat of the rain swept in on the floor;
And then as the howl of the storm went by
Jehosaphat started, for there was a cry.
He listened, and plainly he heard it again,
He lit up his lantern and hurried away,
And close by the door—it gave him a turn
All sheltered within a bundle of fern
A poor baby lay,
Wrapped up in a rag,
So cold as a winnard, so wet as a shag.
Josh looked and fairly perspired with fright;
He scratched his head as he did in a plight;
He took up the baby, set it down by the fire,
Flung on a whole furze bush, and piled it up higher.

[82]

Then he hurried away,
And in to Miss Crocker,
—Could not even stay
To lift up the knocker.
" *There's a baby,* " he cried. Miss Susan arose
With a curl of her lip, and a tilt of her nose,
And was going to crush Josh with a snappish reply,
When she stopped, for there was a look in his eye
All pity and pleading. " Please it wants to be fed.
Do 'ee make haste and come, or I'm 'fraid 'twill be
dead."

The Salamanca Corpus: West Country Songs (1902)

Then she picked up her shawl, not a moment's delay,
And into old Josh's she hurried away,
Sat down by the fire, the child on her lap,
Took the shawl from her shoulders and made it a wrap.
Josh stood by the chair
With a wondering stare.
" I do thank 'ee for coming, Miss Susan, I knew
You could tell in a minute what we ought for to do. "

[83]

Miss Susan replied in accents of silk,
" I think, Mr Row, you must go for some milk."
And, Josh, he was up and off like a shot,
Didn't know it was freezing, indeed, was quite hot;
All breathless with haste he flew over the ground,
And tenderly told of the baby he'd found.
All the place was astir,
Each was eager to share
In the little one's care,
Till Josaphat's kitchen swarmed like a hive.
Feeding-bottles were waiting, there were at least five,
And cradles, the neighbours had really brought three,
And clothes, such a lot,
Whatever they'd got—
Old coats and new skirts,
Men's trousers and shirts.
"God bless you," said Josh, as he mopped at his
brow,
Miss Crocker, she smiled, " We shall really do now."

[84]

While the great fire crackled and scorched with its
glow,
And Josh's old place seemed a heaven below.

When the neighbours had gone,
Miss Susan stayed on,
While Josaphat Row
Tiptoed to and fro,
Afraid of his life Miss Susan would go.
Then she turned with such grace,
Such light in her eyes, and such love in her face,
" I'm sure you must be quite tired," she said,
" I'll stay by the baby—you get off to bed."

Next day when the baby was washed and was fed,
And lay fast asleep in its warm little bed,
Miss Susan was gone for an hour or more,
And came back quite laden, there was such a store

[85]

Of fine laces and bits of most dainty apparel;
Then, rocking the cradle and singing a carol,
She sat snipping, and stitching, and trimming, and
tying,
As if for dear life her needle was flying.
Till up on Josh's old table there rose
A pile of the finest of infantile clothes.

The Salamanca Corpus: West Country Songs (1902)

Then Josh came up blushing, " Aw, Miss Susan,
please,
If there's anything wanted, do 'ee mind takin' these? "
There was five golden sovereigns all of a row,
Miss Susan, she stared with a smile and said, " Oh "—
And she busily bent at her work, and she thought—
"What a wonderful change the baby has wrought! "
Josh watched her a minute—" I never did see
Such a change as that which has come over she."
Then Josh went to market—later, homeward he came,
The folks hardly knew him—not a bit like the same.

[86]

Clean-shaven—his wild, shaggy locks were well trimmed;
In place of the rags a new suit of clothes;
Quite a gentleman now from his head to his toes,
While he chuckled with laughter; with good humour
brimmed.

But soon came the trouble. Miss Crocker must stay
To see to the baby by night and by day,
Or else she must carry the baby away.
But Josh wouldn't hear of it—" Bless en, the dear,
Lev en bide please Miss Crocker, along with me here."
And with such a tone of entreaty was spoken,
That anything else and his heart would have broken.
"It is awkward, you know, my dear Mr Row"—
Said Miss Crocker, " But, really, I fear I must go."
Then a brilliant idea came into his head—
"Well, I tell 'ee. Miss Crocker, lev us gone to be wed."

