THE OYSTER DREDGING SONGS OF THE FIRTH OF FORTH

A SURVEY FROM PRINTED, MANUSCRIPT AND ORAL SOURCES

Francis Collinson*

References to the oyster-dredging songs of the Firth of Forth are found in both the first and second (New) Statistical Account of Scotland. In the (first) Statistical Account (1798) we find under Prestonpans the following:

There are at present ten oyster boats belonging to the Parish. Each boat requires five men. There are not, however, above twenty three regular fishermen. The others work occasionally on land or sea. A boat seldom returns with more than 4000 or 5000, often with fewer. The present price is 15s. per hundred. A hundred as sold by the fishers contains 33 warp equal to six score and twelve. The retail hundred contains only 30 warp. Four oysters make a warp. Three or four times in a season a boat sails with a cargo of them to the number of thirty thousand, sometimes forty thousand, to Newcastle. Oysters are found on a strong clay bottom, on rocks and stones. Sand is prejudicial to them. The fishers dredge from four to fifteen fathoms depth of water. When they drive the dredge, they begin the Oyster Song, which they sing till the dredge is hauled up.

The New Statistical Account (1845) gives the following:

Prestonpans. At the proper season of the year, the fishery of oysters forms the principal occupation of a large number of our sea-faring men. Long before dawn, in the bleakest season of the year, their dredging song may be heard afar off, and, except when the wind is very turbulent, their music, which is not disagreeable, appears to be an accompaniment of labours that are by no means unsuccessful.

A more detailed account of these songs is to be found in "Prestonpans and Vicinity" by Peter McNeill (Tranent 1902—probably privately printed). Peter McNeill was an antiquarian and local historian of Prestonpans and Tranent. He says:

Oyster scalps at Prestonpans lie directly opposite the town. They stretch from comparatively near the shore fully six miles

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out into the Firth of Forth, while from east to west they measure fully three miles. Markets long ago were Edinburgh and Glasgow, and later Newcastle, Hull, and London. The Prestonpans oysters became known as Pandores. Some say they derived the name from the fact of their being nearly as large as "pan-doors", meaning the doors of the salt-pans (i.e. at Prestonpans).[1]

The dredgers while at work, either clam or oyster fishing, sing songs which have a peculiar effect when borne over the waters. We have heard it in the early morning many times, fully two and a half miles inland. The men themselves . . . are very reticent in speaking of their singing. They scout the very idea however of the airs they use being of Norwegian extraction, as held by certain writers[2] and maintain that the airs they use are like to the songs they sing, real 'home made'; and this is how it is done. There is a recognised leader of song in every boat. He starts whatever air he pleases, and no matter what jumble of words comes first he always aims at turning them into lines that will jingle, the rest following, and keeping time most faithfully.

The following are samples picked up by the way:

"Who'll dreg a buckie?
I'll dreg a clam.
I'll dreg a buckie,
And I'll be lucky
And I'll no be lang."

Another sample of song secured is:

"Heave aho, and away we go,
What care we for calm and gale!
Aye take a dram, as lang as ye can,
And brandy's gude among het ale!

Heave aho and away we go,
Mag and Meg, and Jess and Jane,
Oh how they leuch when we get fish
But oh how they girn when we get nane.

Heave aho and away we go,
See them awaiting, on the green,
Big lots or wee lots, or nane ava',
Gin we dinna try we shall be seen!"

McNeill goes on to say:

Ever since these scalps were destroyed by over dredging, it has not paid to follow out this trade; consequently there has been little

done in that way for a great many years. A few are brought in occasionally when the dredgers are out seeking clams for bait, but the Pandore now is scarcely ever heard of.

An old dredger gave this other couple of verses, which had been repeated by his father when he was a boy:

"Lady Hyndford's lang tales—
Comin' doon the brae-o,
She gets a' the creamy milk,
We get a' the whey-o.

Ye ho, and away we go,
Revelling amidst the gale-o;
And if gude luck our lot should be,
We'll drink the milk o' the whale-o.

