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Folklife West Journal, N° 7, Jan. 2012



Ballad Printers of Herefordshire a series of articles by Roy Palmer ❄ 2. - Ledbury ❄

Battle between Spring & Langan

Until the seventy-third round these champions kept the field.

Reform Song

Our Tory foes will ne'er turn back.

Country Statute

*So now stand up for wages, lads,
Before that you do hire.*

*There's rolling Gin,
the hemp will spin,
And Sal will mind the dairy.*

*And John will kiss the mistress
When the master he is weary*



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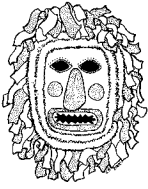
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- ❖ UPDATING WHERE APPROPRIATE, AND AS RESOURCES ALLOW, IN DIFFERENT MEDIA
- ❖ THIS INCLUDES IN PARTICULAR, BUT IS NOT LIMITED TO, FOLKLIFE IN AND AROUND WORCESTERSHIRE



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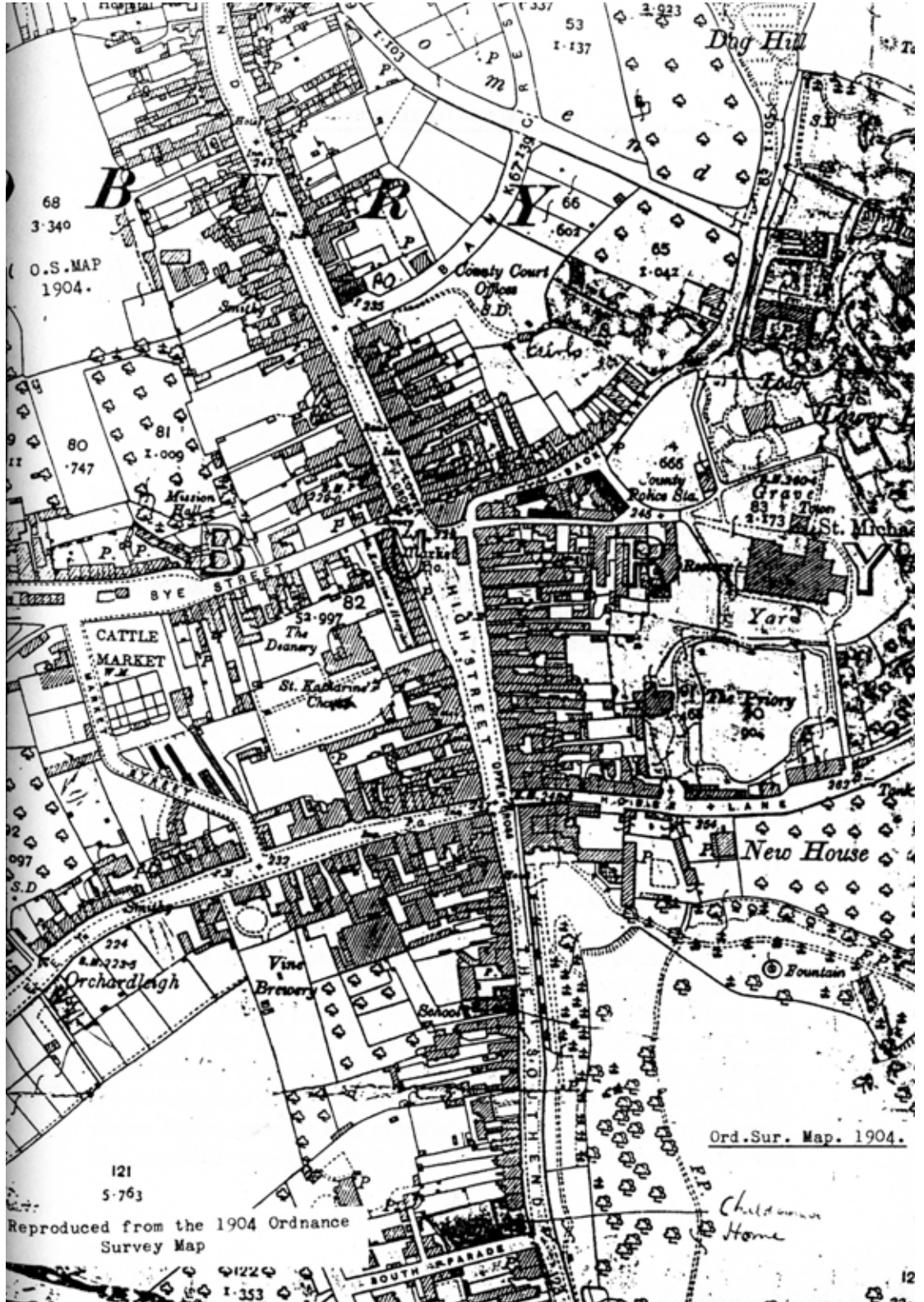
JOURNAL COVER 'LED'BURY', AND 1904 MAP BELOW, FROM ROY PALMER