The Salamanca Corpus: West Country Songs (1902)

Miss Crocker looked down, and she hawed and she
hummed,
With thimble on finger the table she drummed.

[87]

Then the baby it woke with a faint little cry.
Miss Crocker took it, and said with a sigh—
" Well, 'tis only because of the baby, you know "—
" Of course, iss, of course," said Josaphat Row.

[88]

A GENTLEMAN—FOR A TIME

As I rode on my way
It chanced that one day
I came across Neddy Penrose.
His real name, you know,
Was Abednego,
Which is not what you would suppose.
'Twas certainly Monday,
But might have been Sunday,
He was dressed in the finest of clothes.

The tall hat was tipped,
The walking-stick gripped,

[89]

His glossy black coat was on,
And a velvet vest

The Salamanca Corpus: West Country Songs (1902)

That he kept for best,
And only for mittin' would don;
His trousers were new
And gorgeous in hue,
And his boots quite brilliantly shone.

" Well, well, my friend Ned,
Are you going to be wed,
You're drest out so fine?" said I.

" 'Tis better than that,"
And Ned took off his hat
And tucked in his blue silk tie:

" I'm a gentleman now "—
And he made me a bow—

" A lucky fellow am I.

" My boy, don't 'ee see,
Out to 'Merikee,

[90]

Have made a fortune, they say,
And a letter he've writ
That work I'm to quit
And not do nothing but play;
And I reckon I shall,
So no more of the Bal,*
I'll sit in the sun all day."

" That's good news indeed,
And if I'm in need

I will give you a call," I said.

" 'Tis good of the lad

To remember his dad;

He's a capital fellow is Fred.

But I must away,

So I wish 'ee good day "—

" Good morning, sir," said Ned.

* * * *

* The mine.

[91]

Three days had gone by

When I happened to spy

Ned coming along the lane;

And yet—can it be

That it really is he?—

And to make sure I looked again.

Yes—'twas Neddy Penrose

In his working clothes,

A-trudging along in the rain.

The pick it was there,

And the borer he bare,

The hard hat stuck on his head;

And the marks of his toil.

And the stain of the soil

Had dyed him an ochreish red.

" Hello, Neddy," I cried,

"Have you laid it aside?

Where's *the gentleman* gone then? " I said.

[92]

Ned stood for a while,
With a shrug and a smile,
And a doleful shake of his head.
" I would if I could,
But 'tis 'n no good,
I tried it two days," laughed Ned.
" But a gentleman—Aw!
I'd have 'ee to know
That a week—and I should be dead."

[93]

THE "MOSES DUNN"

Iss, there she is,—so purty a craft
As ever there could be.
Smart as a lady, safe as a church,
Stand any amount of sea.
Her name? Well, iss, I've thought about that—
Somebody said *The Unique*,
I don't know, I'm sure, what language 'tis,
Latin, I s'pose, or Greek.

Old Michael do know some French, and so
I ask the meaning of he,—
He said I didn't pernounce it right
And called it U-ni-que.

[94]

Said he'd a-seed 'em in foreign parts,
Beasts with a great long horn,
And the nighest he could make of it,
Was a female unicorn.

So I gived that up. But I found the name
In chapel last Sunday night.
The sermon was all about Mordecai,—
If I mind his name aright;
What was the king to do to the man
That he wanted for to honour?
Then all of a sudden it come to me,
The name that I'd put upon her.

The very thing, I says to myself,
I'll take his name for the craft;
That king of old put his man 'pon a horse,
And then I sort o' laughed;

[95]

If I put my man 'pon a horse's back,
He'd only come tumbling down;
And he wouldn't be able to walk about
Dressed up in a great long gown.

He'd feel at home on the stern of a craft,
So I'll call her his name, says I,
The *Moses Dunn*, and I'll have a chance
Of telling the folks for why.