McNeill continues:

Lady Hyndford, a former proprietress of Prestongrange, who who was very kind to the fishermen, had been observed by the dredgers coming down the the brae towards Bankfoot before setting out one night, and they simply put her ladyship into their dredging song. This reference to the whale in the hindmost line was the public-house at Cuthill, which went by that name, and the milk of the whale, of course, was Thomson the innkeeper's whisky.

There does not appear to be any printed collection of Scots songs with music in which any of these oyster-dredging songs are set down as such, though, as will be seen at the end of this article, at least one of them may have found its way into print under a title which gives no direct clue of its origin.

In David Herd's *Ancient and Modern Scots Songs*, first printed in 1769, there appears "The Dreg Song" which must here be printed in full:

I rade to London yesterday
On a cruket hay-cock.
Hay-cock, quo' the seale to the eel,
Cock nae I my tail weel?
Tail weel, or if hare
Hunt the dog frae the deer,
Hunt the dog frae the deil-drum—
Kend ye nae John Young?

John Young and John Auld
Strove about the moniefald.
Jenny Jimp and Jenny Jeus

Bought a pair of jimp-deus
Wi' nineteen stand of feet;
Kend ye nae white breek?
White breek and steel-pike
Kiss't the lass behind the dyke,
And she whalpet a bairnie.
Hey hou, Harry, Harry,
Monie a boat, monie a ship!
Tell me a true note,
True note, true song!
I've dreg'd o'erlong,
O'er lang, o'er late!
Quo' the haddock to the scate,
Quo' the scate to the eel;
Cock nae I my tail weel?
Tail weel, and gin's better,
It's written in a letter.
Andrew Murray said to Meg;
How monie hens hae you wi' egg?
Steek the door and thraw the crook,
Grape you and I's look.
Put in your finger in her dock
And see gin she lais thereout.
She lais thereout days ane,
Sae dis he days twa,
Sae dis he days three,
Sae dis he days four;
Quo' the carl o' Aberdour.
Aberdour, Aberdeen,
Gray claith to the green,
Gray claith to the sands,
Trip it, trip it thro' the lands.
Thro' lands, or if hare
Hunt the dog frae the deer,
Hunt the deer frae the dog,
Waken, waken, Willie Tod!
Willie Tod, Willie Tay,
Clekit in the month of May
Month of May and Averile,
Good skill o' reasons,
Tentlins and fentlins,
Yeery, ory, alie!
Weel row'd five men,
As weel your ten.
The oysters are a gentle kin,
They winna tak unless you sing.
Come buy my oisters aff the bing,

To serve the shirreif and the king,
And the commons o' the land,
And the commons o' the sea,
Hey benedicite! and that's good Latin.

The title of *dreg-song* seems to have been given in Scotland to labour-songs in general, and in particular to those of the harvest field. In this connection it is worth quoting the note by William Hay, the publisher of Hans Hecht's *Songs from David Herd's Manuscripts* (London 1904). Hay supplied Hans Hecht with many of the notes in his book. He says:

"Dreg songs were the interminable delight of the harvest dinner-hour—especially among the Irishmen, who took a share in harvest operations before machinery took away the social jollity from the workers. I have heard an old man recite one of these long-blown medleys for three-quarters of an hour without a break. The more mixed the metaphor the more delight it gave. Any sing-song tune serves for the recital, if the cadences can be worked in. The "Dredging Song" of the fishermen is of a similar class, but is called by a different name. I have heard two men in different fishing villages give practically the same song word for word. It is more of the nature of a sailor's chantie." Hay.

Hay's remark that "the Dredging Song" of the fishermen is called by a different name (i.e. Oyster Song?) would seem to indicate that he considered the Dreg Song of the Herd MS above to have been of the general work-song class referred to, and not a dredging song of the oyster fishermen. Possibly the term dreg-song as used in this way for labour songs in general may have arisen from a confusion of the word "dreg" with "darg" the Scots word meaning a days work. Later evidence would seem to indicate that Hay was wrong in his supposition, though one must allow weight to his opinion in that he claims himself to have heard the oyster-dredging song proper recited by the fishermen.