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The *Journal* is now included in our *Folklife West* magazine, whilst continuing to be available separately.

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Reproduced from the 1904 Ordnance Survey Map



Ballad Printers of Herefordshire



a series of articles by Roy Palmer



© Roy Palmer

Conventions and Abbreviations

Printers' trading dates are drawn from the **British Book Trades Index** (www.bbti.bham.ac.uk), with additional information from census records (kindly provided by **Keith Chandler**) and from local sources. In the lists of material, ballad and tune titles are in *italic*; first lines (bracketed), in Roman. Dates of publication are shown in round brackets.

Abbreviations:

BO: Bodleian Library, of which the ballad collection can be consulted and also viewed online at www.bodley.ox.ac.uk/ballads

MA: Madden Collection, Cambridge University Library; microfilm copy in the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library.

* : attributed to this printer.

Part 2: Ledbury

JOURNAL COVER 'LEDBURY', AND 1904 MAP PREVIOUS PAGE, FROM ROY PALMER

James Gibbs

Gibbs, who is sometimes confused with James Gibbs, junior, seems to have been recorded as a letter press printer and auctioneer at Ledbury only in 1821. James Gibbs, junior, who was presumably his son, might well have taken over from him in about 1827 after completing his apprenticeship (see below). Only a handful of ballads with the laconic imprint of 'J. Gibbs, Printer, Ledbury' have survived. One of them chronicles the prize fight which took place at the Pitchcroft in Worcester in January, 1824. The winner, Tom Spring, was a local man, born Thomas Winter at Fownhope in 1795. The Gibbs ballad is completely different from others on the event issued as far afield as London and Gateshead.

Battle between Spring & Langan

Come all you gallant milling blades, wherever you may be,
Attend awhile to what I've penn'd, and listen unto me;
'Tis of two gallant hearts of oak, the truth I will unfold,
Fought for Six Hundred Sovereigns in bright and shining gold.

Chorus

*In bumpers fine, of sparkling wine, we'll drink to gallant Spring,
The pride of British science, and the hero of the ring.*

The one a brave Hibernian youth, young Langan was his name,
The other was the champion SPRING, of courage and great fame;
On January the seventh my boys, the truth I will declare,
To the Race Course in Worcestershire these Champions did repair.

'Twas near the hour of one o'clock they entered the ring,
The bets in all directions flew in favour of bold Spring;
The Irish blades their bets did make in favour of young Langan,
But Spring like lightning plac'd his hits upon the Irishman.

O when the fighting did commence, their courage for to try,
Quick as lightning Spring soon plac'd a hit on Langan's eye,
The Irish bloods were all surpris'd to see such science rare,
And wish'd within their heads, my boys, they never had come there.

From the 9th unto the 11th round to Spring was added fame,
The Irish coves they one and all were sickening at the game;
And when the 12th was ended no marks on Spring were found,
But at the closing of the same they both came to the ground.

The 13th and the 14th round were well maintain'd by Spring,
Which plainly prov'd to all around, his title to the ring;
Though Langan he fought manfully, his friends lost all their hopes,
And in the 17th round, my boys, they both fell o'er the ropes.

Until the seventy-third round these champions kept the field,
When Spring severely punish'd him, and forced him to yield;
The Irish coves cry'd one and all, We surely are undone,
And so with empty purses, boys, they all returned home.

