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The English and Scottish Popular Ballads

Harvard’s first professor of English, the American scholar Francis James Child (1825–96) had previously prepared a collection of English and Scottish ballads, published in 1857–9, before he embarked on producing this definitive critical edition. Organised into five volumes and published in ten parts between 1882 and 1898, the work includes the text and variants of 305 ballads, with Child’s detailed commentary and comparison with ballads and stories from other languages. Although he did not live to fully clarify his methods of selection and classification, modern scholars still refer to the ‘Child Ballads’ as an essential resource in the study of folk songs and stories in the English language. The work also contains a helpful glossary of archaic terms and a long list of sources. Volume 1, Part 1 originally appeared in 1882. This reissue from 1898 contains a biographical sketch of Child, along with ballads 1–28.

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Cambridge University Press  
978-1-108-07629-6 - The English and Scottish Popular Ballads: Volume 1 – Part 1  
Edited by Francis James Child  
Frontmatter  
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# The English and Scottish Popular Ballads

VOLUME 1 – PART 1

EDITED BY FRANCIS JAMES CHILD



CAMBRIDGE  
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THE ENGLISH AND SCOTTISH  
POPULAR BALLADS



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*F. J. Child*



THE  
ENGLISH AND SCOTTISH  
POPULAR BALLADS

EDITED BY  
FRANCIS JAMES CHILD



IN FIVE VOLUMES  
VOLUME I

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To  
*FREDERICK J. FURNIVALL, ESQ.*  
OF LONDON

*MY DEAR FURNIVALL:*  
*Without the Percy MS. no one would pretend to make a collection of the English Ballads, and but for you that manuscript would still, I think, be beyond reach of man, yet exposed to destructive chances. Through your exertions and personal sacrifices, directly, the famous and precious folio has been printed; and, indirectly, in consequence of the same, it has been transferred to a place where it is safe, and open to inspection. This is only one of a hundred reasons which I have for asking you to accept the dedication of this book from*  
*Your grateful friend and fellow-student,*  
*F. J. CHILD.*

*Cambridge, Mass., December 1, 1882.*

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## ADVERTISEMENT TO PART I

## NUMBERS 1-28

It was my wish not to begin to print The English and Scottish Popular Ballads until this unrestricted title should be justified by my having at command every valuable copy of every known ballad. A continuous effort to accomplish this object has been making for some nine or ten years, and many have joined in it. By correspondence, and by an extensive diffusion of printed circulars, I have tried to stimulate collection from tradition in Scotland, Canada, and the United States, and no becoming means has been left unemployed to obtain possession of unsunned treasures locked up in writing. The gathering from tradition has been, as ought perhaps to have been foreseen at this late day, meagre, and generally of indifferent quality. Materials in the hands of former editors have, in some cases, been lost beyond recovery, and very probably have lighted fires, like that large cantle of the Percy manuscript, *maxime deflendus*! Access to several manuscript collections has not yet been secured. But what is still lacking is believed to bear no great proportion to what is in hand, and may soon come in, besides: meanwhile, the uncertainties of the world forbid a longer delay to publish so much as has been got together.

Of hitherto unused materials, much the most important is a large collection of ballads made by Motherwell. For leave to take a copy of this I am deeply indebted to the present possessor, Mr Malcolm Colquhoun Thomson, of Glasgow, who even allowed the manuscript to be sent to London, and to be retained several months, for my accommodation. Mr J. Wylie Guild, of Glasgow, also permitted the use of a note-book of Motherwell's which supplements the great manuscript, and this my unwearied friend, Mr James Barclay Murdoch, to whose solicitation I owe both, himself transcribed with the most scrupulous accuracy. No other good office, asked or unasked, has Mr Murdoch spared.

Next in extent to the Motherwell collections come those of the late Mr Kinloch. These he freely placed at my disposal, and Mr William Macmath, of Edinburgh, made during Mr Kinloch's life an exquisite copy of the larger part of them, enriched with notes from Mr Kinloch's papers, and sent it to me across the water. After Mr Kinloch's death his collections were acquired by Harvard College Library, still through the agency of Mr Macmath, who has from the beginning rendered a highly valued assistance, not less by his suggestions and communications than by his zealous mediation.