Examining the internal evidence of Herd's Dreg-Song itself however the line "I've dreg'd o'er long" would seem to refer to actual dredging. The line "weel rowed five men" accords with the statement in the Statistical Account that each boat requires five men; while the two lines:

The oysters are a gentle kin,
They winna tak unless you sing

seem to be conclusive evidence that Herd's song was a dredging-song of the oyster-fishers.

This same song is also to be found among the manuscripts of Lady John Scott, the composer of *Annie Laurie*, who was, as we know, a keen collector of folksongs in her day. She had evidently tried to note down the tune from the singer, whom unfortunately she does not name or describe, but had given up before the song proceeded very far, probably because the task proved too difficult. The manuscript shows however that the song was still current orally in her lifetime. (She was born in 1810 and lived till 1900). There is no indication however of the date of the occasion on which she noted it down.

Admittedly the song might have been collected from the harvest field, like the dreg-songs mentioned by Hay; but Lady John Scott lived "just over the hill" so to speak, from Prestonpans—at Spottiswoode to the north-east of Lauder, and she had ample opportunity of hearing the song sung by the oyster fishermen of Prestonpans or Cockenzie.

Any attempt to reconstruct the tune from Lady Scott's notation can only be a conjectural task. What is worth noting however is the recurrence of the descending figure of the three notes E D C (mi, ray, doh) which we shall meet again presently.

Lady John Scott's version is practically identical with Herd's, though with some of the lines in Herd missing. Minor differences do exist however which are interesting. In Herd the seal says:

Cock nae I my tail weel?

Lady John Scott has:

'Hand na I my e'en weel?'

a much more expressive piece of Scots. Other differences are:

Herd: White breek and steel-pike.
Kiss't the lass behind the dyke.

Scott: Airn sword and steel Pike
kep't the road an' 'keep't the Dike.

Herd: Tail weel, and gins better.

Scott: E'en weel, lugs better.

Herd: Weel row'd five men.

Scott: Weil vowed fine man.

Herd: Month of May and Averile,
Good skill o' raisins.

Scott: Month o' May and Averile
Lang enuich for ae while.

Both versions include the important lines:

The oysters are a gentle kin,
They winna tak unless you sing.

These last two lines would at first sight seem to indicate some tradition or superstition that the oyster had to be sung to in order to get it into the net of the dredge. Inquiries among Scots folklore authorities as to the knowledge of such a superstition or tradition proved negative however.

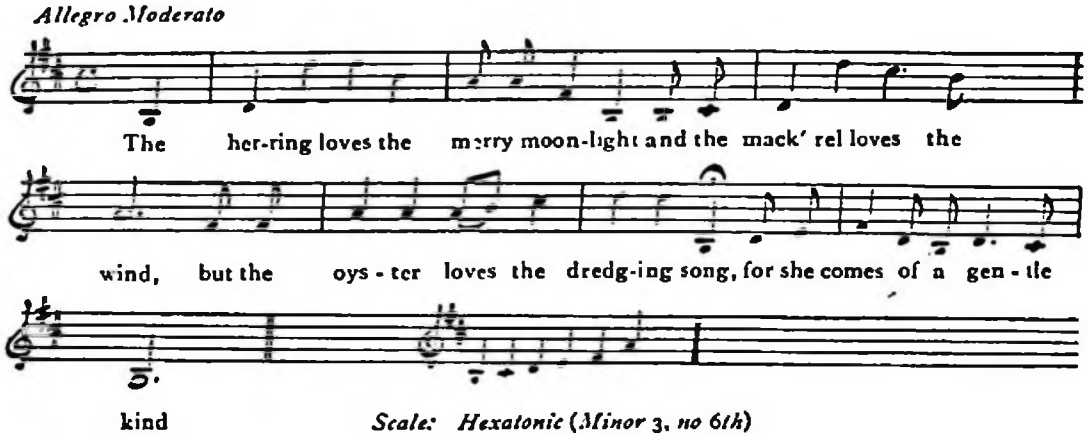
Sir Walter Scott used the same idea of singing to the oyster in "The Antiquary", in the lines which he puts into the mouth of Elspeth Mucklebakit (Chapter 40):

The herring loves the merry moonlight,
The mackerel loves the wind;
But the oyster loves the dredging-sang,
For they come of a gentle kind.

