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Volume 3, by Beverley Nichols**

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BALLADS — VOLUME 3 ***

A BOOK OF OLD BALLADS

Selected and with an Introduction

by

BEVERLEY NICHOLS

A Book of
OLD BALLADS
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BEVERLEY NICHOLS
&
Illustrated by
HMBROCK-RI



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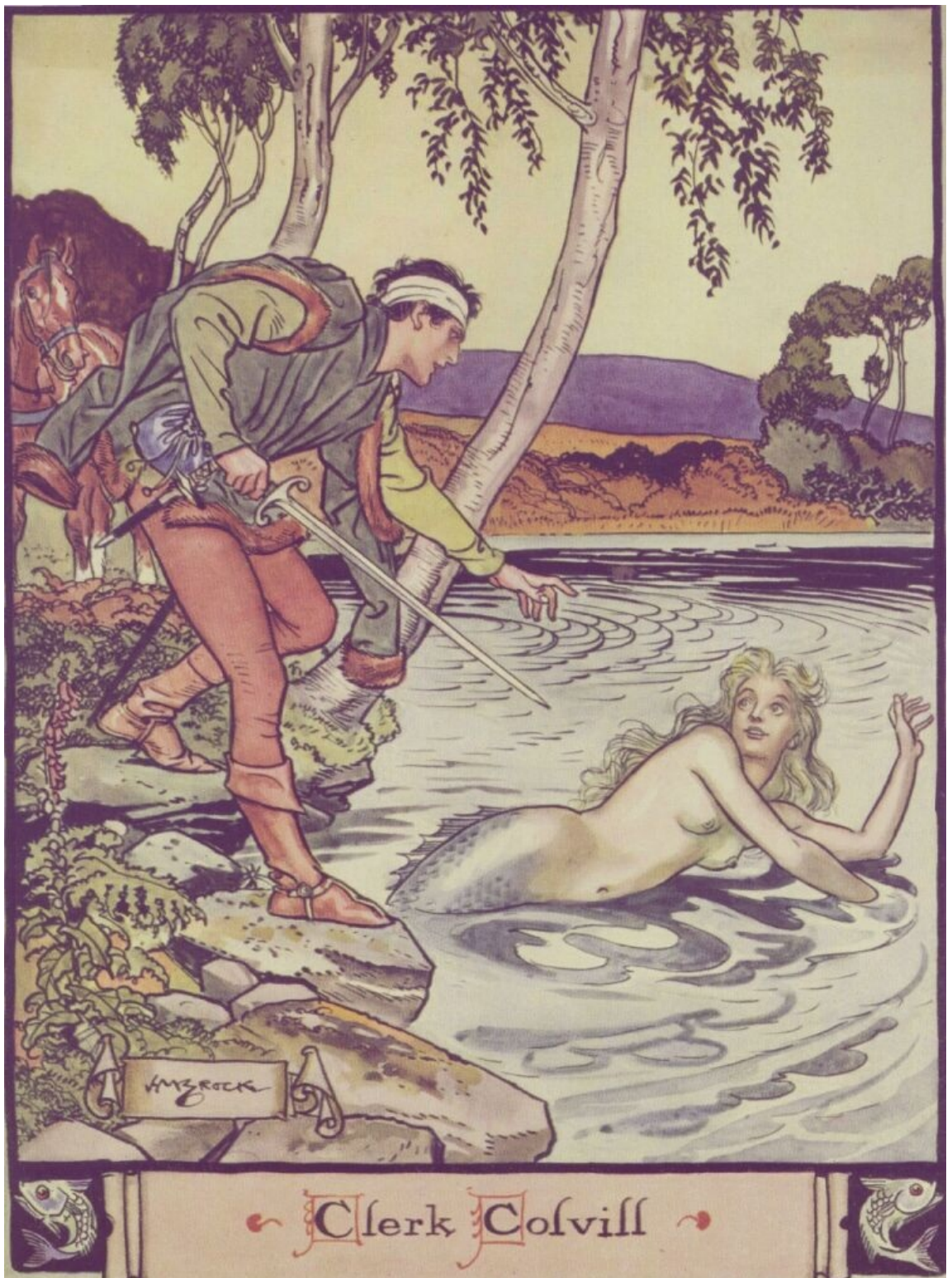
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CLERK COLVILL





Clerk Colvill and his lusty dame
Were walking in the garden green;
The belt around her stately waist
Cost Clerk Colvill of pounds fifteen.