The Salamanca Corpus: West Country Songs (1902)

Is he livin'? Iss. Thank God he is that.
I reckon such folks as he
May be fine and plentiful in heaven—
They're terrible scarce with we.

Us had been fishing away up North—
After the herrin', you know,
'Twas wisht poor speed, heavy hearts on deck
And an empty hold below;

[96]

'Twas when we was coming home again
That Moses happened one day
To put out his nets to have a try—
'Twas up there Sunderland way.

A drunken skipper come tearing by,
He saw that the nets was there;
He never so much as turned her head,
But laughed and began to swear;
Out with his knife and leaned over the side,
And hacked and hewed with a slash,
And every swish of the knife I knew
Was leaving a terrible gash.

Pounds worth of damage the fellow did,
Cursin' at every stroke;
And Moses sat there in his little boat
And never so much as spoke.

[97]

I would have gone for the fellow myself
If Moses had said the word;
But the chap went on with his devilry,
And Moses, he never stirred.

At last he was clear of the nets and gone;
I tell 'ee I could have cried
For to see they nets all spoiled like that—
Then Moses come alongside;
He coiled the nets in the stern of the boat,
So quiet as he could be,
Without so much as an angry word—
I never saw none like he.

'Twas two days after, by Sunderland pier—
'Twas blowin' a hurricane;
You could scarcely see across the place
For the beat of the spray and rain;

[98]

But Moses he got a wonderful eye,—
The minute that he come near
He saw a craft that had lost her hold
Would be dashed against the pier.

He turned to a fisherman at his side—
" That boat will be lost," says he.
Says the chap, " Can 'ee mind who cut your nets?

The Salamanca Corpus: West Country Songs (1902)

Well, that craft belongs to he;
'Twill serve him right, a fellow like that,
So free with his tongue and knife;
And beside, if you're going to save that boat,
You'll have for to risk your life."

Then Moses sprang in a little boat,
Pulled over the tumbling sea,
Right out to the craft, and jumped aboard—
'Twas something I tell 'ee to see

[99]

The way he brought her round in the wind—
The fellows gave him a cheer
When he laid her up in a sheltered place,
And come again to the pier.

The skipper was in the public house
When in come one of his men—
" Your craft, I tell 'ee, is lost 'pon the pier,
You'll never see her again."
And when he saw the craft lying there,
So safe as a craft could be,
The fellow turned round with a terrible oath,
" Who saved my boat? " says he.

" 'Twas Moses Dunn," says a man close by,
" That you served so cruel bad.
There isn't another living soul
But what would just have been glad

[100]

To see 'ee punished for doing en
Such a terrible bit of spite.
If your boat had been lost with all her gear,
'Twould have served 'ee perfectly right."

" He saved my boat, and I cut his nets! "

Then he come to Moses Dunn—
The face of the skipper was black as night,
But Moses' shone like the sun.

" Here, what do 'ee mean I should like to know?

They tell me you saved my craft."

Says Moses, " Iss, o' course I did,"

And he looked at the man and laughed.

" But here," says the man, " I can't make you out,

Do you know who I am? " says he,

" Do you know that I cut your nets to bits? "

Says Moses, " What's that to me?

[101]

He looked at Moses from head to foot,

" Well, I can't tell what to say—

I cut your nets and you saved my boat,

And I got no money to pay.

" What do 'ee call yourself, Moses Dunn?—

I tell 'ee I never knew

The Salamanca Corpus: West Country Songs (1902)

That there was living upon the earth
A man that could do like you."
"Call myself? Well—a Christian I s'pose."
" I don't think much of they,"
Says the chap, "but I'd be a Christian myself
If I could be one your way.

" Here, Moses Dunn," and his voice it choked,
" Will 'ee please to shake hands with me?
You've saved my boat, but I'll tell 'ee what
You've a-broke my heart," says he.

[102]

And now a kinder and better man
I don't think the world could show
Than the drunken fellow that cut the nets
That day two years ago.