So now the fight is ended, and the contest is all o'er, -
The knowing ones of Paddy's land their loss they do deplore;
If they again should make a match all for the British ring,
Their Langan great, in his retreat, will always find a Spring.

J. GIBBS, PRINTER, LEDBURY

Battle between Spring and Langan (Come all you gallant rolling blades) [1824] **BO**

Call again Tomorrow (I'll to court among all the nobility) / *The Beauty* (O when I was a little boy) **BO**

Little Sally (Come buy, who'll buy, come buy) **BO**

The Much-admired Carol, called The Black Decree (Let Christians all with one accord) **BO**

Vanity Fair! Or A Rough Draught of London, by a Country Bumkin (What's a poor simple clown) **BO**

James Gibbs, Junior

This Gibbs was a bookseller, printer, stationer and auctioneer at Home End Street or Homend Street (now called simply the Homend). His ballad imprint invariably identifies him as James Gibbs, Junior. He must be the James Gibbs, printer, aged 35, listed in the 1841 census. He would therefore have been aged 21, and out of his apprenticeship, in 1827, and thus able to succeed his father. In 1851 he appears at 102 Homend Street as James Gibbs, Junior, printer, bookseller and stationer, born in Ledbury. His oldest son was also a James Gibbs, aged 11; and a fifteen year-old apprentice printer, John Davis, shared the family home. James Gibbs, Junior, died in 1859. Thirty-eight of his ballad sheets survive, of which a sequence running from 13 to 32 (but lacking 28) carry stock numbers.

Gibbs favours the standard ballad corpus, with 26 of the 78 individual titles listed here known to be from the oral tradition. *Ledbury Ale* might seem to be a local production but in fact it simply replaces throughout the word 'English' with 'Ledbury' in a ballad circulating elsewhere in the 1820s and '30s under the title of *English Ale* or *A Bumper of English Ale*. However, *The Bosbury Carol* (also printed in Ledbury by Ward: see below) does appear to be unique to the area. Two further items issued by Gibbs, which I have not seen elsewhere, concern national rather than local matters. William IV, who became king in June 1830, was welcomed with a punning *Song, by a Member of a Cricket Club*, which concludes:

There's then a health to good King William,
Long may he live to grace the Crown;
Let us a flowing *Crown* bowl fill him,
And in it all but loyalty drown.

If foes or traitors dare approach,
May William prove a *striker* stout;
And, ere the knaves can *score a notch*,
Bowl every rascal of them out.

William IV's personal views were opposed to the reform of the franchise but he grudgingly accepted the act of 1832 which reduced the power of the crown and the influence of the aristocracy and gave parliamentary representation for the first time to industrial towns like Birmingham and Manchester. The event was celebrated by Gibbs in:

Reform Song

Now, my friends, we've gain'd our will,
 Since we've pass'd the Reform Bill;
 Then let us to our text stand true,
 And ne'er desert our loyal Blue:
 And with our glorious Union Jack,
 Our Tory foes will ne'er turn back.
O the Bill, the Reform Bill
We've gain'd, and nothing but the Bill.

In times like these let's all agree,
 And hope for better days to see; -
 How proud to read in after story,
 The People sav'd Old England's glory!
 We fought a battle, gain'd the day,
 And hang'd be he that dares say nay.
O the Bill, &c.

But let us hope the Union fame
 Our foes will ne'er have cause to blame;
 Then with Reform wine fill your glasses,
 And drink to your friends, and wives, and lasses;
 And may the babe that's yet unborn,
 Applaud the day we gain'd Reform!
O the Bill, &c.

Then since we have our object won,
 Let's proceed to mirth and fun;
 To have REFORM a standing toast:
 And may that toast be pledg'd in peace,
 Till Kings and People all shall cease!
O the Bill, &c.

PRINTED BY J. GIBBS, JUN. [with *Rule Britannia*]

All titles MA, unless otherwise stated.

