

THE SONGS SUNG BY BARLOW

Barlow produced a series of song-books, printed in England, during the 1840s. Only a few remain. They are not freely available for study outside of London. The titles, on some of the covers, indicate that the songs are the popular minstrel songs of the day. The songs are printed with piano accompaniment arranged by Barlow. More song-titles are on advertisements in newspapers from Australia and New Zealand. Barlow wrote his own advertisements and most give one or two-word descriptions of the songs. Words like: Original, Comic, Serio-Comic, Fire-side Song. He often used puns and jokes like: Upper Attic Ballad (Operatic Ballad). Using these descriptions it's possible to trace the origins of some of the more obscure songs. I have come to believe that Barlow used the word original only for songs he wrote. Origins are less clear when he is referring to a routine or a dance. Some of the songs of uncertain origin on the following list were almost certainly written by him. **See also Barlow's Routines, Characters, Dances.**

SONGS WITH COMMENTS ON THEIR ORIGINS

THE IRISH JAUNTING CAR. Valentine Vousdon (William Mc Nevin) 1850s.

THE LIGHT BRIGADE.

THE FALL OF SEBASTOPOL.

RED, WHITE, AND BLUE.

ROMANS AND GREEKS.

THE UNION OF ENGLAND AND FRANCE.

All songs written by James Mulholland for the Burletta, *The Siege of Sebastopol*. Written for Barlow at the Salle de Valentino, Melbourne in 1855. The burletta contained seven songs (I've only found five) and several character dances.

MY MARY JANE. Burlesque. May be the song by H. Sidney and E Mackney. Published by Chappell & Co. of London in the 19th Century.

JENNY LANE. By R. Bishop Buckley, Minstrel. 1850.

NOT FOR JOSEPH. By Arthur Lloyd. 1866.

DOING BANTING. This was a song, or a routine, or both, written by Charles Sloman for Barlow. It was based on William Banting and his weight-reduction diet. Barlow performed it in Tasmania 1867. Sloman was a performer in London at the same time as Barlow.

There is a one-act farce, by William Brough and Andrew Halliday, using the title *Doing Banting*. It is dated 1864. A play called *Doing Banting* was performed at the School of the Arts in Grafton, New South Wales, in 1869. The cast list shows an all-male cast playing Alderman Podge and his daughters Patty and Fatima. There are eight characters in all. In 1883 this play was performed again at the Alexandra Shire Hall in Victoria. It was not a success. It is unclear how this play connects with the routine Barlow performed.

SAILING ON THE OHIO. With solo on bones. This is probably the Boatman Dance by Dan Emmett.

PULLING HARD AGAINST THE STREAM. Sentimental song. Claimed by Harry Clifton in 1867. Also, uncredited, on an undated broadside that may be older.

BELLE OF THE MOHAWK VALE. By George W. Elliot.

MARY BLANE. By Francis. C. Germon of the Ethiopian Serenaders.

OLD JOE/POOR OLD JOE. From the Ethiopian Serenaders 1847

SHANGHAI CHICKEN. By Stephen Foster.

COME WHERE MY LOVE LIES DREAMING. By Stephen Foster.

THE SHAMROCK OF ERIN. Also called Sublime was the Warning, by Thomas Moore.

JOLLY DOGS or SLAP BANG. Written by Harry Copeland who once said it was the worst song of a hundred he'd written. It was copyrighted in 1864. There is an older song using a similar refrain, written by James Wymark in 1858. It was called *Slap Bang, or the Adventures of Solomon Slipstich*. This is based on a song, called *Bungalow*, sung by Mat Peel's minstrel troupe. It has a bawdy version.

Barlow sang *Slap Bang* in Tasmania in 1867. I have found it in his repertoire only this one time. The newspaper reporter, although he spoke in glowing terms about Barlow, obviously agreed with Copeland as to the value of this song. He did note that Barlow's last verse, sung in Maori, was very good.

CREEP A-FORE YE GANG. Scotch Song. Robert Ballantine (1808-1877). Said by one newspaper reporter to be a parody of *Castles in the Air*.

DINAH TAKE THIS HAND. Operatic Ballad or Upper Attic Ballad (;-) By J D. Warren. 1850.

LUCY NEAL. Words and Music by James Sanford of the Ethiopian Serenaders.

LUCY NEALE QUADRILLES.

LUCY PEEL. Elongated Lament. Well-known minstrel song c. 1848.

LUCY LONG. A variant of Lucy Peel. This explains Barlow's joke, Elongated Lament, attached to Lucy Peel.

JENNY WHO LIVES IN THE DELL. By George Cooper (1840-1927). Music by John Rogers Thomas (1830-1896).

FAIR GIRL DRESSED IN CHECK. By Alfred Vance. Sung by Barlow in character.

THE RAW RECRUIT. Anonymous song by a Civil War Soldier, who may have been from the Harvard Regiment.

IRISH BEAUTIES. May be an early song-version of the instrumental, using this name, which is dated 1911.