So that's the story, and now you see
Why 'tis that I want to honour
The fellow that did so brave a thing,
And the name I'll put upon her.
The *Moses Dunn*: so I'll paint it large,
That's the very name, says I,
And when I can I'll take the chance
Of telling the folks for why.

[103]

-1-

Do 'ee know a place they call Michaelstow,
Well 'twas there—a bravish long time ago,
A Chrissymas day,
So I've heard say.
The Church congregation, tho' not much to boast
On other occasions, that day was a host.
Mostly women it was, and I'll tell 'ee for why,
To every widow that chanced to come by,
'Pon a Chrissymas day,
There was gived away

[104]

A new petticoat,
Never cost 'em a groat.
And every maid,
Young woman, or staid,
And every wife,
So sure as you're life,
Was a widow that day,
With a crape flyaway,
And bound for to go
To Michaelstow,
All on a Chrissymas day.

-2-

'Twas a wonderful show,
Through the rain or the snow,
How far was no matter,
From down to Kilsletter,

And up to Trewartha,
And down to Polbartha,

[105]

From Reskadinnick
And out to Menhinnick.
There was widow Tremaine,
And neighbour Polblane;
And old Mother Craze
And Nancy Polblaze
Was out of their bed;
And blind Betty was led,
And passles of folks that you made sure was dead,
'Twas so long since you'd see'd 'em, was going down the
street,
So sprightly as rabbits, so spry 'pon their feet.
From Kehelland, Rosscroggan, Goondurrow and Troon,
From Trejethan, Cojiggus, and down to Polrune,
There was sure to be one
Before service was done,
For 'twas up and go
To Michaelstow,
All on a Chrissymas day.

[106]

-3-

Now 'twas old Granny Grey,
So I've heard 'em say,
Though reg'lar to Chapel

Was strict Church to-day.
" 'Tis all one," says she,
"You know seemin' to me,
A petticoat will warm 'ee exactly the same,
If 'tis church or 'tis chapel, no matter the name.
And if they've a-got
To get rid of the lot,
We ought to be willing to give 'em a lift,
And show a good sperit by taking the gift.
So I feel I must go
To Michaelstow,
All on a Chrissymas day."

-4-

But if Granny went she was bound for to find
Somebody or other who would come in to mind

[107]

The cooking of dinner—'Twas sheep's head and ainge—
If that had been all, easy 'nough to arrange,
But there was three puddings, and says Granny Grey,
"Who'll keep the crock stirring while I am away?
Of course, without stirring, the puddin's will stick."
So the stirring was left to her grandson, boy Dick,
" Now, be a good boy, don't 'ee go for to play,
But keep the crock stirring while Granny's away.
And now I must go
To Michaelstow,
For this is Chrissymas day."

-5-

Now over the hearth there hung the black crock,
And poor little Dick stood tip-toe on a block,
And with the big rolling-pin kept it astir,
And meant to keep at it till Granny was there.
Half-an-hour had passed by the solemn old clock
And Dicky went on astirring the crock,

[108]

Till his arms they were aching,
His back was a-breaking.
" I must stop for a minute," says poor little Dick,
" I'll stir 'em again before they can stick."
And then from deep down in the valley below
Came the peal of the bells from Michaelstow,
All on a Chrissymas day.

-6-

Now Dick had no sooner stepped down on the floor
When up came Bill Quintrell who lived in next door.
" ' Ere come and play marbles, you're allowed to to-day,'
Says Billy. But Dick he says, " No, I can't stay."
" Aw, come for one game, twent take 'ee a minute."
" One game then," says Dick, making sure he would win it.
The first game Dick lost, " Well, come then, one more,"
Says Dick, and the games went on till 'twas four,
And then came a wrangle and almost a fight,
And they stopped a bit longer to make it all right,

[109]

While the noisy old jackdaws was goin' to and fro
About the grey tower of Michaelstow,
All on a Chrissymas day.