One might readily assume that he had borrowed the idea from Herd, for we know that he had his MS in his possession

THE HERRING

Recorded from Miss Margaret Eyre, at St. Briavels, Lydney, Glos. in 1958 by Francis Collinson



for a time. Unexpectedly however the writer's attention was drawn to the existence of these lines in the repertoire of a traditional singer and folksong collector, Miss Margaret Eyre, aged 92, living at St. Briavels in the Wye Valley, from whom in 1958 he recorded them. Miss Eyre said that she had learned the song at the age of twelve from two girls, older than herself, of the name of Levison Gower. She was then staying with her

uncle, who was the rector of Yalding in Kent. To the writer's question of whether the song had any additional verses, her reply was "There may well have been—I can't remember." All attempts to trace further verses however in any surviving MS of the Levison Gower family have so far met with no success; and the question of whether Scott wrote the lines himself or whether he borrowed them from an existing folksong must remain inconclusive. The tune is a striking one, and if one makes allowances for the circumstances of its transmission, it may well have been a traditional Scots folk air.

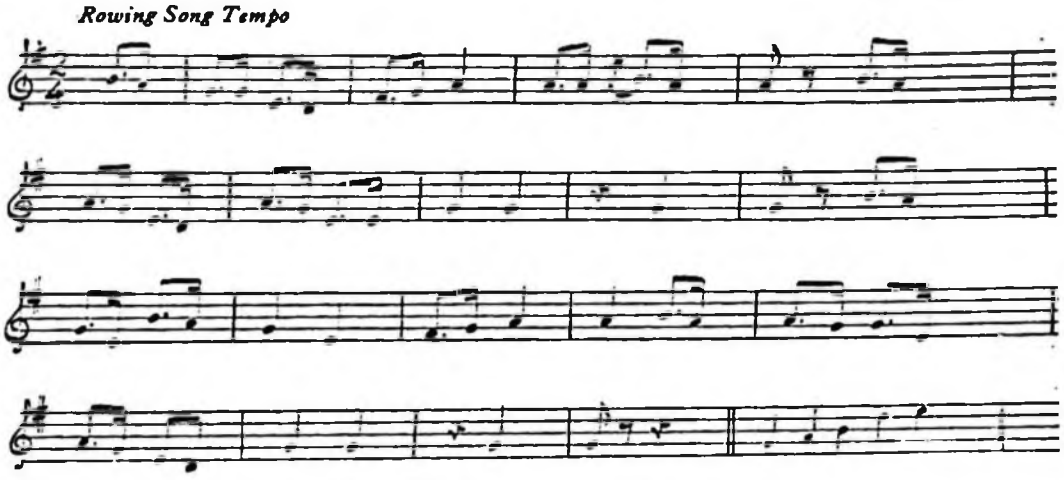
Among the phonograph recordings made by Mrs. Kennedy Fraser, now in the possession of Edinburgh University, there appear three items listed as (1) King of Cockenzie (informant or singer, Dickson); (2) Oyster Song (John Dickson Cockenzie) and (3) Newhaven Dredger's Oyster Song (sic) (No informant given). These were probably recorded by Mrs. Kennedy Fraser at Eyemouth in the summer of 1906 when, as she recounts in her autobiography, she went there to record Gaelic songs from the Hebridean girls who were there for the herring gutting.

The writer examined these recordings in 1954, when he found that (1) had perished completely and the recording was totally inaudible. With Nos. (2) and (3) the singing was so faint and the background noise so loud, that transcription could only be conjectural. The following is the writer's attempt to transcribe the second of the three items (K.F.2).