LARDY DARDY SWELL. Alternate titles: Tiddy Fol Lol. Lardy-Dardy Swell on a Hundred a Year. One Hundred a Year. From a broadside c. 1876.

NOW I LOVE SUKEY DEARLY. Published in London in 1840. Unknown author.

MARY ANN. Also known as My Mary Ann. Claimed to have been written by Barney Williams (Bernard O'Flaherty), in 1856, for his wife. However, versions of this song can be found, without the name Mary Ann, as far back as the 18th century as Fare Thee Well, or Ten Thousand Miles. The song was sung by Barlow as a request, in Rockhampton in 1884. He accompanied himself on Harmonium.

BEN BOLT. The poem Ben Bolt was written by Thomas Dunn English in 1842. It was set to music by Nelson Kneass (1823-1868 or 1869), a composer from Philadelphia. The song was first sung in Pittsburgh in 1848.

OLD DAN TUCKER. By Dan Emmett.

BUFFALO GAL/LUBLY FAN. Attributed to the minstrel, Cool White, (John Hodges) in 1844.

DAR HE GOES AND DAT'S HIM. Also There He Goes & That's Him. By Dan Emmett 1844.

MARY DEANE. Published in Barlow's Songbook number three between 1847 & 1851. In 1854 this song was published in London with the author's name given as George Joseph Oliver Allman.

WHO'S DAT KNOCKING ON THE DOOR. Published in Barlow's Songbook number three between 1847 & 1851.

MY SKIFF IS ON THE SHORE. Published in Barlow's Songbook number three between 1847 & 1851.

MY SKIFF IS ON THE SHORE, WALTZ. Published in Barlow's Songbook number three between 1847 & 1851.

OLD AUNT SALLY. Published in Barlow's Songbook number three between 1847 & 1851.

YOU'LL SEE THEM ON THE OHIO or YOU'LL SEE DEM ON DE OHIO.

GINGER DINE. Published in Barlow's Songbook number three between 1847 & 1851.

I SAW MISS ROSA DANCING. Published in Barlow's Songbook number five around 1851.

NIGGER'S WEDDING DAY. Published in Barlow's Songbook number three between 1847 & 1851.

STUPID CLARA. Published in Barlow's Songbook number five around 1851.

THE NEGRO SLAVE. Published in Barlow's Songbook number five around 1851.

THE GIRLS OF OLD KENTUCKY. Published in Barlow's Songbook number five around 1851.

THE PRETTY YELLER GAL. Published in Barlow's Songbook number five around 1851.

A LIFE IN OLD VIRGINNY. Published in Barlow's Songbook number five around 1851.

OH, THAT I HAD A THOUSAND A YEAR.

OPPORTUNITY.

FIDGETY MAN. Serio-Comic

CABBAGE AND TURNIPTOPS or MY CABBAGES AND MY TURNIP TOPS. Called by Barlow a Vegetarian Lay and a London Coster Song.

MY JOHNNY WAS A VOLUNTEER.

THE BELLE OF THE BALL. Printed on an undated London Broadside before 1860.

MY DARLING MIGNONETTE. Words by William Carlton. Music by E. N. Catlin. Published 1867-1876.

YOUNG FLORA. This might be *Flora McDonald's Lament* which contains these words. Words by James Hogg. Music by Neil Gow Jnr. It was published in 1820.

WHEN A MAN WEDS. Patter Song.

LOOK ALWAYS ON THE SUNNY SIDE. Broadside published in New York. No date. No author.

MY JOHNNY IS GONE FOR A SOLDIER. May be the Irish song Shule Aroo.

TERRY O'RANN. Irish Song. Published in New York by H. De Marsan. No date. No author.

OH! NICODEMUS. Nautical Love Song. Author unknown. Made famous by male impersonator Ella Wesner.

JENNY ALONE AND I. Might be *Where are the Joys we have Met in the Morning*, by Robert Burns. This song has the line, "...Jenny, sweet Jenny alone."

WEEPIN' WILLER. London broadside. Published by Taylor. No date. No author.

ARTFUL JOE. Sporting song. Published in San Francisco. No date. No author.

MAGGIE MOORAL. Comic song. Several references to it as being sung by Barlow in Australia. One reference to it being sung by another singer in Ballarat.

HAIL COLUMBIA. Played and sung by Barlow, in Chinese style, with Chinese Fiddle accompaniment. Did he also sing his own words?

YANKEE DOODLE. Played and sung by Barlow, in Chinese style, with Chinese Fiddle accompaniment. Did he also sing his own words?

RORY O'MORE. Played and sung by Barlow, in Chinese style, with Chinese Fiddle accompaniment. Did he also sing his own words?

HIGHLAND FLING. Played and sung by Barlow, in Chinese style, with Chinese Fiddle accompaniment. Did he also sing his own words?

OLD REUBEN BROWN

MY OLD WIFE AND I. Also called, My Dear Old Wife and I. Fireside Song. May be based on Harry Richmond's, My Young Wife and I. 1835.