"O promise me now, Clerk Colvill,
Or it will cost ye muckle strife,
Ride never by the wells of Slane,
If ye wad live and brook your life."

"Now speak nae mair, my lusty dame,
Now speak nae mair of that to me;
Did I neer see a fair woman,
But I wad sin with her body?"

He's taen leave o his gay lady,

Nought minding what his lady said,
And he's rode by the wells of Slane,
Where washing was a bonny maid.

"Wash on, wash on, my bonny maid,
That wash sae clean your sark of silk;"
"And weel fa you, fair gentleman,
Your body whiter than the milk."

* * * * *

Then loud, loud cry'd the Clerk Colvill,
"O my head it pains me sair;"
"Then take, then take," the maiden said,
"And frae my sark you'll cut a gare."

Then she's gied him a little bane-knife,
And frae her sark he cut a share;
She's ty'd it round his whey-white face,
But ay his head it aked mair.

Then louder cry'd the Clerk Colville,
"O sairer, sairer akes my head;"
"And sairer, sairer ever will,"
The maiden crys, "till you be dead."

Out then he drew his shining blade,
Thinking to stick her where she stood,
But she was vanished to a fish,
And swam far off, a fair mermaid.

"O mother, mother, braid my hair;
My lusty lady, make my bed;
O brother, take my sword and spear,
For I have seen the false mermaid."

SIR ALDINGAR



SIR ALDINGAR

Our king he kept a false stewàrde,
Sir Aldingar they him call;
A falser steward than he was one,
Servde not in bower nor hall.

He wolde have layne by our comelye queene,
Her deere worshippe to betraye:
Our queene she was a good womàn,
And evermore said him naye.

Sir Aldingar was wrothe in his mind,
With her hee was never content,
Till traiterous meanes he colde devyse,
In a fyer to have her brent.

There came a lazar to the kings gate,
A lazar both blinde and lame:
He tooke the lazar upon his backe,
Him on the queenes bed has layne.

"Lye still, lazar, whereas thou lyeest,
Looke thou goe not hence away;
He make thee a whole man and a sound
In two howers of the day."

Then went him forth Sir Aldingar,
And hyed him to our king:
"If I might have grace, as I have space,
Sad tydings I could bring."

Say on, say on, Sir Aldingar,
Saye on the soothe to mee.
"Our queene hath chosen a new new love,
And shee will have none of thee.

"If shee had chosen a right good knight,
The lesse had beene her shame;
But she hath chose her a lazar man,
A lazar both blinde and lame."

If this be true, thou Aldingar,
The tyding thou tellest to me,
Then will I make thee a rich rich knight,
Rich both of golde and fee.

But if it be false, Sir Aldingar,
As God nowe grant it bee!
Thy body, I sweare by the holye rood,
Shall hang on the gallows tree.

He brought our king to the queenes chambèr,
And opend to him the dore.
A lodlye love, King Harry says,
For our queene dame Elinore!

If thou were a man, as thou art none,
Here on my sword thoust dye;

But a payre of new gallowes shall be built,
And there shalt thou hang on hye.

Forth then hyed our king, I wysse,
And an angry man was hee;
And soone he found Queen Elinore,
That bride so bright of blee.

Now God you save, our queene, madame,
And Christ you save and see;
Heere you have chosen a newe newe love,
And you will have none of mee.

If you had chosen a right good knight,
The lesse had been your shame;
But you have chose you a lazar man,
A lazar both blinde and lame.

Therefore a fyer there shalt be built,
And brent all shalt thou bee.--
Now out alacke! said our comly queene,
Sir Aldingar's false to mee.

Now out alacke! sayd our comlye queene,
My heart with grieve will brast.
I had thought swevens had never been true;
I have proved them true at last.

I dreamt in my sweven on Thursday eve,
In my bed whereas I laye.
I dreamt a grype and a grimlie beast
Had carryed my crowne awaye;

My gorgett and my kirtle of golde,
And all my faire head-geere:
And he wold worrye me with his tush
And to his nest y-beare:

Saving there came a little 'gray' hawke,
A merlin him they call,
Which untill the grounde did strike the grype,
That dead he downe did fall.

