

Solution to “A Choral Arrangement”

The featured quotes are all lines from Child’s Ballads, a collection of several hundred English ballads by Francis James Child (hence the flavor text). The people pictured – all are reverse image searchable – are names of Child Ballads (e.g. “Henry Martyn” and “Sir Lionel”). There are a few ways to realize this (e.g. by googling parts of the quotes or the names of several of the people together). Except... in each line, one word was changed. Specifically, clockwise starting from the top:

SITT → NEST
O → DEAR
RED → UNRULY
TREACHERY → CRIMES
BOONE → DOGGY
YONDER → SKAGGS
STRAWBERRY → CORAL
UP → SHAME
MARTYN → KNOPF
SAIR → FILTH

If you take the replaced words and read them clockwise starting from the top, you get “SORT BY SUMS”. This will be useful later.

Now that we’ve used the *replaced* words, we need to figure out how to use the *replacement* words. A natural thing to do is to draw lines from each person to the person they’re singing about. (For instance, Sir Lionel sings “Oh no! Oh no! cried Henry ~~Knopf~~ Martyn” so we would draw an arrow from Sir Lionel to Henry Martyn.) Now, the replacement words (e.g. Knopf) of intersecting lines intersect at one letter. For example, “KNOPF” and “FILTH” have the letter “F” in common. See the diagram on the next page.

There are 16 intersection points, corresponding to 16 letters. Now we just need to figure out how to order the letters. We recall the “SORT BY SUMS” hint from earlier. This tells us to sort by the sums of the child ballad numbers. For instance, F is at the intersection of the ballads “Henry Martyn” (#250 in Child’s numbering) and “King Henry” (#32). If we order these letters in order of these sums (e.g. 282 for F), we get **THE LADY OF ARNGOSK**, which is the answer (the name of another Child Ballad, as it happens).

NEST



DEAR

FILTH



UNRULY

KNOPF



SHAME



CRIMES

CORAL

SKAGGS

DOGGY