THE LATE FIRE.

CHEER UP, BE SAD NO MORE.

YOUNG MRS CROSS AND THE LORDS OF CREATION.

THE JOLLY WEST END OF TOWN.

PATRICK PATSON. Irish anecdote and song. Said to be a parody of "Stonewall Jackson". This may be the song called Stonewall.

MISS SALLY SNOW. Published in Barlow's Songbook number three between 1847 & 1851. Likely to have been written by Barlow.

NIGGER'S LEGISLATION. Published in Barlow's Songbook number three between 1847 & 1851.

THE NIGGER LEGISLATOR. May be the same as above.

THE SONGS WRITTEN BY BARLOW

Very few of Barlow's original songs are to be found today but it's likely more will emerge in time. A few were printed in Australian newspapers at the time of his performances. Some fragments were remembered by the writers of memoirs. I believe, like so many topical songs, they were not meant to last.

THE BLUE TAIL'D FLY. The Version with the refrain, and scratch 'im with de briar too. Without the Jimmy-crack-corn chorus.

I am including The Blue-Tailed Fly as sung by Barlow, and claimed as original. I have not been able to establish the author from a printed source, but Barlow always claimed this song as original. See my detailed study of this song at the end of this section.

BILLY BARLOW. Barlow sang his own topical versions of this song. There are many hundreds of songs based on the early broadside versions. They were sung by hundreds of different performers.

WHAT'S TO BECOME OF POOR BILLY BARLOW.

THE OVENS DIGGINGS. Sung, by Barlow, in the Beechworth and Wangaratta areas in the 1850s. This was based on the song Billy Barlow.

MELBOURNE TWENTY YEARS AGO. To the tune of Ben Bolt.

MELBOURNE FORTY YEAR AGO

YOUNG MRS CROP.

HOME NEWS. In 1867 this was called HOME NEWS OR THE MARRIAGE OF OUR FAIR PRINCESS. (This may indicate that Barlow used this song to make topical comments.) Serio Comic.

THE PRICKLY HEAT. Original Comic. To the tune of Dancing Mad. This could be The Piper o' Dundee which contains this line. Barlow's song was written about living in Queensland.

THE WERRIBEE ENCAMPMENT. This event took place in March 1861. Volunteers from Melbourne set up a military camp at Werribee. They had a mock-battle and put on displays of marching and other military exercises.

THE BATTLE OF THE WERRIBEE See above.

VOLUNTEERS ROUSE AND BE READY. National Song. May be connected with the Werribee Encampment.

AUSTRALASIA.

NEW AUSTRALIA.

BETSY BLUE. Housemaid's Song.

ROWE'S AMERICAN CIRCUS.

CHING CHONG or CHING CHONG CHOW. "Chinese" Song, with solo on Chinese fiddle. Sung by Barlow's character Ching Chong. I've wondered if this song was the one still sung in Melbourne, by school children, in the 1940s. There are many variants from other sources. It begins, Ching Chong Chinaman velly, velly sad...

HAVE YOU SEEN THE GHOST. Sensation Song. Sung by Barlow during his routine *Professor Pepper's Ghost*. Sung in Portland, Victoria, with local verses. A fragment was printed in the Portland Guardian. Pepper's Ghost is an illusion first exhibited, by John Henry Pepper, in the 1860s. It is still used today.

THE FAT LITTLE DUTCHMAN. Sung by Barlow's German character Migil Schneider.

MELBOURNE 20 YEARS AGO. To the tune of Ben Bolt. Sung in Tasmania & Adelaide in 1872.

MELBOURNE 40 YEARS AGO. Sounds like the above song 20 years on.

THE RUSSIAN INVASION. Written about the Crimean War. This was described as a "talking song" using various popular airs strung together.

TOMMY BEST'S COFFIN. Based on a story from Branhholm, Victoria. **See Marlene Greiner's story: Tom Best and His Coffin.**

A NEGRO'S LAMENT FOR THE Death OF PRESIDENT LINCOLN. Sung by Barlow in London. Called his new song in 1865.

THE CHINA SIDE OF JORDAN. About Barlow's experiences in China.

KNOW YE THE LAND. Sung by Barlow in Casterton, Victoria in 1857. This is a song based on Johann Goethe's poem written about Italy. Kennst du das Land.

COLONIAL TEA. From 1850s in Melbourne. A Topical song heard, at Salle de Valentino, by Cuthbert Fetherstonhaugh. A fragment printed in Fetherstonhaugh's memoirs is all I've found.

A SONG FOR THE SEASON. Written in August 1863. A close parody of Bonnie Dundee. It is in the first person as though sung by the bush-ranger John Gilbert. It is signed J.G.B. My guess would be that this means, John Gilbert Barlow.

IF EVER I CEASE TO LOVE. Serio-comic. With a long list of denunciations and an account of his experiences when Custom House officers impounded his gridiron and other musical instruments.

GLYCERINA THE SEWING MACHI-INE-ER.

