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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE BROTHER AVENGED, AND OTHER BALLADS ***

Transcribed from the 1913 Thomas J. Wise pamphlet by David Price, email ccx074@pglaf.org

AND OTHER BALLADS

GEORGE BORROW

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THE BROTHER AVENGED

I stood before my master's board, The skinker's office plying; The herald-men brought tidings then That my brother was murdered lying.

I followed my lord unto his bed, By his dearest down he laid him; Then my courser out of the stall I led, And with saddle and bit arrayed him.

I sprang upon my courser's back, With the spur began to goad him; And ere I drew his bridle to, Full fifteen leagues I rode him.

And when I came to the noisy hall
Where the Kemps carouse were keeping,
O then I saw my mother dear
O'er the corse of my brother weeping.

Then I laid an arrow on my good bow,
The bow that never deceived me;
And straight I shot the King's Kempions twelve,
Of my brother who had bereaved me.

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And then to the Ting I rode away, Where the judges twelve were seated; Of six to avenge my brother I begged, And of six protection entreated. For the third time rode I to the Ting, For deep revenge I lusted; Up stood the liege-man of the King, And at me fiercely thrusted. Up stood the liege-man of the King, With a furious thrust toward me; And the Judges twelve rose in the Ting, And an outlaw'd man declared me. p. 7 Then I laid an arrow on my good bow, And the bow to its utmost bent I; And into the heart of the King's liege-man The sharp, sharp arrow sent I. Then away from the Ting amain I sped, And my good steed clomb in hurry; There was nothing for me but to hasten and flee, And myself 'mong the woods to bury. And hidden for eight long years I lay Amid the woods so lonely; I'd nothing to eat in that dark retreat But grass and green leaves only. I'd nothing to eat in that dark retreat, Save the grass and leaves I devoured; No bed-fellows crept to the place where I slept, But bears that brooned and roared. So near at hand was the holy tide Of our Lady of mercies tender; The King of the Swedes his followers leads, And rides to the Church in splendour. p. 8 So I laid an arrow on my good bow, As I looked from the gap so narrow; And into the heart of the Swedish King I sent the yard-long arrow. Now lies on the ground the Swedish King, And the blood from his death-wound showers; So blythe is my breast, though still I must rest Amid the forest bowers. THE EYES p. 9 To kiss a pair of red lips small Full many a lover sighs; If I kiss anything at all, Let it be Sophy's eyes. The eyes, the eyes, whose witcheries Have filled my heart with care; Too dear I prize the eyes, the eyes Of Sophy Ribeaupierre. Were I the Czar, my kingly crown, My troops and victories, And fair renown I'd all lay down To kiss but Sophy's eyes. The charming eyes, whose witcheries p. 10 Have filled my heart with care; Too dear I prize the charming eyes Of Sophy Ribeaupierre. Perhaps I've seen a fairer face, Though hers may well surprise;

A form perhaps of lovelier grace, But, oh! the eyes, the eyes! The matchless eyes, whose witcheries Have filled my heart with care; I well may prize the matchless eyes Of Sophy Ribeaupierre.

What with the polished diamond-stone Can vie beneath the skies?
Oh, it is vied and far outshone
By Sophy's beaming eyes.
By Sophy's eyes, whose witcheries
Have filled my heart with care;
Well may I prize the beaming eyes
Of Sophy Ribeaupierre.

The sun of June burns furiously,
And brooks and meadows dries;
But, oh, with more intensity
Burn cruel Sophy's eyes!
The wicked eyes, whose witcheries
Have filled my heart with care;
Too dear I prize the wicked eyes
Of Sophy Ribeaupierre.

O, soon beneath their piercing ray, Like some parched plant which dies, Wither shall I, poor youth, away? And all for Sophy's eyes. But bless the eyes, whose witcheries Have filled my heart with care; Till Death I'll prize and bless the eyes Of Sophy Ribeaupierre.

HARMODIUS AND ARISTOGITON From the Greek

With the leaves of the myrtle I'll cover my brand, Like Harmodius and Aristogiton of yore; When the tyrant they slew, and their dear native land They caused with just laws to be governed once more.

O, beloved Harmodius! thou still art not dead, In the Isles of the Blest thou still livest, they say; Where the swift-heel'd Achilles and bold Diomed Through sweet flowery meadows continually stray.

With the leaves of the myrtle I'll cover my blade, Like Harmodius and Aristogiton of yore; Who, whilst the high rites to Athena were paid, The bold tyrant Hipparchus extended in gore.

And on earth ever, ever your glory shall glow, Harmodius and Aristogiton, sun-bright; Because ye the damnable tyrant laid low, And restored to your country her law and her right.

MY DAINTY DAME

My dainty Dame, my heart's delight, Star of my watch, serene and bright; Come to the green wood, mild is May, Cosy the arbours, come away!