No Scottish ballads are superior in kind to those recited in the last century by Mrs Brown, of Falkland. Of these there are, or were, three sets. One formerly owned by Robert Jamieson, the fullest of the three, was lent me, to keep as long as I required, by my honored friend the late Mr David Laing, who also secured for me copies of several ballads of Mrs Brown which are found in an Abbotsford manuscript, and gave me a transcript of the Glenriddell manuscript. The two others were written down for William Tytler and

Alexander Fraser Tytler respectively, the former of these consisting of a portion of the Jamieson texts revised. These having for some time been lost sight of, Miss Mary Fraser Tytler, with a graciousness which I have reason to believe hereditary in the name, made search for them, recovered the one which had been obtained by Lord Woodhouselee, and copied it for me with her own hand. The same lady furnished me with another collection which had been made by a member of the family.

For later transcriptions from Scottish tradition I am indebted to Mr J. F. Campbell of Islay, whose edition and rendering of the racy West Highland Tales is marked by the rarest appreciation of the popular genius; to Mrs A. F. Murison, formerly of Old Deer, who undertook a quest for ballads in her native place on my behalf; to Mr Alexander Laing, of Newburgh-upon-Tay; to Mr James Gibb, of Joppa, who has given me a full score; to Mr David Loudon, of Morham, Haddington; to the late Dr John Hill Burton and Miss Ella Burton; to Dr Thomas Davidson.

The late Mr Robert White, of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, allowed me to look through his collections in 1873, and subsequently made me a copy of such things as I needed, and his ready kindness has been continued by Mrs Andrews, his sister, and by Miss Andrews, his niece, who has taken a great deal of trouble on my account.

In the south of the mother-island my reliance has, of necessity, been chiefly upon libraries. The British Museum possesses, besides early copies of some of the older ballads, the Percy MS., Herd's MSS and Buchan's, and the Roxburgh broadsides. The library of the University of Cambridge affords one or two things of first-rate importance, and for these I am beholden to the accomplished librarian, Mr Henry Bradshaw, and to Professor Skeat. I have also to thank the Rev. F. Gunton, Dean, and the other authorities of Magdalen College, Cambridge, for permitting collations of Pepys ballads, most obligingly made for me by Mr Arthur S. B. Miller. Many things were required from the Bodleian library, and these were looked out for me, and scrupulously copied or collated, by Mr George Parker.

Texts of traditional ballads have been communicated to me in America by Mr W. W. Newell, of New York, who is soon to give us an interesting collection of Children's Games traditional in America; by Dr Huntington, Bishop of Central New York; Mr G. C. Mahon, of Ann Arbor, Michigan; Miss Margaret Reburn, of New Albion, Iowa; Miss Perine, of Baltimore; Mrs Augustus Lowell, Mrs L. F. Wesselhoeft, Mrs. Edward Atkinson, of Boston; Mrs Cushing, of Cambridge; Miss Ellen Marston, of New Bedford; Mrs Moncrieff, of London, Ontario.

Acknowledgments not well despatched in a phrase are due to many others who have promoted my objects: to Mr Furnivall, for doing for me everything which I could have done for myself had I lived in England; to that master of old songs and music, Mr William Chappell, very specially; to Mr J. Payne Collier; Mr Norval Clyne, of Aberdeen; Mr Alexander Young, of Glasgow; Mr Arthur Laurenson, of Lerwick, Shetland; Mr J. Burrell Curtis, of Edinburgh; Dr Vigfusson, of Oxford; Professor Edward Arber, of Birmingham; the Rev. J. Percival, Mr Francis Fry, Mr J. F. Nicholls, of Bristol; Professor George Stephens, of Copenhagen; Mr R. Bergström, of the Royal Library, Stockholm; Mr W. R. S. Ralston, Mr William Henry Husk, Miss Lucy Toulmin Smith, Mr A. F. Murison, of London; Professor Sophocles; Mr W. G. Medlicott, of Longmeadow; to Mr M. Heilprin, of New York, Mme de Maltchycé, of Boston, and Rabbi Dr Cohn, for indispensable translations from Polish and Hungarian; to Mr James Russell Lowell, Minister of the United States at London; to Professor Charles Eliot Norton, for such "pains and benefits" as I could ask only of a life-long friend.