UNLOCK THE LANDS. Sung to the tune of Happy Land.

SLAP BANG Barlow wrote a verse for this song that was sung in Maori.

UNTITLED POEM ABOUT SUMMERTIME. Penned in Portland, Victoria in 1857.

WORDS OF BARLOW'S ORIGINAL SONGS

THE BLUE-TAILED FLY.

A letter published in the Melbourne Age on January the 11th, 1941, gives part of the song as Barlow sang it, and shows [us a glimpse of Barlow's performance.](#)__

TO THE EDITOR OF THE AGE__

Sir, -- Billy Barlow was a clever man performer on the gold fields. My late father knew him well, and used to sing Billy's favorite negro song, The Blue-Tailed Fly. Billy appeared in Maldon about the year 1896, and was reputed to be 85 years of age. Does any living person remember him "on the diggings"? It was said that he made and lost several fortunes. At Maldon he sang his old favorite. Here is one of the verses --

Massa go for a ride in the afternoon.
I follow him up wid de hickory broom.
I hand him de bottle when him dry,
And brush away de blue-tailed fly,
And brush him wid de briar broom. and

Billy sang a verse, then stopped and chased that imaginary blue-tailed fly all over the stage and wings, all the while imitating with his lips the drone of the fly or bumblebee, eventually catching the insect, and screwing its head off. He repeated the actions after each verse.

In another clever item, he dressed in front as a sailor and back as a Lancashire man. He sang a sailors' song and danced a clog dance. Billie Barlow is a lady young, clever, and much alive. -- Yours, &c.,
L.I.G.

Hawthorn.

From this fragment I think we can safely assume that Barlow sang the following version of The Blue-tailed Fly.

DE BLUE TAIL FLY

If when you come in summer time,
To South Carolinas sultry clime,
If in de shade you chance to lie,
You'll soon find out de blue tail fly,
An' scratch 'im wid a brier too.

Dar's many kind ob dese here tings,
From diff'rent sort of insects springs;
Some hatch in June, an' some in July,
But August fatches the blue tail fly,
An' scratch 'im wid a brier too.

When I was young, I used to wait,
On Massa's table an' hand de plate;
I'de pass de bottle when he dry,
An brush away de blue tail fly,
An' scratch 'im wid a brier too.

Den arter dinner massa sleep,
He bid me vigilance to keep;
An' when he gwine to shut he eye,
He tell me watch de blue tail fly,
An' scratch 'im wid a brier too.

When he ride in de arternoon,
I foller wid a hickory broom;
De poney being berry shy,
When bitten by de blue tail fly,
An' scratch 'im wid a brier too,

One day he rode aroun' de farm,
De flies so numerous did swarm;
One chance to bite 'im on de thigh,
De debble take dat blue tail fly,
An' scratch 'im wid a brier too.

De poney run, he jump an' pitch,
He tumble massa in de ditch;
He died an' de jury wonder why,
De verdict was de "blue tail fly,"
An' scratch 'im wid a brier too.

Dey laid 'im under a 'simmon tree,
His epitaph am dar to see;
Beneath dis stone I'm forced to lie,
All by de means ob de blue tail fly,
An' scratch 'im wid a brier too.

Die Massa's gone, now let him rest,
Dey say all tings am for de best;
I neber shall forget till de day I die,
Ole Massa an' de blue tail fly,
An' scratch 'im wid a brier too.

De hornet gets in your eyes an' nose,
De 'skeeters bites y'e through your close,
De gallinipper sweeten high,
But wusser yet de blue tail fly,
An' scratch 'im wid a brier too.

Reference: *Three Centuries of American Music, Vol. 1, American Solo Songs Through 1865*, Edited by Nicholas Tawa.
Published by G. K. Hall & Co., 1989.

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A SONG FOR THE SEASON

This song was printed in Bell's Life in Sydney and Sporting Chronicle on

Saturday, the 14th of August, 1863.

It is a close parody of Sir Walter Scott's Bonnie Dundee. It is in the first person as though sung by the bush-ranger John Glibert.

It is signed J.G.B. My guess is that this means, John Gilbert Barlow.

A SONG FOR THE SEASON.

Words by William Barlow.

Old Scotch Air.

Sung with great applause by Mr JOHN GILBERT on the Weddin Course

To the Lords of the Council 'twas Gilbert upspoke,
Ere the Rangers go down there are crowns to be broke.
Then each gallant youth that would plunder with me,
Let him follow the Banners of Gilbert the Free.

 Come fill up my cup, come fill up my can:
 Come saddle my horses, and call out my men.
 Thro' all the West Country e'en let us gang free.
 For it's who so foolhardy dare meddle wi' me?

Bold Gilbert is mounted, he rides thro' the West;
Thro' all the wide quarter his steed is the best.
For from Coombing's fair stables he took him by force.
And Coombing's young Laird still laments for his loss.

 Come fill up, &c.