All round my Hat (All round my hat I wears a green willow) / *Dame Durden* (Dame Durden kept five serving girls)
All's Well (Deserted by the waning moon) / *Canadian Boat Song* (Faintly as tolls the evening chime) / *My Native Land Adieu* (Adieu, my native land, adieu)
Answer to The Gallant Huzzar (It was of a beautiful damsel) / *Dashing Sergeant* (If I had a beau for a soldier would go)
 **Answer to the Inniskillen Dragoon* (One fine summer's morning, all in the month of June) / *William and Harriet* (It's of a rich gentleman near London did dwell)
The Awkward Recruit (Behold poor Will, just come from drill) / *The Young Rose* (This innocent flower I receiv'd from my love)
Betsy Baker (From noise and bustle far away) [c. 1829] / *Trio* (Hark! the bonny Christ-church bells), no. 13
Black-ey'd Susan (All in the Downs the fleet was moor'd) / *The Bold Dragoon* (There was an ancient fair, O she lov'd a neat young man), no. 30
The Bosbury Carol (When we were all, through Adam's fall) Hereford City Library, Davies Collection, vol. 1, fol. 285
The Devil and Little Mike (It was on one dusky eve) / *Cupid is a little Devil* (Come here, behold each female face), no. 25
The Good Old Days of Adam & Eve (I sing, I sing of good times older) / *When Arthur* (When Arthur first at court began), no. 15. The sheet is headed *Popular and Select Songs*
Green Hills of Tyrol (Green hills of Tyrol, again I see) / *The Cabin-Boy* (The sea was rough, the clouds were dark) / *Time is on the Wing* (Strew, strew, with roses)
The Happy Couple (A nobleman liv'd in a village of late) / *Wine, Rosy Wine* (Wine, wine, rich and rosy wine) / *Care flies the Brain* (Care flies the brain when you are near)
Heaving the Lead (For England when with fav-ring gale) / *Banks of Allan Water* (On the banks of Allan Water), no. 23
Here's a Health (Here's a health to all good lasses) / *Glorious Apollo* (Glorious Apollo from on high behold us) / *Pray Goody* (Pray Goody, please to moderate the rancour of your tongue) / *Away with Melancholy* (Away with melancholy)
High-mettled Racer (See the course throug'd with gazers, the sports are begun) / *Home! Sweet Home!* ('Midst pleasures and palaces, though we may roam) [1823], no. 18
Holes in Stockings (In London town, as I heard say) / *The Maid of Llangollan* [sic] (Tho' lowly my cot and poor my estate)
How to Nail 'em (My merry, gentle people, pray) / *The Woodpecker* (I knew by the smoke that so gracefully curl'd), no. 32
Hurrah for the Bonnets of Blue (Here's a health to them that's awa') / *Hurrah for an Irish Stew* (Hurrah! for an Irish stew), no. 21
I'd be a Butterfly (I'd be a butterfly, born in a bower) / *The King! God Bless Him* (A goblet of Burgundy fill, fill for me), no. 22
Jack of All Trades (I'm parish-clerk and sexton here) / *Song, by a Member of a Cricket Club* (Come, Fielders, round the table pop) [1830]
Jim Crow (I came from ole Kentucky) / *The Flower Girl's Song* (Come, buy my flowers! come, buy)
Joe the Marine (Poor Joe, the marine, was at Portsmouth well known) / *Light Cigar* (Now the day is over), no. 20
L - A - W! (Come list to me a minute) / *The Woodlands* (How sweet is the woodlands, with fleet hound and horn), no. 16
Life's like a Ship (Life's like a ship in constant motion) / *With my Jug in one Hand* (With my jug in one hand, and my pipe in the other), no. 26
O Nanny (O Nanny, wilt thou gang with me) / *Answer to "O Nanny"*. Yes, William (Yes, William, I will gang with thee)
The Old English Gentleman (I'll sing you a good old song, made by a good old pate) / *The Road! A Parody on 'The Sea'* (The Road, the Road, the Turnpike Road!), no. 27
Polly Hopkins and Mr Tomkins (Oh, pretty, pretty Polly Hopkins) / *Ledbury Ale* (D'ye mind me? I once was a sailor)
The Poor Fisherman's Boy (It was down in the lowlands a poor boy did wander) / *Bonny Moon* (As I went to my cot at the close of the day)
Reform Song (Now, my friends, we've gain'd our will) [1832] / *Rule Britannia* (When Britain first, at Heav'n's command)
Ri fum to fum (If you will list, I vow, sirs) / *Pity and Protect the Slave* (Sons of freedom, hear my story), no. 17
The Rose-bud of Summer (When the rose-bud of summer its beauties bestowing) / *The London Rover* (I took my little horse, and from London town I came)
The Sailor's Tear (He leap'd into the boat) / *The Exciseman Outwitted* (To a village that skirted the sea), no. 29
Scots wha ha (Scots, wha ha wi' Wallace bled) / *Oh! No, we never mention her* (Oh! no we never mention her)
The Sea (The sea! the sea! the open sea!) / *Oyster Girl* (Many a knight and lady gay), no. 19
The Soldier's Tear (Upon the hill he turn'd) / *Alice Gray* (She's all my fancy painted her)
The Wandering Boy (When the winter winds whistle along the wild moor) / *Robin Adair* (What's this dull town to me?), no. 14
The West Countryman (There was an old chap in the West Country) / *Auld Lang Syne* (Should auld acquaintance be forgot)
Young Sailor Bold (His cheeks they appear'd like two roses) / *Merry Swiss Boy* (Come, arouse thee, arouse thee, my brave Swiss boy), no. 24