ADVERTISEMENT TO PART I

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In the editing of these ballads I have closely followed the plan of Grundtvig's Old Popular Ballads of Denmark, a work which will be prized highest by those who have used it most, and which leaves nothing to be desired but its completion. The author is as much at home in English as in Danish tradition, and whenever he takes up a ballad which is common to both nations nothing remains to be done but to supply what has come to light since the time of his writing. But besides the assistance which I have derived from his book, I have enjoyed the advantage of Professor Grundtvig's criticism and advice, and have received from him unprinted Danish texts, and other aid in many ways.

Such further explanations as to the plan and conduct of the work as may be desirable can be more conveniently given by and by. I may say here that textual points which may seem to be neglected will be considered in an intended Glossary, with which will be given a full account of Sources, and such indexes of Titles and Matters as will make it easy to find everything that the book may contain.

With renewed thanks to all helpers, and helpers' helpers, I would invoke the largest coöperation for the correction of errors and the supplying of deficiencies. To forestall a misunderstanding which has often occurred, I beg to say that every traditional version of a popular ballad is desired, no matter how many texts of the same may have been printed already.

F. J. CHILD.

[DECEMBER, 1882.]

ADVERTISEMENT TO PART II

NUMBERS 29–53

I HAVE again to express my obligations and my gratitude to many who have aided in the collecting and editing of these Ballads.

To Sir Hugh Hume Campbell, for the use of two considerable manuscript volumes of Scottish Ballads.

To Mr Allardyce, of Edinburgh, for a copy of the Skene Ballads, and for a generous permission to print such as I required, in advance of a possible publication on his part.

To Mr Mansfield, of Edinburgh, for the use of the Pitcairn manuscripts.

To Mrs Robertson, for the use of Note-Books of the late Dr Joseph Robertson, and to Mr Murdoch, of Glasgow, Mr Lugton, of Kelso, Mrs Alexander Forbes, of Edinburgh, and Messrs G. L. Kittredge and G. M. Richardson, former students of Harvard College, for various communications.

To Dr Reinhold Köhler's unrivalled knowledge of popular fiction, and his equal liberality, I am indebted for valuable notes, which will be found in the Additions at the end of this volume.

The help of my friend Dr Theodor Vetter has enabled me to explore portions of the Slavic ballad-field which otherwise must have been neglected.

Professors D. Silvan Evans, John Rhys, Paul Meyer, and T. Frederick Crane have lent me a ready assistance in literary emergencies.

The interest and coöperation of Mr Furnivall and Mr Macmath have been continued to me without stint or weariness.

It is impossible, while recalling and acknowledging acts of courtesy, good will, and friendship, not to allude, with one word of deep personal grief, to the irreparable loss which all who are concerned with the study of popular tradition have experienced in the death of Svend Grundtvig.

F. J. C.

JUNE, 1884.



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FRANCIS JAMES CHILD

FRANCIS JAMES CHILD was born in Boston on the first day of February, 1825. He was the third in a family of eight children. His father was a sailmaker, "one of that class of intelligent and independent mechanics," writes Professor Norton, "which has had a large share in determining the character of our democratic community, as of old the same class had in Athens and in Florence." The boy attended the public schools, as a matter of course; and, his parents having no thought of sending him to college, he went, in due time, not to the Latin School, but to the English High School of his native town. At that time the head master of the Boston Latin School was Mr Epes Sargent Dixwell, who is still living, at a ripe old age, one of the most respected citizens of Cambridge. Mr Dixwell had a keen eye for scholarly possibilities in boys, and, falling in with young Francis Child, was immediately struck with his extraordinary mental ability. At his suggestion, the boy was transferred to the Latin School, where he entered upon the regular preparation for admission to Harvard College. His delight in his new studies was unbounded, and the freshness of it never faded from his memory. "He speedily caught up with the boys who had already made considerable progress in Greek and Latin, and soon took the first place here, as he had done in the schools which he had previously attended." Mr Dixwell strongly advised his father to permit him to continue his studies, and made arrangements by which his college expenses should be provided for. The money Professor Child repaid, with interest, as soon as his means allowed. His gratitude to Mr. Dixwell and the friendship between them lasted through his life.