The Weddin has gullies. Abercrombie has caves;
If you've traps in the East, in the West I have slaves,
And Cockatoo settlers three thousand times three
Will cry shares in the booty with Gilbert the Free.

 Come fill up, &c.

Then I'll pillage the Banks, and I'll stick up the stores.
I'll rout your sham escorts, I'll laugh at your laws,
And tremble false loons in the midst of your glee.
For you've not seen the last of O'Mealy and me.

 Come fill up, &c.

J.G.B.

BONNIE DUNDEE Sir Walter Scott. Included here for comparison.

To the Lords o' Convention 'twas Claverhouse spoke
E'er the King's crown go down there are crowns to be broke
So each cavalier who loves honour and me

Let him follow the bonnets o' Bonnie Dundee

Come fill up my cup, come fill up my can
Come saddle my horses and call out my men
Unhook the West Port and let us gae free
For it's up with the bonnets o' Bonnie Dundee

Dundee he is mounted and rides up the street
The bells they ring backward, the drums they are beat
But the provost douce man says just let it be
For the toon is well rid o' that devil Dundee

There are hills beyond Pentland and lands beyond Forth
Be there lords in the south, there are chiefs in the north
There are brave downie wassles three thousand times three
Cry hey for the bonnets o' Bonnie Dundee

And awa tae the hills, tae the lee and the rocks
Ere I own a usurper I'll couch with the fox
So tremble false whigs in the mid'st o' yer glee
For ye've no seen the last o' my bonnets and me.

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TOMMY BEST'S COFFIN. This song was written by Barlow, after he heard the story in the Branxholme Hotel, while touring in the Western District of Victoria. This was in 1857. He returned to the area and sang the song for the family in 1878. He told them that he had sung the song before royalty in London. **See Marlene Greiner's story: Tom Best and His Coffin.**

The tune is Derry Down. However, it falls more easily into the tune used by Sam Cowell for Villikins and His Dinah which is in a major key but otherwise very similar to Derry Down.

TOMMY BEST'S COFFIN

by William Robert Barlow, 1857.

Reprinted in the Portland Guardian, 9 April 1878

Now, many strange things I've read in my time,
And many queer subjects I've put into rhyme,
But the one I'll now tell of beats all I e'er read,
A man ordering his coffin before he is dead.

Derry down, down; hi derry down.

Tommy Best is his name, he's the picture of health,
Independent of this, he has plenty of wealth;
For Branxholme, near Portland, I'm told he is Mayor,
And for taking his nobbler you'll find him all there.

Derry down, &c.

Now I'll tell you the way it first came about,
For a joiner, one day, he was standing a shout;
And the joiner not having much tin in his fob,
Drank Tommy's good health, then asked him for a job.
Derry down, down, &c.

All right, says old Best, with a smile on his face,
I'll give you a job which you'll own is a case.
You ne'er had the like of, believe I'm not chaffing,
I'll give you an order to make me a coffin.
Derry down, down, &c.

The carpenter smiled and thought him in jest,
There's no gammon, I mean it, said the Mayor, Tommy Best,
And if, for a moment, you doubt what I say,
Take my meaning, and down half the money I'll pay.
Derry down, down, &c.

Then down on the nail the deposit was paid,
His measure he took, and the coffin was made
From the choicest of wood for this comical elf,
And the timber he actually sawed out himself.
Derry down, &c.

It was to be dove-tailed, well glued and reviewed
For when finished in Branxholme 'twould have to be viewed.
Now by way of good health when a nobbler he's quaffing,
Says he, boys here goes "Another nail in my coffin."
Derry down, down, etc.

He's rigged out like a ship that has just put to sea,
Coppered bottomed, well fastened from leakage quite free,
He's a captain now doubt on his Branxholme estate,
But when he's in his coffin he'll be the first mate.
Derry down, &c.

He'll run down like a watch, then with him it's a case,
And just like a watch, he's got a glass face
To enable his friends to see the last of his beauty,
And Tommy can see that Big Mick does his duty.
Derry down, &c.

Inside, I believe, there are many queer things,
Such as bell-pulls, electric wires and springs,

With pen, ink, and paper, and of wax a long stick,
To inform his old friends what he thinks of Old Nick.
Derry down, &c.

He intends I believe till he's stretched on the stocks,
The coffin to keep for a Sunday clothes box,
But when the time comes that he must be mute,
The clothes bag will clear him and be his last suit.
Derry down, &c.

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KNOW YE THE LAND

Sung by Barlow in Casterton, Victoria in 1857.

This is a song based on Johann Goethe's poem written about Italy.