❖ **Ballad Printers of Herefordshire** ❖
 ❖ **a series of articles by Roy Palmer** ❖
2: Ledbury *continued*

Thomas Ward

Ward registered his press in the High Street in 1825. He must have died or moved away from Ledbury by 1841, since he does not appear in that year's census. In between, in addition to printing, he owned and ran a 'circulating' library (in fact, a private library which lent books out at a small charge), sold newspapers, and acted as an insurance agent. He appears to have been Herefordshire's most prolific ballad printer, with over fifty sheets extant. In total, these carry over eighty separate items, some of which run to more than one edition. For example, *The Seeds of Love* and *Two Wenches at Once* each occur three times. Rather more than half Ward's titles (not necessarily in his versions, of course) are known to have circulated orally, with classics like *The Blind Beggar's Daughter*, *Lord Marlborough* and *The Golden Glove*, not to mention *The Wild Rover*. Like Gibbs, Ward has little material of obvious local origin. Again like Gibbs, he does print *The Bosbury Carol*, of which the first of eighteen eight-line verses runs:

When we were all through Adam's fall,
 Once judged for to die,
 And from all mirth brought to the earth,
 To dwell in misery,
 God pitied then his creature man,
 In Scripture as you may see,
 And promised that a woman's seed,
 Should come for to make us free.

The title may derive from the carol's having been a favourite at Bosbury, and I have a copy of a local manuscript version dating from 1740.

Ward may not have printed specifically local material, but he undoubtedly had an eye to the agricultural community in which he lived and worked. *The Lucky Farmer's Boy* would have been new in the 1830s but, to my personal knowledge, it remained a favourite in the Ledbury area until at least the turn of the twenty-first century. Its rather fortunate *dénouement* contrasts with the sharp criticism of farmers voiced in ballads which would have found a ready sale at the Ledbury mops, the hiring fairs held every October. *The Hiring Day* expresses the living-in farm worker's contempt for the conditions under which he has lived:

Old Skin 'emalive was my master last year,
 He allowed neither ale nor small beer;
 The cheese was made bad and full of eyes,
 And rusty fat bacon made into pies.
 The bread was bad, the flesh was scarce,
 These are the reason, for leaving my place.

In much the same vein, though not without humour, is:

Country Statute

Come all you lads of high renown,
 And listen to my story,
 For now the time is coming on
 That is to all your glory:
 For Jumping Joan is coming here
 The fair for to admire,
 To see the lads and lasses standing,
 Waiting to be hired.

The master that a servant wants
 Will now stand in a wonder,
 You all must ask ten pounds a year,
 And none of you go under;
 It's you that must do all the work,
 And what they do require,
 So now stand up for wages, lads,
 Before that you do hire.

There's rolling Gin, the hemp will spin,
 And Sal will mind the dairy,
 And John will kiss the mistress
 When the master he is weary;
 There's Tom and Joe will reap and mow,
 They'll thrash and ne'er be tired,
 They'll load the carts and do their part,
 So they are the lads to hire.