In 1842 Mr Child entered Harvard College. The intellectual condition of the college at that time and the undergraduate career of Mr Child have been admirably described by his classmate and lifelong friend, Professor Norton, in a passage which must be quoted in full<sup>1</sup>:—

"Harvard was then still a comparatively small institution, with no claims to the title of University; but she had her traditions of good learning as an inspiration for the studious youth, and still better she had teachers who were examples of devotion to intellectual pursuits, and who cared for those ends the attainment of which makes life worth living. Josiah Quincy was approaching the close of his term of service as President of the College, and stood before the eyes of the students as the type of a great public servant, embodying the spirit of patriotism, of integrity, and of fidelity in the discharge of whatever duty he might be called to perform. Among the Professors were Walker, Felton, Peirce, Channing, Beck, and Longfellow, men of utmost variety of temperament, but each an instructor who secured the respect no less than the gratitude of his pupils.

"The class to which Child belonged numbered hardly over sixty. The prescribed course of study which was then the rule brought all the members of the class together in recitations and lectures, and every man soon knew the relative standing of each of his fellows. Child at once took the lead and kept it. His excellence was not confined to any

<sup>1</sup> C. E. Norton, 'Francis James Child,' in the Proceedings of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, XXXII, 334, 335; reprinted, with some additions, in the Harvard Graduates' Magazine, VI, 161-169 (Boston, 1897). I have used this biographical sketch freely in my brief account of Professor Child's boyhood.

one special branch of study; he was equally superior in all. He was the best in the classics, he was Peirce's favorite in mathematics, he wrote better English than any of his classmates. His intellectual interests were wider than theirs, he was a great reader, and his tastes in reading were mature. He read for amusement as well as for learning, but he did not waste his time or dissipate his mental energies over worthless or pernicious books. He made good use of the social no less than of the intellectual opportunities which college life affords, and became as great a favorite with his classmates as he had been with his schoolfellows.

"The close of his college course was marked by the exceptional distinction of his being chosen by his classmates as their Orator, and by his having the first part at Commencement as the highest scholar in the class. His class oration was remarkable for its maturity of thought and of style. Its manliness of spirit, its simple directness of presentation of the true objects of life, and of the motives by which the educated man, whatever might be his chosen career, should be inspired, together with the serious and eloquent earnestness with which it was delivered, gave to his discourse peculiar impressiveness and effect."

Graduating with the degree of Bachelor of Arts in 1846, Mr Child immediately entered the service of the college, in which he continued till the day of his death. From 1846 to 1848 he was tutor in mathematics. In 1848 he was transferred, at his own request, to a tutorship in history and political economy, to which were annexed certain duties of instruction in English. In 1849 he obtained leave of absence for travel and study in Europe. He remained in Europe for about two years, returning, late in 1851, to receive an appointment to the Boylston Professorship of Rhetoric and Oratory, then falling vacant by the resignation of Professor Edward T. Channing.

The tutorships which Mr Child had held were not entirely in accordance with his tastes, which had always led him in the direction of literary and linguistic study. The

faculty of the college was small, however, and it was not always possible to assign an instructor to the department that would have been most to his mind. But the governors of the institution were glad to secure the services of so promising a scholar; and Mr Child, whose preference for an academic career was decided, had felt that it was wise to accept such positions as the college could offer, leaving exacter adjustments to time and circumstances. Meantime he had devoted his whole leisure to the pursuit of his favorite studies. His first fruits were a volume entitled *Four Old Plays*,<sup>1</sup> published in 1848, when he was but twenty-three years old. This was a remarkably competent performance. The texts are edited with judgment and accuracy; the introduction shows literary discrimination as well as sound scholarship, and the glossary and brief notes are thoroughly good. There are no signs of immaturity in the book, and it is still valued by students of our early drama.

