

who delight their listeners with endless streams of jokes, some obscene, in English and Yiddish.

In a book whose average page contains more than twenty bibliographic references, a strong editorial hand is needed to delete the abundant and indiscriminate capitalization of words which are not part of titles. The editor might also have restrained the lavish uncritical praise which is bestowed on all but a few of the hundreds of scholars mentioned. Most confusing is the chaotic arrangement of the material in a welter of footnotes and uncoordinated note-like paragraphs, which somehow manage nonetheless to be readable and amusing. With the help of the giant index, the reader may venture to retrace his steps to some valuable citation buried in a paragraph already dark with titles.

Studies in Jewish and World Folklore is an indispensable bibliographic tool and learned guide to the comparative study of the folktale. Despite the difficulties in navigation, this book contains an ocean of valuable information gathered with extraordinary care and enthusiasm by an erudite scholar.

--Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett
Folklore Institute
Bloomington, Indiana

Footnotes

1. In August, 1968, I collected a variant of this story (no. 252) from Mrs. Rivka Kirshenblatt, who is almost 70. She heard the story in Apt, Poland, where she was born. In the early 1930's she came to settle in Toronto, Canada. In her variant, the two Jews ask the man at the gate of the Emperor Franz Josef's palace if he would show them the Emperor's famous wealth. After paying their guide, they discover that he is the Emperor himself. The Emperor thanks them because this is the first money he has honestly earned.

Bell, Robert. Early Ballads Illustrative of History, Traditions and Customs; Also Ballads and Songs of the Peasantry of England Taken Down from Oral Recitation and Transcribed from Private Manuscripts, Rare Broad-sides, and Scarce Publications; George Bell and Sons, London, 1877. Pp. viii+472. Reissued by Singing Tree Press, Detroit, 1968. \$16.50.

A major problem of Anglo-American folksong scholarship is the lack of national folksong archives to which all collectors contribute their findings. Consequently English and American Folksong scholarship has always---more than in other countries---been very dependent on the work of individual scholars who managed to find the money and the publisher for their collections. That this situation still persists is shown by the fact that more and more of the older collections have been re-issues during the last years---and have been sold, obviously. Beside the collections of Child, Percy, D'Urfey, and others, Robert Bell's is certainly a minor collection. It has, however, its distinctive merits. Among the ballads he prints in the first part, originally the first volume of his collection, are a number of very rare pieces which he saved from oblivion, namely his variants of "Earl Brand" and the "Death of Queen Jane." Robert Bell was mainly a scholar and antiquarian, so most of his songs are taken

from old broadsides, garlands, manuscripts, etc. Only a smaller portion of songs in the second part is taken from oral tradition. Sometimes no source is given.

One wonders what the relatively large number of rather lengthy seventeenth and eighteenth century poems has to do in such a collection. Maybe they were indispensable in these earlier collections. There are no tunes to the texts. On the other side, Bell displays more modern tendencies when he acknowledges that at least with the peasant songs their social context and their function is relevant and that the songs reflect peasant life as it really is. "Whatever these songs describe is true to life," he says in the introduction to the second part. He takes pain to give the reader all information he has at hand about songs like the "Sword Dancers' Song" (pp. 392ff) of the "Cornish Midsummer Bonfire Song" (p. 389) and certain others. His collection also includes quite a number of humorous songs, some of them of a "freer" nature.

For the reasons given in the beginning and for the virtues of the book itself (and despite its deficiencies), I would maintain that Bell's collection was worth reprinting. The only thing that puts me off is the price.

--Klaus Roth
Bloomington, Indiana

IN BRIEF

Peter Eric Adotey Addo has published a collection of Ga folktales (Ghana Folk Tales: Ananse Stories from Africa; New York, Exposition Press, 1968; pp. 51; \$3.00) which is pleasant if unremarkable. Rev. Addo, a native of Ghana but currently on the faculty of Bennett College, North Carolina, apparently has rewritten them from memory (or did he collect them? the exact nature of his source is not clear and his publisher refers to him as "translator-editor"). He has included a short introduction which is in some respects naive, at least to the folklorist (he seems unaware of the international type index or Motif Index and overstresses the possibility of learning about a living culture simply from its tales), but which also has a few interesting things to say about the process of narration. The book is, of course, meant for the general reading public and the tales are, of course, enjoyable.

We were surprised and interested to learn that, on the thirtieth anniversary of its publication, Richard M. Dorson's Davy Crockett: American Comic Legend continues in print (New York, Rockland Editions, 1939; pp. xxvi + 171; \$5.00; original stock purchased by E. Weyhe, Ind., 794 Lexington Avenue, New York 10021, from whom it is available). The texts are taken from the otherwise virtually inaccessible Crockett almanacs which appeared between 1835 and 1856. A liberal selection of the delightfully grotesque woodcuts which originally accompanied the tales are included. These, plus excellent typography on fine paper and a good binding, combine to make a very handsome volume and in fact the book was voted one of the "fifty best" of 1939 (an award presented for format and design. Professor Dorson has contributed an Introduction in which he discusses frontier humor. Foreword by Howard Mumford Jones.