Know Ye the Land. W. R. Barlow c. 1857

"Kennst du das Land wo die citronen bluhn,
Von dunkeln laub die gold orangen glan -"

Know ye the land where the gum trees in hosts,
Are creaking to men to convert them to posts.
Where the tall stringy bark its position bewails
And invites the rude bushman to split it in rails;
Where acres in millions, both wooden and bare,
Big, big with fertility seek the ploughshare!
Where nature solicits the frugal to roam,
And promises all who adventure a home;
And health to enjoy the sweet fruits of the earth
And sweet smiling children to gladden the hearth.
Where the voices of Ate and Ganymede blend,
To proclaim that monopoly approaches its end,
And the rights of mankind to their heritage tend.
'Tis the clime of the South -- where nothing may weep,
Save the willow alone, on the moss-covered steep;
And the Solons are nearly as silly as sheep.
O! sweet as the jackass's note in the brake,
Are the hills which they pass -- and the speeches they make!

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Untitled POEM

This was printed in the *Portland Guardian* on the 26th of June 1957.

The sun is brightly shining o'er meadow and plain
And gilds every wave of the rippling main;
While the bees that are humming simplicity's
 strains,

 Tells us, beautiful summer is coming again.

 Beautiful summer, beautiful summer,

 Oh! beautiful summer is coming again.

Oh, how sweet 'tis to ramble along the sea shore,
 'Midst fragrance and sounds which the heart
 must adore;

E'en the bloom tint of health of each damsel
 and swain,

Tell us, beautiful summer is coming again

 Beautiful summer, beautiful summer,

 Oh! beautiful summer is coming again.

The cold chilly blast of the winter is o'er,
 And the bush winds are warbling sweet music
 once more;

While the blooming young wild flowers, the
 green fields and grain,

Tell us, beautiful summer is coming again.

 Beautiful summer is coming again,

 Oh! beautiful summer is coming again.

ROBERT BARLOW

The above lines were composed last Wednesday,
by Mr. Barlow, the talented musical humourist,
a propos of so beautiful a day succeeding the
cold and rainy weather of the previous
days. They were intended for publication on
that day, and had they reached us an hour earlier
would have appeared in our last issue.--Ed.P.G.

HAVE YOU SEEN THE GHOST.

Sung during Barlow's routine, *Professor Pepper's Ghost*. A fragment
remains:

"All around town on every wall and post
Go where you will, it's have you seen the ghost?
To profit by excitement our countrymen contrive,
Here's another new committee to keep the game alive."

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MELBOURNE TWENTY YEARS AGO

A song about Barlow's memories of the early days of settlement in Melbourne. A fragment was printed in Tasmania's *Cornwall Chronicle* in 1872. The tune used was Ben Bolt.

Though they didn't dress so flash,
Mind you everyone had cash,
And there wasn't so much going through the court.

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ABOUT COLONIAL TEA Title unknown

A fragment of this song appears in *The reminiscences of Cuthbert Fetherstonhaugh*. He says that, at the Salle de Valentino in Melbourne, he heard a good comic man who used to sing 'Billy Barlow' as well as this topical song.

And then the price of greens and taters,
Oh dear me,
It's enough to give a cove the Vapours,
To drink the Colonial tea.

Fetherstonhaugh adds: "and so it was. The Colonial tea had two names, Jack the painter, that was the green tea, and it had a whiff of paint. The other name was "post and Rails," which speaks for itself."

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DIGGINGS SONG

This is a song of Barlow's from the Wangaratta area in the 1850s. The words, and phrasing, fit into the tune of the refrain used in *Billy Barlow*. A fragment was printed in Perth's *West Australian* in 1881.

Ho, ho, hark-a-da-ho!
I'm off to the diggings, says
William Barlow!

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UNLOCK THE LANDS

This song was part of an act Barlow performed at the Salle de Valentino in Melbourne in 1853. The tune he used was Happy Land. He appeared bearing a large golden key and gave away "little farms" to the audience. A fragment of the song was published in the *South Australian Advertiser* on

January 7th 1913. The article was titled: *The Gold Diggings. Reminiscences of Older Days.* By W. Round.

Unlock the lands, unlock the lands;
Is now the universal cry.
Unlock the lands, unlock the lands;
Or you shall know the reason why.

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A BRIEF STUDY OF SONG THE BLUE-TAILED FLY. WITH BARLOW'S INVOLVEMENT.

Regarding the title - over the years, there have been variations in the spelling, the punctuation, and the dialect.

A LOOK AT FOUR SONGS

SONG ONE. A song called, The Blue-Tailed Fly. It does not have the "Jim crack corn, I don't care" chorus and doesn't use the title, Jim Crack Corn. It has its own tune which is different from the other three songs in this study. It's in a minor key. The refrain at the end of each verse is "and scratch 'im wid a briar too." It first appears in print, with piano arrangement, in 1846. The title is De Blue Tail Fly. It was published by Oliver Ditson in Boston. No author is given. This is the song that Barlow claimed as his. A newspaper article gives the words of the refrain as Barlow sang them. There are several references as to this song, and the routine that accompanied it, being "original". Throughout his performing life and beyond, Barlow was known as the "Original Blue-Tailed Fly". He was in America around the time this song was published. During the 1840s he published song-books, containing popular minstrel songs, with his own piano arrangements.