-7-

Then all of a sudden came back to Dick's mind
The thought of the dinner that he'd left behind.
And in at the door
And over the floor
And up on the block
He looked into the crock—
Aw! what was this ghastly old thing that he found!
That horrible head was going slowly around!
The stare of those sockets was awful to view!
The thing was alive! oh, what could he do!
Two puddings was gone!
And the thing hurried on,
While that pudding it fled
From the horrible head!

[110]

Poor Dick couldn't stay,
He must hurry away,
And down he must go
To Michaelstow,
All on a Chrissymas day.

-8-

Now the parson was old, and his teeth they was gone,

And his eyes they was dim, and he couldn't get on
In a hurry you see;
For what it might be
That he wrote he couldn't always make out,
And nobody else knew what 'twas about—
And the thoughts of they sinners
Was home with their dinners;
And with petticoats waitin'
'Twas no good his pratin';
And many was snoring,
While the wind it was roaring,

[111]

And a shower of rain
Beat each window-pane,
And here and there clung the patches of snow
On the grey church tower of Michaelstow,
All on a Chrissymas day.

-9-

Then all of a sudden came a burst and a bang
The great iron handle it shook with a clang.
The people woke up at the sound of the din
And frightened turned round: then Dicky came in.
He was all of a-tremble from head to feet,
His hands stretched out and his face like a sheet;
And poor little Dick, he looked round in dismay,
Till up in a corner he saw Granny Gray.
Then came a great cry,
" Aw Granny! Aw my!

The Salamanca Corpus: West Country Songs (1902)

*That head he have eat two puddens a'ready,
And there's he's going round so cruel and steady,*

[112]

*And his ghastly old eyes 'pon the other is set,
If you don't make haste home that one will be eat! "*

* * * * *

And that's all I know
Of Michaelstow,
All on a Chrissymas day.

[113]

THE LAMENT

Aw Mother o' Moses, what do 'ee think?

The Daughter of Pharaoh is here:

" I do want my awn little boy," says she—

" My little one so dear."

Aw Mother o' Moses, make haste, make haste,

They'll dress en up so gay,

And learn en all sorts o' wonderful things,

And make en a King one day.

Aw Mother o' Moses, where are 'ee to?

Here's such a grand coach and four.

And the Daughter of Pharaoh her awn self

Is knockin' to the door.

[114]

Aw Mother o' Moses, make haste, make haste,
Can 'ee hear what they do say?
" Bring en forth the beautiful little one,
So beautiful as day."

* * * * *

The Mother o' Moses sat by the ark—
She never once stirred nor spoke,
The cradle was empty, the child was gone—
And they said her heart was a-broke.

[115]

THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM

OF old the simple wise men saw a star:
One star amidst the host of shining worlds,
From which there came a subtle influence,
Mysterious, weird, compelling confidence;
Unspoken was its message, yet inwrought.
And all within them heard and heeded it,
As though it were the very voice of God.
And so from out the wilderness they went,
Ever unto the heavenly vision true;
Their faithful steps unfaltering day or night,
Undaunted by the perils of the way;
By threat, by loneliness, by mystery unawed;
Their guide and company the silent star.

[116]

At length the journey done, they reached a cave,

The Salamanca Corpus: West Country Songs (1902)

A lowly home, with softest light aglow,
An atmosphere of holy love and charm
And perfect peace, and in its furthest depth
The Mother holding at her breast the Babe.
Then sank the star: not as the stars are wont,
Not in the light it died, but lost in love,
Such love, all comprehensive, wonderful.

[117]

A HOMELY COUNSEL ON CARE

A WINDING hill, on either side the hedge
Crowned by the windshorn trees and bright with flowers;
A turn, and then the blue expanse of sea
On either hand, and broken line of coast;
A step, and there the haven lies below,
Shut in by rocks, where wild waves surge and foam,
A burst of thunder then a shower of spray.
A rough stone pier with groups of fishermen,
And in its shelter sway the anchored boats.
And nearer, children play about the beach.
The blue smoke of the clustered cottages

[118]

As a thin veil o'erspreads; while far and near
Fly the white gulls, or dip with mewing cry.