The leave of absence granted to Mr Child in 1849 came at a most favorable moment. His health had suffered from close application to work, and a change of climate had been advised by his physicians. His intellectual and scholarly development, too, had reached that stage in which foreign study and travel were certain to be most stimulating and fruitful. He was amazingly apt, and two years of opportunity meant much more to him than to most men. He returned to take up the duties of his new office a trained and mature scholar, at home in the best methods and traditions of German universities, yet with no sacrifice of his individuality and intellectual independence.

While in Germany Mr Child studied at Berlin and Göttingen, giving his time mostly

<sup>1</sup> *Four Old Plays* | *Three Interludes*: *Thersytes* Jack Jugler | and *Heywoods Pardoner and Frere*: | and *Jocasta a Tragedy* | by Gascoigne and | Kinwelmarsh | with an | Introduction and Notes | Cambridge | George Nichols | MDCCCXLVIII. The editor's name does not appear in the title-page, but the Preface is signed with the initials F. J. C. *Jocasta* was printed from Steevens's copy of the first edition of Gascoigne's *Posies*, which had come into Mr Child's possession.

to Germanic philology, then cultivated with extraordinary vigor and success. The hour was singularly propitious. In the three or four decades preceding Mr Child's residence in Europe, Germanic philology (in the wider sense) had passed from the stage of "romantic" dilettantism into the condition of a well-organized and strenuous scientific discipline, but the freshness and vivacity of the first half of the century had not vanished. Scholars, however severe, looked through the form and strove to comprehend the spirit. The ideals of erudition and of a large humanity were not even suspected of incompatibility. The imagination was still invoked as the guide and illuminator of learning. The bond between antiquity and mediævalism and between the Middle Ages and our own century was never lost from sight. It was certainly fortunate for American scholarship that at precisely this juncture a young man of Mr Child's ardent love of learning, strong individuality, and broad intellectual sympathies was brought into close contact with all that was most quickening in German university life. He attended lectures on classical antiquity and philosophy, as well as on Germanic philology; but it was not so much by direct instruction that he profited as by the inspiration which he derived from the spirit and the ideals of foreign scholars, young and old. His own greatest contribution to learning, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, may even, in a very real sense, be regarded as the fruit of these years in Germany. Throughout his life he kept a picture of William and James Grimm on the mantel over his study fireplace.

Mr Child wrote no "dissertation," and returned to Cambridge without having attempted to secure a doctor's degree. Never eager for such distinctions, he had been unwilling to subject himself to the restrictions on his plan of study which candidacy for the doctorate would have imposed. Three years after, however, in 1854, he was surprised and gratified to receive from the University of Göttingen the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, accompanied by a special tribute of respect

from that institution. Subsequently he received the degree of LL. D. from Harvard (in 1884) and that of L. H. D. from Columbia (in 1887); but the Göttingen Ph. D., coming as it did at the outset of his career, was in a high degree auspicious.

The Boylston Professorship of Rhetoric and Oratory, to which, as has been already mentioned, Mr Child succeeded on his return to America toward the end of 1851, was no sinecure. In addition to academic instruction of the ordinary kind, the duties of the chair included the superintendence and criticism of a great quantity of written work, in the nature of essays and set compositions prepared by students of all degrees of ability. For twenty-five years Mr Child performed these duties with characteristic punctuality and devotion, though with increasing distaste for the drudgery which they involved. Meantime a great change had come over Harvard: it had developed from a provincial college into a national seminary of learning, and the introduction of the "elective system" — corresponding to the "Lernfreiheit" of Germany — had enabled it to become a university in the proper sense of the word. One result of the important reform just referred to was the establishment of a Professorship of English, entirely distinct from the old chair of Rhetoric. This took place on May 8, 1876, and on the 20th of the next month Mr Child was transferred to the new professorship. His duties as an instructor were now thoroughly congenial, and he continued to perform them with unabated vigor to the end. In the onerous details of administrative and advisory work, inseparable, according to our exacting American system, from the position of a university professor, he was equally faithful and untiring. For thirty years he acted as secretary of the Library Council, and in all that time he was absent from but three meetings. As chairman of the Department of English and of the Division of Modern Languages, and as a member of many important committees, he was ever prodigal of time and effort. How steadily he attended to the regular duties of the class-room, his pupils, for fifty years, are