In me thy spouse and servant see,
To silvan hall I'll usher thee;
Thy bed shall be the leaves heaped high,
Thy organ's note the cuckoo's cry.
Thy covert warm the kindly wood,
No fairer form therein e'er stood.
Thy dress, my beauteous gem, shall be
Soft foliage stript from forest tree;

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The foliage best the forest bore, Served as a garb for Eve of yore. Thou, too, throughout the summer day Shalt rove around in Eve's array. My Eve thou art, my ever dear, Thy Adam I'll attend and cheer.

p. 15

Come to the green wood, come away, The floor with grass and flowers is gay! There 'neath no tree shalt thou descry In churlish guise old jealousy. Fear not my love, afar is now The loon, thy tiresome lord, I trow; To all a jest amidst his clan He choler deals in Cardigan. Here, nestled nigh the sounding sea, In Ifor's bush we'll ever be. More bliss for us our fate propounds On Taf's green banks than Teivi's bounds; Thy caitiff wight is scarce aware Where now we lurk, my little fair. Ah! better here, in love's sweet thrall, To hark the cuckoo's hearty call, Than pine through life in castle hall!

GRASACH ABO OR THE CAUSE OF GRACE

p. 16

- O, Baillie Na Cortie! thy turrets are tall,
 Descried from their top is the oncoming foe;
 Though numerous the warriors that watch on thy wall,
 Thy hope and thy trust are in Grasach Abo.
- O, Baillie Na Cortie! thy chieftains abound With courage no dangers can ever lay low; In the day of the fight can their equals be found, When is roared to the heaven's heights Grasach Abo?
- O, Baillie Na Cortie! brave helps thou hast nigh, Will rise at thy summons full quickly I trow; The Shortuls, Roothes, Shees, clans so mighty and high, Will rise on the foemen of Grasach Abo.

O, Baillie Na Cortie! thy banner shall bound Blood red in the winds o'er the battle that blow; When thy lion so gallant breathes terror around, And thy soldiers are shouting out Grasach Abo.

- O, Baillie Na Cortie! thy armoury boasts
 The arms of great chiefs on the wall in a row;
 Gilliepatrick let fall, and O More of the hosts,
 When they ran in red rout before Grasach Abo.
- O, Baillie Na Cortie! when blazed the bright swords, Thy sons gave the Butlers a signal o'erthrow; When Desmond was scattered with all his dark hordes, He loathed the wild war whoop of Grasach Abo.
- O, Baillie Na Cortie! thou needest no aid
 Of strangers the day when the blood torrents flow;
 The Brennaghs, Powrs, Parcels with buckler and blade,
 Shall triumph and feast with the Grasach Abo.
- O, Baillie Na Cortie! thy bards hope to praise
 Thee, thee through long ages undarkened with woe;
 And him, thy brave chieftain, his bountiful ways,
 And the heroes who bleed for the Grasach Abo.

p. 17

Sick in Ribe Dagmar's lying,
Soon she'll be in Ringsted's wall;
All the Dames in Denmark dwelling
Unto her she bids them call.
"Fetch me four, fetch five, I pray ye,
Fetch me those for wisdom famed;
Fetch Sir Carl of Haves' sister,

Little Kirstine is she named.

"Fetch the old, and fetch the youthful, Fetch the learned unto me; Fetch the lovely little Kirstine, Worthy all respect is she.

"Canst thou read and write, my darling? Canst thou ease the pains I bear? Thou shalt ride upon my coursers, And the ruddy scarlet wear."

"Could I read and write, my lady, Blythely I would do the same; Thy pains are than iron harder, 'Tis with grief I that proclaim."

'Twas the lovely little Kirstine, Took the book and read a space— "Ah, thy pains than steel are harder, God Almighty help thy case!"

THE ELF BRIDE [21]

p. 21

There was a youthful swain one day Did ted the new mown grass; There came a gay and lovely may From out the nigh morass. Clad in a dress of silk was she, Green as the leaves which deck the tree, Her head so winsomely to see With bulrush plaited was.

That lass he wooed, his suit she heeds, And married are the pair; To bridal bed his wife he leads-But what befell him there? He found, fear-stricken and amaz'd, That he a rough oak trunk embrac'd, Instead of the enchanting waist Of his mysterious fair.

Then straight abroad a voice he heard, Which sang the window through; These were the words the voice proffer'd If my report be true: "Come out to her whom thou didst wed! Upon my mead thy couch is spread." From this he guessed with some elf maid That he had had to do.

THE TREASURE DIGGER

p. 23

O, would that with last and shoe I had stay'd, Without wild desires; And, ah! no trust in Satan had laid, That prince of liars!