Mrs. Kennedy Fraser Recording No. 2 (K.F.2)

OYSTER SONG

(Melody reduced to basic form from complete recording)



Scale: pentatonic

Sung by John Dickson, Cockenzie

Transcribed by Francis Collinson

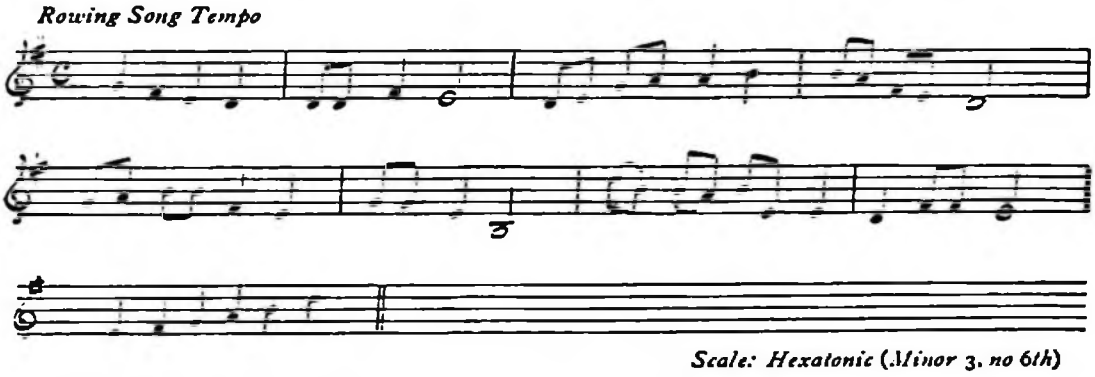
A few scraps of words could be heard. These are:

Hey we turn again and turn again. . . .
Five o'clock, five o'clock . . .
Here they come. . . .
Hey you're right; no, I'm nae! . . .

It is of interest to note the recurrence of the progression of the three notes mi, ray, doh (Cf. the first three notes of the transcription) for these are to be found also, as has been remarked, in the Lady John Scott example. It points to a possible relationship between the two airs, and to this figure as being characteristic of one of the Oyster Song tunes.

The third of the three Kennedy Fraser recordings (K.F.3) Newhaven dredger's Oyster Song, was not quite so indistinct as K.F.2., though even so, reconstruction of the melody can again only be conjectural. Here is the writer's solution:

Mrs. Kennedy Fraser Recording No. 3 (K.F.3)
NEWHAVEN DREDGER'S OYSTER SONG
(Melody reduced to basic form from complete recording)



Scale: Hexatonic (Minor 3, no 6th)

Singer's name not given — Transcribed by Francis Collinson

More word fragments could be heard in this recording, as follows:

Far away . . . for wages . . . full of meat(?) . . . bonny day . . . bonny day . . . Tuesday . . . day . . . week . . . on a wedding cake . . . Thursday. . . . There's a humble cottage in a wood . . . hanging ower the staircase. . . .

About the year 1920, Miss Isobel Dunlop noted down the tune of an oyster song at Port Seton. The following is a transcript of a recorded interview in which Miss Dunlop was interviewed by the writer and Mr. Nigel Tranter:

My father, who was born about 1860, remembered as a boy going down to Port Seton for his holidays and hearing some of the

fishermen going out dredging for oysters. Many years after, I happened to be buying fish at Port Seton from an old fish curer and asked him if he had ever come across the oyster dredging songs. He said he had known that his father had sung for the oysters. He couldn't remember the words, but he hummed a tune which I noted down.

The date of this notation by Miss Dunlop seems to have been 1920 or a year or two earlier. The tune can be identified with some certainty as basically the same tune as K.F.3 (Newhaven dredger's Oyster Song).