There's Poll, so red, will make the bread,
 Likewise good cheese and butter,
 And Bet so thick will tread the rick,
 She is never in a flutter,
 She'll feed the sows and milk the cows,
 And do what she is able,
 Altho' she's mean, she is neat and clean
 When waiting at the table.

There's black-eyed Fan with a frying-pan
 Will cook your eggs and bacon,
 With beef and mutton roast and boil'd,
 If I am not mistaken;
 She'll make the puddings fat and good
 All ready for the dinner,
 But if you grumble, when she has done,
 She will cure you with the skimmer.

The farmer's wife, so full of pride,
 Must have a lady's maid, sir,
 All for to dress and curl her hair,
 And powder it beside, sir;
 But the girl of art to dress so smart,
 They call her charming Nancy,
 She can wink and blink in such a style,
 She is all the young men's fancy.

And when the mop it is all o'er,
 You that are young and hearty,
 Must take your girl all in your hand,
 And join a drinking party,
 But when you are returning home,
 Enjoying sweet embraces,
 With love and honour spend the night,
 At Statutes, Fairs and Races.

Ward, Printer, Ledbury
 [with *Mary's Lament*]

All titles **MA**.

Those marked **BL** are to be found in addition in the British Library, 1876 e 3, 'A Collection of Ballads Printed at Various Places in the Provinces'

Auld Lang Syne (Should auld acquaintance be forgot) / *Answer to Undaunted Mary* (Young William was a ploughboy the truth I'll unfold)



Betsy of Dundee (You sailors of this nation, I pray you give attention) / *The London Merchant* (It is of a rich merchant, who in London we hear)

The Blind Beggar's Daughter (It is of a blind beggar who had lost his sight) / *Little Mary, the Sailor's Bride* (As William and Mary stray'd by the sea side)

Bold Robin Hood (Bold Robin Hood ranged the forest all round)

The Bosbury Carol (When we were all through Adam's fall) **BL**

The Butcher turned Devil (Come neighbours draw near me and listen awhile) / *Two Wenches at Once* (Till I fell in love I was happy enow)

Buy a Broom (From Teutchland I came with my light wares all laden) / *I'd be a Butterfly* (I'd be a Butterfly born in a bower)

Country Statute (Come all you lads of high renown) / *Mary's Lament* (My heart it will break, my eyes they will weep) **BL**

The Curly Hair (Ye lasses and lads land an ear to my song) / *The Devil and Hackney Coachman* (Ben was a Hackney coachman rare)

The Dandy Bonnet (Come neighbours draw near & listen awhile) / *The Seeds of Love* (I sowed the seeds of love)

Days of Adam and Eve (I'll sing, I'll sing of good days older) / *Flounce to your Gown* (Of all the gay fashions we daily do see)

The Deep, Deep Sea (Oh come with me my love) / *Undaunted Mary or; The Banks of Sweet Dundee* (It's of a farmer's daughter so beautiful I'm told)

Enniskillion [sic] *Dragoon* (A beautiful damsel of fame and renown) / *The Farmer's Son* (Come all you pretty maidens fair attend unto my story)

Fanny Blair (Come, all you good people, wheresoever you be) / *The Bonny Blue Handkerchief* (As early one morning I chanc'd for to stray)

The Flowing Bowl (Come landlord fill a flowing bowl) / *The Blind Beggar's Daughter of Bethnal Green* (It is of a blind beggar who had lost his sight)

The Fortunate Maid (It's of a pretty maiden fair) / *Fate of Young Henry* (Young Henry, a sailor bold, as ever plough'd the main)

The Frolicksome Farmer ('Tis of a brisk young farmer, who in -----shire did dwell) / *The Merry Little Soldier* (I'm a merry little soldier)

Ground for the Floor (I liv'd in the woods for a number of years) / *Fair Helen* (Fair Helen one morn from her cottage had stray'd)

The Hiring Day (Were you at ----- or did you see) / *Sheffield 'Prentice* (I was brought up in Sheffield, but not of high degree)