Each Saturday night, when slept the rest, Away I stroll'd To the forest, so murky and drear, in quest Of buried gold.

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And down to the earth my wishing-rod low Itself declin'd.	
I dug then, and gripped the chest's ring amain, And held it stout; But the copper deceitful burst in twain, And the fiends laughed out.	p. 24
Just, just as long was the treasure my own, As I trembled with fright; But soon as I held it secure, down, down It sank from sight.	
Ye devilish pack, what grin ye at? I fell not your prey; I'll trust no more in old women's chat, And in cross-shaped way.	
I go by my last and shoe to stay, Without wild desires; And ne'er more in Satan I trust will lay, That prince of liars!	
THE FISHER	p. 25
The fisherman saddleth his good winged horse, To be on the deep seems to him his best course.	
Against the white strand loud and hoarse the wave breaks, And towards the strand now the fisherman makes.	
And up when the fisher his fishing-line drew, A fine golden fish on the hook met his view.	
Then he laughed in his beard: "I've of fish seen a store, But ne'er one with golden cloth kirtle before.	
"If I a gold piece for each gold-scale possess'd, With poverty I should no more be distrest."	
With its tail the fish 'gan the bench furious to smite, And a strange dance it seemed to the fisherman's sight.	p. 26
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"If to-morrow a like one upon my hook bite,

I shall perish of hunger, poor miserable wight."

He the rest of the day sat at home by his hearth And spake not a word that repeating is worth.

He early next morn in his boat his seat took, And straightway adjusted a bait to his hook.

And soon as he'd overboard cast the fish-line, The float it descended deep under the brine.

Then he laughed in his beard, and with bitterness said: "A catch of another gold fish I have made!"

The thin lengthy line he up-drew half unwilling, And, behold! there upon the hook hung a gold shilling.

And I can forsooth and for certainty say, That he for delight had no rest the whole day.

But as oft as the line he up-drew from the tide, Upon the hook never a fish he descried.

For whene'er for the fish he upon the hook sought, He found that a shilling of gold he had caught.

THE CUCKOO

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Abiding an appointment made, Upon the weed-grown steep I stayed, One morning mild when May was new, And fresh the down was fraught with dew. The meads were flowering, bright the woods, The branches yielding thousand buds. My lips employed in song the while On Morfydd of the merry smile. 'Twas then as round I cast my eye With mighty wish the maid to spy; Though, howsoe'er my sight I strained, No glimpse of Morfydd I obtained. I heard the cuckoo's voice arise, Singing the song which most I prize. To each Bard true most sweet I trow His music on the mountain's brow. Therefore, as called by courtesy, I greeted him in poesy.

"Good day, dear Cuckoo, with thy strain
A herald thou from heaven's domain;
To us the tidings thou dost bear
Of summer, blissful season fair.
Of summer which to greenwood shade
Entices forth the Bard and maid;
Which decks with foliage dense the grove,
And through all nature breathes of love.
O, dear to me that note of thine,
It seasons love like choicest wine;
Whilst, doating fondness to chastise,
What cutting taunt in 'Cuckoo' lies!
But, pretty bird, I pray declare
Where lingereth now my lady fair?"

"O, poet, what delusion great Doth fill this year thy foolish pate? 'Tis harbouring a useless pain One thought of her to entertain. With all her store of winning charms, She weds her to another's arms. Believe me, when I say to thee A mate of thine she may not be."

"Hush, hush, I'll not believe thy voice, Dare not defame my bosom's choice. That nymph, the fairest 'neath the sun, Has sworn an oath, a solemn one; p. 30

She vowed by her baptismal rite, Beneath the bough one blessed night, Her hand my own enclasping hard, To live and die with me, her Bard. The minister that mystic night Was Madog Benfras, matchless wight. Her suitors all may vainly sigh, How should she wed, whom wed have I? 'Tis false, O Bird, what thou dost state, And waste of time with thee to prate. Folly and drunkenness, 'tis plain, Have got possession of thy brain. Hence with thy news, and get thee cool, Thou art, I fear, a very fool!"

"O, Dafydd, who the fool but thou, Talking this guise beneath the bough? Another husband chooses she, Whose charms deceitful captured thee. The Damsel of the neck of snow Is now another's wife, I trow. To love another's looks not well, The Bow Bach owns the blooming belle."

"For what thou'st sung within the grove, With malice filled, about my love, May days of winter come with speed, The summer and the sun recede; Hoar frost upon the foliage fall, The wood and branches withering all. And thou with piercing cold be slain, Thou horrid bird of hateful strain!"

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Footnotes:

[21] These stanzas should be compared with *The Elves*, printed in *The Nightingale*, *The Valkyrie* and *Raven*, and *Other Ballads*, 1913, pp. 25-26.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE BROTHER AVENGED, AND OTHER BALLADS ***

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