The subsequent history of the tune is rather interesting. Miss Dunlop showed her notation of the oyster song to Mrs. Kennedy Fraser, whom she knew, and who subsequently joined it to a set of words similar to one in McNeill's book (possibly an adaptation from this actual source). This was the song beginning "Who'll dreg a buckie-o" above. The song was found unpublished among her papers after her death by her sister Margaret Kennedy, who sent it to Mrs. Addison, the conductor of the Scottish Newhaven Fisherwomen's Choir, who included it in the choir's repertoire, still current today. There was no indication in Mrs. Kennedy Fraser's MS, which the writer has seen, either that it was an oyster dredging song or that it had any associations with Newhaven (the word *oyster* does not occur in it) and its return to its original port of origin by this fortuitous means seems to have been pure coincidence.

During the winter of 1959-60, the writer made a tour of inquiry in company with Nigel Tranter among the fishermen of the former oyster-fishing ports of the southern shore of the Firth of Forth. All informants questioned were agreed that the Oyster Song was a *rowing* song, used when the wind was unfavourable or insufficient to tow the dredge; and every informant except one, to be presently quoted, said that the words of the song were *always* improvised. They were said to be chanted by a song-leader among the boat's crew, who repeated his lines in chorus. The following are transcripts of relevant passages in recorded interviews with these informants: Tom Buchanan, (age late seventies) of Prestonpans, retired fisherman:

> There were only two men in the village that knew the Dreg Song (*sic*) at the hinder end, and that was Walsh and Cooper. They are dead long ago.

Mr. Donaldson of Cockenzie another retired fisherman of advanced age:

They (i.e. the oyster songs) were impromptu—just as they were working.

Mr. Robert Langlands of Fisherrow, aged 89, retired fisherman, said in a first non-recorded interview that the song often began with the line:

"Back again you shall be brought"

In explanation of this he said that the oyster boats were often manned by the young boys and the old men; and the line quoted meant that the boys would be brought back again in their old age to the oyster fishing when they were too old for the more strenuous deep-sea fishing—just as, at that time, they were too young for it.

On a second visit Mr. Langlands was not well enough to see or talk to strangers, but a friend of his, Mr. W. Halley of Fisherrow, mussel-gatherer and -salesman, agreed to put some further questions regarding the oyster song to him. Mr. Halley gave this account of the interview (recorded):

He (Mr Langlands) said that it was chanted as—"Dreg an oyster, dreg a clam;" and "if we pu' they would get her fu' " and "if they were too long" (i.e. in landing their catch) "you could only give them to 'Nicky Tom' (the Devil). The Dreg Song was generally just constructed by an imaginary thing that they saw such as a bird, and the followers (i.e. in the boat's crew) just chanted this or repeated what he said.

Mr. Halley then added on his own account that the tune was "just chanting"; and he himself chanted the following by way of demonstration. The tune was nondescript, and not worth quoting:

Solo: Dreg an oyster dreg a clam,
Chorus: Dreg an oyster dreg a clam,
Solo: And if we pu' we'll get her fu'.
There's a big bird in the fore
And if we pull on the oar
We'll be there long before.

Mr. Andrew Buchanan of Cairds Row Fisherrow, aged 84, retired fisherman, contributed the following specimen:

Solo: Then we'll begin again
Chorus: Then we'll begin again
Solo: With a morning song
Chorus: With a morning song.

Q. How long did one of these songs go on?

A.B. It went on for about twenty minutes.

Q. Just making up the words all the time?

A.B. Oh aye, whatever came into his head. They used to start at ten o'clock and chanted till four o'clock in the morning—never stopped. Lying in bed you would hear them miles away.

(Questioned as to whether he himself had ever taken part in the oyster fishing.)

A.B. I was at the clam fishing, but the oyster fishing was dropped before I started.

Q. But you were at the dredging?

A.B. I was at the dregs for the clams for a few years.

Referring to the song again he continued:

A.B. It was off old men—whatever he said I just followed suit—just repeated it. That's what the Dreg Song was, just a pickle nonsense and the rest followed suit.

Q. What sort of tune did they have for it?

A.B. Oh they didna' have any kind of tune—there was no certain tune for that.