DE BLUE TAIL FLY

Reference: *Three Centuries of American Music, Vol. 1, American Solo Songs Through 1865,* Ed. Nicholas Tawa. Pub. G. K. Hall & Co., 1989.

If when you come in summer time,
To South Carolinars sultry clime,
If in de shade you chance to lie,
You'll soon find out de blue tail fly,
An' scratch 'im wid a brier too.

Dar's many kind ob dese here tings,
From diff'rent sort of insects springs;
Some hatch in June, an' some in July,
But August fatches the blue tail fly,
An' scratch 'im wid a brier too.

When I was young, I used to wait,
On Massa's table an' hand de plate;
I'de pass de bottle when he dry,
An brush away de blue tail fly,
An' scratch 'im wid a brier too.

Den arter dinner massa sleep,
He bid me vigilance to keep;
An' when he gwine to shut he eye,
He tell me watch de blue tail fly,
An' scratch 'im wid a brier too.

When he ride in de arternoon,
I foller wid a hickory broom;
De poney being berry shy,
When bitten by de blue tail fly,
An' scratch 'im wid a brier too,

One day he rode aroun' de farm,
De flies so numerous did swarm;
One chance to bite 'im on de thigh,
De debble take dat blue tail fly,
An' scratch 'im wid a brier too.

De poney run, he jump an' pitch,
He tumble massa in de ditch;
He died an' de jury wonder why,
De verdict was de "blue tail fly,"
An' scratch 'im wid a brier too.

Dey laid 'im under a 'simmon tree,
His epitaph am dar to see;
Beneath dis stone I'm forced to lie,
All by de means ob de blue tail fly,
An' scratch 'im wid a brier too.

De Massa's gone, now let him rest,

Dey say all tings am for de best;
I neber shall forget till de day I die,
Ole Massa an' de blue tail fly,
An' scratch 'im wid a brier too.

De hornet gets in your eyes an' nose,
De 'skeeters bites y'e through your close,
De gallinipper sweeten high,
But wusser yet de blue tail fly,
An' scratch 'im wid a brier too.

SONG TWO. A song also published in 1846 with the title, Jim Crack Corn or The Blue-tail Fly.

It does not give an author but it does say it was sung by The Virginia Minstrels. It uses the same verses as SONG ONE but it does not have the refrain. Instead it has the chorus:

"Jim crack corn, I don't care (thrice over)
Massa's gone away."

The tune is completely different. A catchy polka. This song came to be known as either The Blue-Tailed Fly, or as, Jimmy Crack Corn. It survives, to this day, with a slight change to the phrasing at the end of the chorus. It would be interesting to know when this change came about. By the 1940s Burl Ives was singing the chorus with the change. Around 1956, in Colorado, Gregory Hildebrand heard a school friend singing the last line of the "Jim crack corn" chorus using the original phrasing. Hildebrand doesn't know where this boy heard it sung this way. There are many parodies, bawdy and respectable, based on this song.

SONG THREE. Another song called Jimmy Crack Corn is about birds in a cornfield. It is same tune as SONG TWO. It uses the "Jim crack corn" chorus with the older phrasing on the last line. Ruth Crawford Seeger in her book, American Folk songs for Children, says she learned this song from a phonograph recording. It was sung by an old man who learned it as a child.

JIM CRACK CORN

Big old owl with eyes so bright,
On many a dark and starry night.
I've often heard my true love say,
Sing all night and sleep all day.

CHORUS:

Jim crack corn, I don't care;
Jim crack corn, I don't care,
Jim crack corn, I don't care
Old Master's gone away

Said the blackbird to the crow,
Down to the cornfield let us go;
Pulling up corn has been our trade,
Ever since Adam and Eve was made.

Said the sheldrake to the crane:
When do you think we'll have some rain?
The farm's so muddy and the brook so dry,
If it wasn't for tadpoles, we'd all die.

When I was a boy I used to wait
On Master's table and pass the plate,
Hand round the bottle when he got dry,
And brush away the blue-tailed fly.

SONG FOUR. From Nigel Parsons, in Wales, comes a song he sang at school. It has also been collected, by Rob Willis, in rural Australia . It was printed in *The Scottish Student' Songbook* 6th edition 1897. It is called, *So Early in the Morning*. Early in the Morning is often credited to Dan Emmett but without clear evidence.

So Early in the Morning

From *The Scottish Student's Song Book* (6th edition 1897)

South Carolina's a sultry clime,
Where we used to work in the summertime,
Massa 'neath the shade would lay,
While we poor niggers toil'd all day.

So early in the morning
So early in the morning
So early in the morning
Before de break of day.

When I was young I used to wait,
on massa's table lay de plate,
Pass de bottle when him dry
And brush away de blue tail'd fly.

So early in the morning
So early in the morning
So early in the morning
Before de break of day.
Now massa's dead and gone to rest,
Of all de massas he war de best;
I nebber see de like since I was born,
Miss him now he's dead and gone.

So early in the morning
So early in the morning
So early in the morning
Before de break of day.

