

THE SHEFFIELD APPRENTICE

The text that Vaughan Williams collected is more or less the same as other versions of this song so a comparison text has not been included.

Collected versions of this song all seem to follow fairly closely the broadside version, which poses the question were the versions collected since the turn of the century learnt from the broadside text?

I was brought up in Sheffield a place of high degree
My parents doated upon me they had no child but me
I roamed about for pleasure just where my fancy led
Till I was bound apprentice and all my joys were fled

I did not like my master he did not use me well
I made a resolution not along with him to dwell
I made a resolution not along with him to stay
Steering my course for London and curse be the day

I had not been in London scarce one month two or three
Before my honoured mistress grew very fond of me
She said I've gold I've silver I've houses and I've land
If you will marry me they shall be at your command

Oh no dear honoured mistress I cannot wed you now
For I have lately promised likewise a solemm vow
To wed with dearest Polly your handsome chamber maid
So come me honoured mistress she has my heart betrayed

She flew into a passion and turned away from me
Saying by he who made her she'll be revenged on me
Her gold ring on her finger as she was passing by
She slipped it in my pocket and by it I must die

For that before the justice before the justice I was
brought
And there before the justice to answer for my fault
Long time I pleaded innocent but that was all in vain
She swore so false against me that I was sent to gaol

Upon the day of execution and on that fatal day
I pray'd the people round me Oh pray come pity me
Don't laugh at my downfall for I bid their world adieu
Farewell my dearest Polly I died for love of you