He then chanted the following:

Solo: Betsy Millar,
Chorus: Betsy Millar,
Solo: Sell'd her sark
Drunk the siller.
Woe be till her!
Chorus: Woe be till her!

Mrs. Imrie of Prestonpans is the sole survivor of the family of John Dickson, the "King of Cockenzie" of the Kennedy Fraser recording. The writer played over to her a tape-recorded copy of the Kennedy Fraser phonograph recordings of the tunes. The following is a recorded interview with her:

Q. Were you able to recognise your father's voice?

Mrs I. Yes, definitely.

Q. Can you remember him ever singing that song?

Mrs I. Well I don't remember the words, but I know the tune. I was just a wee girl when I was sitting on his knee when he was singing that.

Q. Were there actual words for these songs or did he just make them up?

Mrs I. Definitely there was one traditional and one that they just made up themselves.

Q. He was known as the King of Cockenzie wasn't he?

Mrs I. As "King Dickson".He got that name because very often he was the most fortunate fisherman in the place.

It was the first of the two songs (K.F.2) in which Mrs. Imrie recognised her father's voice. She declared that K.F.3 was not sung by her father and that she did not know the tune.

John Donaldson (late) of Cockenzie was said by another informant (name not noted) to have recorded the Dreg-song in the 1930's for an American folksong collector not identified.

Another informant at Cockenzie, who wished to remain anonymous, contributed the following fragment as typical of the Dreg Song:

Solo: To work this morn,
Chorus: To work this morn,
Solo: I saw a ship,
Chorus: I saw a ship,
Solo: She's clad in sail,
Chorus: She's clad in sail.

Mrs. Morgan, one of the older members of the Musselburgh Fisherwomen's Choir recorded the following verse of a song to its own tune:

"Oysters, O oysters, O oysters cried he,
How many O' your oysters for a penny
Will you gie?
Sometimes there's yin,
And sometimes twa or three,
It's according tae the size o' the oysters."

This is a Scots version of "The Oyster Girl" a widely spread folksong throughout Great Britain, which the writer has collected in Kent.

Mr. George Wilson, skipper of the fishing boat *Gratitude* of Newhaven, and his two elder brothers were also interviewed. His eldest brother, who was mending nets on Newhaven quay when the writer questioned him, confirmed that the song often began with the words "Back again you shall be brought" with the same explanation given above. Mr. George Wilson himself recorded the following:

My father and his two brothers had a boat of their own, and they went to the oyster fishing, but that was practically before my time. I would be maybe two or three years old when the oysters were getting played out.

Mr. Wilson explained that though he had not heard the Dreg Song sung he had discussed it at some length with his brothers who both remembered the singing of it. They were themselves unwilling to record. He continued:

I've heard the term Dreg Song, and it seems to me that it took place while the men were rowing for lack of wind to draw the sails. The dredges are made to travel at about a 45° angle on the bottom of the sea. Now it takes a good amount of power to draw that dredge over the ground. If there wasn't sufficient wind the men had to row, and to keep time rowing they used this dredge song. The song was made up of anything that took the eye such as a mark on the shore—a sailing boat passing, or a man whose name would fit to a rhyme or anything like that, and that helped to pass the time away on the long day dredging oysters.

Q. Can you remember the kind of thing they would actually have sung?

G.W. The only thing that comes to my mind was:

Dreg a buckie, dreg a clam;
Fleming's ink works to the gas works—
Dodge your wheel and fill your creel.

I think it was going something like this when they were getting near time for taking the dredge on board. They would say now:

Now that's Score to The trees;
Off your bottom and bend your knees,
So—be—yes!
We'll take the dredge on board.

The Score is the downfall of the west edge of Edinburgh Castle; and the Trees are the trees at the west side of Granton Harbour. The Fleming's Ink Works and the Gasworks are in that vicinity too so the length of the dredge travelling over the ground would be between those two points.