Within a garden by her cottage door
Sits an old mother, knitting busily—
Hair snowy white beneath a snow-white cap;

The Salamanca Corpus: West Country Songs (1902)

Eyes blue as the blue skies that arch the place;
A face all full of peace and sunny hopes.
A cheery song she sings, a moment stayed
To count the stitches and to set them right,
Then click the needles music to her song.
From her I learned this counsel upon care.

Don't you trouble trouble
Till trouble troubles you.
Don't you look for trouble;
Let trouble look for you.

[119]

Don't you borrow sorrow;
You'll surely have your share.
He who dreams of sorrow
Will find that sorrow's there.

Don't you hurry worry
By worrying lest it come.
To flurry is to worry,
T'will miss 'ee if you're mum.

If care you've got to carry
Wait till 'tis at the door,
For he who runs to meet it
Takes up the load before.

If minding will not mend it,
Then better not to mind;

The best thing is to end it—
Just leave it all behind.

[120]

Who feareth hath forsaken
The Heavenly Father's side;
What He hath undertaken
He surely will provide.

The very birds reprove thee
With all their happy song:
The very flowers teach thee
That fretting is a wrong.

" Cheer up," the sparrow chirpeth,
" Thy Father feedeth me;
Think how much more He careth,
Oh lonely child for thee."

" Fear not," the flowers whisper,
" Since thus He hath arrayed
The buttercup and daisy—
How can'st thou be afraid."

[121]

Then don't you trouble trouble
Till trouble troubles you:
You'll only double trouble,
And trouble others too.

[122]

A FISHERMAN'S SONG

WHAT do 'ee say, my little maid,
What do 'ee say?
Sing 'ee something—a bit of a song?
'Tis what I be doing all day long,
Li'll maid, li'll maid.

I do look up into the sky,
A stretch of grey,
With a break of blue just here and there—
God compass 'ee with all that's fair,
Li'll maid, li'll maid.

I do look out upon the earth,
A stretch of green;

[123]

Fields and flowers, hedgerows and trees,
Send her a message 'pon every breeze,
Li'll maid, li'll maid.

I do watch the gulls goin' by,
Flying ashore;
Tell her how much I do love her, the dear,
Tell her how much I do wish she was here,
Li'll maid, li'll maid.

The Salamanca Corpus: West Country Songs (1902)

Up sail now, the tide is a-turned;
The wind's gone west—
My love do go with the seas to 'ee,
My love do fly 'pon the breeze to 'ee,
Li'll maid, li'll maid,

[124]

THE HOPELESS DAWN

TWAS a Friday in August, the last of the month,
With a sunset so pretty as ever could be,
And a breeze just enough for to fill out the sails—
Can 'ee hear the raven a-croak in the tree?

My man and my son had a craft of their own—
The Beauty they called her, so proud of the name,
She was called after mother, so both of them said—
The wind is gone west and the sky is a flame!

My son he was wed, and he brought home his bride;
For father and me loved the maid as our own:
So sweet as her looks and so clever as good—
There's the cry of the gulls and the sea is a moan!

[125]

I had dreamed for three nights of a terrible storm,
And thought I stood out in the teeth of the gale,
And I woke with my watching in vain for the craft—
Can 'ee hear the waves break with a sob and a wail?

The Salamanca Corpus: West Country Songs (1902)

We went to the door for to look at the stars,
As she and me did before going up to bed;
They was all of a tremble as if in a fright—
That's a rocket they've fired 'pon Black Rock head!

Then all of a sudden came the burst of the storm;
Like thunder there broke the roar of the swell;
And the wind seemed to shake the house and the ground—
Can 'ee hear it, my dear—the toll of the bell?

I sat down on the chair, and she lay on the floor,
And she sobbed as she laid her head on my knee;
We waited and prayed—but 'twas waiting in vain—
There's the boom of a gun from a ship out at sea!

[126]

The fire was dead and the candle burnt out;
Day broke with a sea and a sky that was grey;
But for us two the sun has not risen since then—
A wreck on the point, did the fisherman say?