The Humours of the Fair (Ye gallants so pretty in Country and City)

Hurrah for the Bonnets of Blue (Here's a health to them that's awa') / *The London Merchant* (It is of a rich merchant who in London we hear)

**Jim Crow* (I came from old Kentucky, a long time ago) / *The Moon is on the Hill* (Awake my light, my sleeping love)

John and his Wife (Come neighbours draw near and I'll tell you a tale) / *The Seeds of Love* (I sowed the seeds of love)

**The Life of Georgy* (As I was walking over London Bridge) / *Highland Mary* (Ye banks and braes, and streams around)

**Little Mary, the Sailor's Bride* (As William and Mary stray'd by the sea side) / *Two Wenches at Once* (Till I fell in love I was happy enow)

The London Merchant (It is of a rich merchant who in London we hear) / *Down among the Green Bushes* (As I walk'd through the meadows one morning in May)

The Lucky Farmer's Boy (The sun had set behind the hill) / *Sweet Home* (Mid pleasures and palaces though we may roam)

The Lucky Farmer's Boy (The sun had set behind the hill) / *Ten o' Clock, Remember Love* (Twas ten o' clock one moonlight night)

The Merry Little Soldier (I'm a merry little soldier) / *Lash'd to the Helm* (In storms when clouds obscure the sky)

The Milk Maid (As cross the fields I chanc'd to stray, I met a pretty milk maid) *The Lowland Queen* (Now Spring has deck'd the fields with pride)

**My Father's Servant Boy* (You lovers all both great & small attend unto my theme) / *The Golden Glove* (A wealthy young squire of Tamworth we hear)

My Old Hat (I am a poor old man, in years, come listen to my song) / *Mary Neil* (Once I lov'd a damsel)

The New Fashioned Farmer (Good people all attend awhile)

**The New Sailor's Farewell* (Adieu my dearest Betsey, ten thousand times adieu) / *The Cottager's Daughter* (Down in the valley my father now dwells)

The Nightingale (My love he was a rich farmer's son) / *Answer to 3 Strings to my Bow* (Oh hear the complaint of a maiden)

The Pawnbroker's Shop (A song I am going to sing you)

The Pensioner's Complaint of his Wife (You neighbours all listen to a story I'll tell) / *Down in our Village* (When first I was a shepherd boy)

The Pitch Plaister (O have you not heard what a bother and row) **BL**

**The Poor Little Fisherman's Girl* (Twas down in the country a poor girl was weeping) / *Lord Marlborough* (You generals all and champions bold)

The Rose of Ardee (When first to this country a stranger I came) / *The Swiss Boy* (Come, arouse thee, arouse thee, my brave Swiss boy)

The Swiss Boy (Come arouse thee, arouse thee, my brave Swiss boy) / *The Rose of Ardee* (When first to this country a stranger I came)

**The Tailor in a Hobble* (Come listen awhile and a story I'll tell)

Ten o' Clock, Remember Love ('Twas ten o' clock one moonlight night) / *The Seeds of Love* (I sowed the seeds of love)

Times are Altered (Come all you swaggering farmers, wherever you may be)

**Times are Altered* (Come all you swaggering farmers, wherever you may be) [another edition]

The Transport (Come all young men of learning a warning take by me) / *The Sailor's Courtship* (A pretty young shepherdess was keeping her sheep)

**Two Wenches at Once* (Till I fell in love I was happy enow) / *The Flowing Bowl* (Come landlord fill a flowing bowl)

The Undaunted Female ('Tis of a fair damsel who in London did dwell) / *The Merry Little Soldier* (I'm a merry little soldier)

What Won't Money Do? (Oh this money, money, money)

The Wild Rover (I have been a wild rover these dozen long years) / *The Old Miser* ('Tis of an old miser in London did dwell) **BL**

The Wild Rover (I have been a wild rover these dozen long years) / *The Lass of Dundee* (When first from the city of Dundee I came) **BL**

William and Harriet (It's of a rich gentleman near London did dwell) / *The American Stranger* (I am a stranger in this country from America I came)

You shan't Come again (I once lov'd a fair maid as dear as my life) / *Lost Lady Found* (It was down in a valley where violets do grow)