Timeline for the song, The Blue-Tailed Fly.

1820s: A song called The Blue-Tailed Fly was sung at the Adelphi Theatre in London. This was an unrelated song, about a fly in a fish-shop, printed in London as a broadsheet.

1833 or 1834: Lew Wallace says a solo performer sang The Blue-Tailed Fly, along with Jump Jim Crow, in Brookville or Covington, Indiana. Note that Thomas (Daddy) Rice was performing in this area at the time. This song doesn't sound like Barlow's Blue-Tailed Fly, which does not have a chorus. If this date is accurate, it is too early for Barlow, and probably too early for Dan Emmett, to have written the version of The Blue-tail Fly sung on this occasion.

Wallace says: "The second part of the program aroused the entertained, myself included, to a white heat of enthusiasm. It was made up entirely of plantation songs and jigs, executed in costume -- burned cork, shovel shoes, and all. Two of the songs I yet remember -- "Jump Jim Crow" and "The Blue-Tailed Fly." The chorus rang through my head for years; and as I walked home through the night I was unconscious of any special increase of wisdom; at the same time, I felt that the world was full of fun and life worth living, if only for fun."

1837: Barlow performed his first solo entertainment in Dublin. From then on, according to a newspaper article from New Zealand, "Billy Barlow and the Blue-Tailed Fly were well-known in London and the provinces". Not exactly evidence one way or another but noteworthy.

1839: Barlow claimed his Blue-Tail Fly was born this year. On December 21st, 1874 the South Australian Register remarks that Barlow's Blue-Tail Fly is thirty-five years old. I believe, without confirmation, that Barlow was in

America around this time.

1846: The two minstrel songs, Jim Crack Corn and De Blue-tail Fly, published with no authorship given.

SOME CONCLUSIONS AND SOME QUESTIONS

It is perhaps noteworthy that, although Dan Emmett claimed authorship of so many minstrel songs, there is no evidence of him actually claiming any of the versions of The Blue-Tailed Fly.

I believe one performer to be considered as a possible author of The Blue-Tailed Fly, in its earliest form, is Thomas Rice.

Since the words of the two minstrel songs, published in 1846, using the title, The Blue-Tailed Fly, are so similar one must surely have been a copy of the other. Which one came first? Or -- Did Early in the Morning come first?

Abraham Lincoln counted The Blue-Tailed Fly among his favourite songs. He called it, "That buzzing song". He was raised in the area where Lew Wallace heard this song, so he would have known it from childhood. So far I've not found an account of a performer doing a buzzing-fly routine along with the song before Barlow. Barlow sang the song, I believe with the routine, from 1839. (Maybe even earlier in 1837) He made buzzing noises and pursued an imaginary fly all over the stage. On several occasions Barlow's advertisements for his shows call The Blue-Tailed Fly, "the buzzing song". There is no mention of buzzing in the words of any of the versions of The Blue-Tailed Fly.

The Virginia Minstrels were known to have performed for Lincoln but I have not found a description of how this song was performed by this troupe. Did the Virginia Minstrels also add a buzzing routine? Did Barlow perform for Lincoln? Barlow was in America at around the time the Virginia Minstrels formed. Barlow never mentioned Lincoln in his lists of important people he performed for.

There are a few examples of performers doing Barlow's routine, of The Blue-Tailed Fly in Australia and mention of one in America. They all appear well after his performances of it. A man called Bevis performed Barlow's Blue Fly song, along with the act, in Rockhampton, Queensland. He was locally known as Billy Barlow. Bevis died in 1955 at the age of ninety-two and a half. This might make him the last performer to do Barlow's routine.

In 1915 it was claimed that Walter Howson had been the "Original Blue-Tailed Fly". He did indeed sing The Blue-Tailed Fly in Sydney in 1848,

before Barlow's arrival in Australia. The advertisement calls it "song". There is no indication that Howson did an act around it. Howson was called Master Walter Howson then. Barlow's performances of The Blue-Tailed Fly go back before this date. However, it could well be that Howson was the first to sing The Blue-Tailed Fly in Australia.

I've long thought the Jim Crack Corn songs sound like crow-scaring songs. There were songs of this type in England and in rural America in the 19th century. My father's understanding of the meaning of "Jim crack corn" dates back to his childhood on the Central Victorian Goldfields in Australia. Here minstrelsy had long been a popular form of entertainment. My father, John Bolitho Semmens, was born in 1897. He told me that in "the olden times" Jim or Jimmy was the name used for the crow. As in Jump Jim Crow. Cracking corn was what birds did when they raided the crops to feed. Servant-children, in the British Isles and in America, had the task of scaring crows from the cornfield. In America's South slave children were used. Unsurprisingly, the crow-scarer doesn't care if birds eat the crop once the master's gone away. Crow-scaring songs from England express some of these ideas but I've yet to find a close match. The Crow is called John Crow in some of these songs. Malcolm Douglas agreed that this theory had merit but couldn't prove it for me either. Now he's dead.