[127]

A REQUIEM

COME home, thou weary one, come home—
To guide thee through the gathering night,
From out the window shines the light,
Come home, thou weary one, come home.

Come in, thrice welcome one, come in—

The Salamanca Corpus: West Country Songs (1902)

For thee the door is left ajar,
For thee is neither bolt nor bar,
Come in, thrice welcome one, come in.

Lie down, thou weary one, lie down—
Thy work is done and thou art blest,
Thy work hath won thee worthy rest,
Lie down, thou weary one, lie down.

[128]

Sleep on, beloved one, sleep on—
The love that holdeth waneth not,
The love that watcheth changeth not,
Sleep on, beloved one, sleep on.

[129]

YET ABIDETH LOVE

WINTER has chased away
Blue skies and songs of May.
She, too, is old now,
White-haired, with wrinkled brow;
But those eyes, dear eyes,
Are aglow with their light,
As when the day dies
Shine stars of the night.

Never alone,
A hand holds her own

[130]

Strong hand whose clasp
Thrills with its grasp;
And her heart is aflame
As love whispers her name.

Contented she waits
Till the great Temple gates
Are flung wide,
Then forth from the night
Steps the bride,
Forth into the light.
And then shall one say,
" Who giveth this woman away
And Death shall upstand,
And set the hand of the bride in the bridegroom's
hand.

For love is of God: so shall love be
As God's own Self, immortally.

[131]

THE NEW YEAR

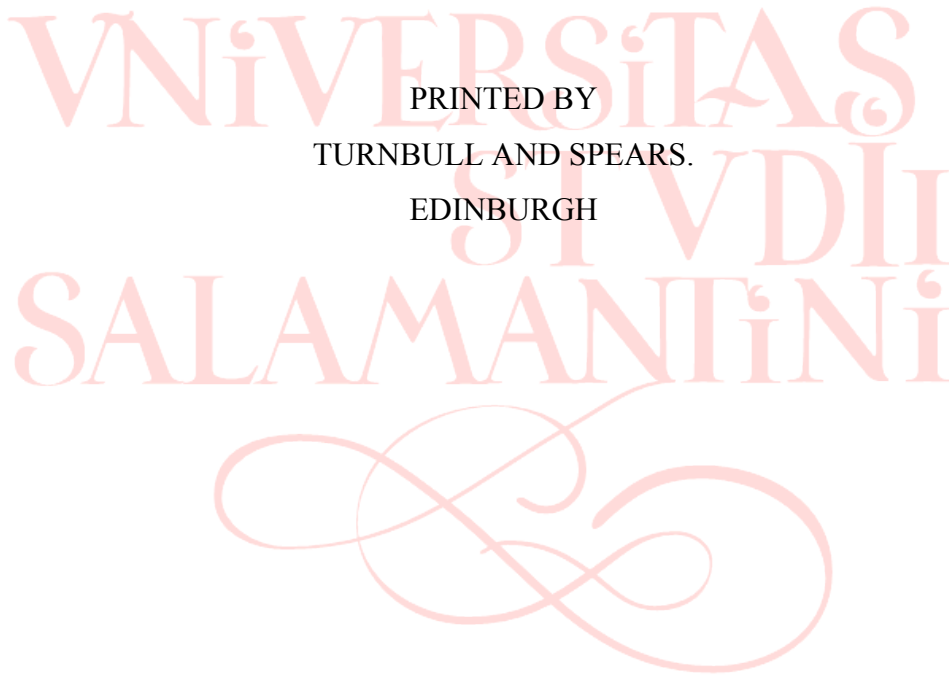
FEAR, facing the new year,
Saith—" What shall it bring? "
And is dumb,
Dreading the hidden ways.

FAITH, looking upward, saith,

The Salamanca Corpus: West Country Songs (1902)

" Good is in everything;
Let it come.
God ordereth the days."

THIS is our new year's bliss—
He is mine, and I am His,
All the ways, all the days
Lead us home.
Let us pray, let us praise.



PRINTED BY
TURNBULL AND SPEARS.
EDINBURGH