Q. Then did one man sing it and the others join in?

G.W. Well they would all be looking about, and if they saw anything, another man would take up where a man left off, and that would continue the sequence and keep the oars going at the certain pace; because a dredge, when it is going along the ground is no use if it is jerked. It must go at a steady pace. The steadier the tow the more fish, because if the dredge was jerked it would lift it off the bottom and miss the ground.

Here we would seem to have the explanation of the tradition that one had to sing to the oyster to get it into the net. Without

a song the rowers could not row steadily enough; the dredge lifted, and the knife-edged bar along the bottom of the dredge (known to the fishermen by the uncompromising name of *the shite*) failed to cut the oyster from the sea bed.

That then completes the evidence. From all the foregoing it would seem that though the Oyster Song was usually improvised, there were several stereotyped, traditional versions, of which those in Peter McNeill's book may be accepted as specimens. It is obvious that the term "dreg song" was used by the fishermen quite as often and indeed more often than "oyster song", and that William Hay was wrong in saying that "the dredging song of the fishermen is called by a different name" (i.e. different to the name "dreg song").

It seems probable that the same tunes were used for both the traditional and the improvised words. The evidence seems to point to the K.F.2 tune, though it was recorded to words of the impromptu type, as being the prototype for the dreg song in Herd, as shown by the melodic characteristics of the tune noted by Lady John Scott and it also points to the song itself having been a fisherman's dredging song. The tune K.F.3 fits both the song in McNeill beginning "Who'll dreg a buckie-o" and the one beginning "Heave aho and away we go" and it is reasonably intelligent guesswork to say that it may have been used for both songs.

To return once more to Hans Hecht's book; Hecht himself follows Hay's note with the statement:

"Another dreg song, parodied by Burns in his 'Ken ye ought o' Captain Grose?' with a little more sense in it is in his Songs, II, 99."

This begins:

"Keep ye weel frae Sir John Malcolm
Igo and Ago,
If he's a wise man I mastak' him,
Iram Coram Dago.
Keep ye weel frae Sandy Don,
Igo and Ago,
He's ten times dafter than Sir John,
Iram Coram Dago.

To hear them of their travels talk etc.
To go to London's but a walk. etc.
I hae been at Amsterdam, etc.
Where I saw mony a braw madam, etc.

To see the wonders of the deep,
Wad gar a man baith wail and weep.
To see the Leviathans skip,
And wi' their tail ding o'er a ship.

Were ye e'er in Crail Town?
Did ye see Clark Dishington?
His wig was like a drouket hen,
And the tail o't hang down,
like a meikle maan lang draket gray goose-pen.

There are several interesting parallels between the words of this and of the Dreg Song of Herd's Ms. First, the use of (dog) Latin (Cf. the last line of the song in Herd); then the journey to London, and finally the sea images. Here again the inference in Hecht is that the song is a darg-song rather than a dredging song. But there was a Sir John Malcolm at Grange near Burntisland in Fifeshire in the seventeenth century. Clark Dishington came from a well-known family of land-owners on the north shore of the Forth (the name is found at a later date among the list of baillies of Newhaven). The tune (which appears first in print in Bremner's Reels, c. 1765), makes a superbly good rowing song, to which the pseudo Latin lines make a ready chorus.[3] The references to the various personalities are all grossly satirical (Cf. Andrew Murray in the song in Herd). Is it too fanciful to guess also that here is another of the dreg-songs of the oyster-fishers of the Forth?

NOTES

[1] To the writer it seems more probable that the name was given from a much exaggerated resemblance in size (and also, roughly speaking, in shape) to the body of the Pandore or Bandore, a species of lute (many of the airs in the Skene Manuscript are written for this instrument). Curiously enough the back of the instrument was sometimes ornamented by the carving of a large clam-shell. Cf. Hipkin and Gibb, *Musical Instruments* (London 1945), Plate IX.

[2] These references not found.

[3] The song in full is to be found in James Johnson, *The Scots Musical Museum*, new edition with notes by W. Stenhouse. 4 vols. Edinburgh 1853. It appears there as No. 455 under the title *Sir John Malcolm.*

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