the best witnesses. They, too, will best understand the satisfaction he felt that, in the fiftieth year of his teaching, he was not absent from a single lecture. No man was ever less a formalist; yet the most formal of natures could not, in the strictest observance of punctilio, have surpassed the regularity with which he discharged, as it were spontaneously, the multifarious duties of his position.

Throughout his service as professor of rhetoric, Mr Child, hampered though he was by the requirements of his laborious office, had pursued with unquenchable ardor the study of the English language and literature, particularly in their older forms, and in these subjects he had become an authority of the first rank long before the establishment of the English chair enabled him to arrange his university teaching in accordance with his tastes. Soon after he returned from Germany he undertook the general editorial supervision of a series of the 'British Poets,' published at Boston in 1853 and several following years, and extending to some hundred and fifty volumes. Out of this grew, in one way or another, his three most important contributions to learning: his edition of Spenser, his *Observations on the Language of Chaucer and Gower*, and his *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*.

Mr Child's Spenser appeared in 1855.<sup>1</sup> Originally intended, as he says in the preface, as little more than a reprint of the edition published in 1839 under the superintendence of Mr George Hillard, the book grew upon his hands until it had become something quite different from its predecessor. Securing access to old copies of most of Spenser's poems, Mr Child subjected the text to a careful revision, which left little to be done in this regard. His *Life of Spenser* was far better than any previous biography, and his notes, though brief, were marked by a philological exactness to which former editions could not pretend. Altogether, though meant for the

general reader and therefore sparingly annotated, Mr Child's volumes remain, after forty years, the best edition of Spenser in existence.

The plan of the 'British Poets' originally contemplated an edition of Chaucer, which Mr Child was to prepare. Becoming convinced, however, that the time was not ripe for such a work, he abandoned this project, and to the end of his life he never found time to resume it. Thomas Wright's print of the *Canterbury Tales* from the Harleian MS. 7334 had, however, put into his hands a reasonably faithful reproduction of an old text, and he turned his attention to a minute study of Chaucer's language. The outcome was the publication, in the *Memoirs of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* for 1863, of the great treatise to which Mr Child gave the modest title of *Observations on the Language of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales*. It is difficult, at the present day, to imagine the state of Chaucer philology at the moment when this paper appeared. Scarcely anything, we may say, was known of Chaucer's grammar and metre in a sure and scientific way. Indeed, the difficulties to be solved had not even been clearly formulated. Further, the accessible mass of evidence on Anglo-Saxon and Middle English was, in comparison with the stores now at the easy command of every tyro, almost insignificant. Yet, in this brief treatise, Mr Child not only defined the problems, but provided for most of them a solution which the researches of younger scholars have only served to substantiate. He also gave a perfect model of the method proper to such inquiries — a method simple, laborious, and exact. The *Observations* were subsequently rearranged and condensed, with Professor Child's permission, by Mr A. J. Ellis for his work *On Early English Pronunciation*; but only those who have studied them in their original form can appreciate their merit fully. "It ought never to be forgotten," writes Pro-

<sup>1</sup> The *Poetical Works of Edmund Spenser*. The text carefully revised, and illustrated with notes, original and selected, by Francis J. Child. Boston: Little, Brown, and Company. 1855. 5 vols.

<sup>2</sup> The *Canterbury Tales of Geoffrey Chaucer*. A new text, with illustrative notes. Edited by Thomas Wright. London, printed for the Percy Society, 1847-51. 3 vols.