Giffe I were a man, as now I am none,
A battell wold I prove,
To fight with that traitor Aldingar,
Att him I cast my glove.

But seeing Ime able noe battell to make,
My liege, grant me a knight
To fight with that traitor Sir Aldingar,
To maintaine me in my right.

"Now forty dayes I will give thee
To seeke thee a knight therein:
If thou find not a knight in forty dayes
Thy bodye it must brenn."

Then shee sent east, and shee sent west,

By north and south bedeene:
But never a champion colde she find,
Wolde fight with that knight soe keene.

Now twenty dayes were spent and gone,
Noe helpe there might be had;
Many a teare shed our comelye queene
And aye her hart was sad.

Then came one of the queenes damsèlles,
And knelt upon her knee,
"Cheare up, cheare up, my gracious dame,
I trust yet helpe may be:

And here I will make mine avowe,
And with the same me binde;
That never will I return to thee,
Till I some helpe may finde."

Then forth she rode on a faire palfràye
Oer hill and dale about:
But never a champion colde she finde,
Wolde fighte with that knight so stout.

And nowe the daye drewe on a pace,
When our good queene must dye;
All woe-begone was that faire damsèlle,
When she found no helpe was nye.

All woe-begone was that faire damsèlle,
And the salt teares fell from her eye:
When lo! as she rode by a rivers side,
She met with a tinye boye.

A tinye boye she mette, God wot,
All clad in mantle of golde;
He seemed noe more in mans likenesse,
Then a childe of four yeere old.

Why grieve you, damselle faire, he sayd,
And what doth cause you moane?
The damsell scant wolde deigne a looke,
But fast she pricked on.

Yet turne againe, thou faire damsèlle
And greete thy queene from mee:
When bale is att hiest, boote is nyest,
Nowe helpe enoughe may bee.

Bid her remember what she dreamt
In her bedd, wheras shee laye;
How when the grype and grimly beast
Wolde have carried her crowne awaye,

Even then there came the little gray hawke,
And saved her from his clawes:
Then bidd the queene be merry at hart,
For heaven will fende her cause.

Back then rode that faire damselle,
And her hart it lept for glee:
And when she told her gracious dame
A gladd woman then was shee:

But when the appointed day was come,
No helpe appeared nye:
Then woeful, woeful was her hart,
And the teares stood in her eye.

And nowe a fyer was built of wood;
And a stake was made of tree;
And now Queene Elinor forth was led,
A sorrowful sight to see.

Three times the herault he waved his hand,
And three times spake on hye:
Giff any good knight will fende this dame,
Come forth, or shee must dye.

No knight stood forth, no knight there came,
No helpe appeared nye:
And now the fyer was lighted up,
Queen Elinor she must dye.

And now the fyer was lighted up,
As hot as hot might bee;
When riding upon a little white steed,
The tinye boy they see.

"Away with that stake, away with those brands,
And loose our comelye queene:
I am come to fight with Sir Aldingar,
And prove him a traitor keene."

Forthe then stood Sir Aldingar,
But when he saw the chylde,
He laughed, and scoffed, and turned his backe,
And weened he had been beguylde.

"Now turne, now turne thee, Aldingar,
And eyther fighte or flee;
I trust that I shall avenge the wronge,
Thoughe I am so small to see."

The boy pulld forth a well good sworde
So gilt it dazzled the ee;
The first stroke stricken at Aldingar,
Smote off his leggs by the knee.

"Stand up, stand up, thou false traitòr,
And fight upon thy feete,
For and thou thrive, as thou begin'st,
Of height wee shall be meete."

A priest, a priest, sayes Aldingàr,
While I am a man alive.
A priest, a priest, sayes Aldingàr,
Me for to houzle and shrive.

I wolde have laine by our comlie queene,
Bot shee wolde never consent;
Then I thought to betraye her unto our kinge
In a fyer to have her brent.

There came a lazar to the kings gates,
A lazar both blind and lame:
I tooke the lazar upon my backe,
And on her bedd had him layne.

Then ranne I to our comlye king,
These tidings sore to tell.
But ever alacke! sayes Aldingar,
Falsing never doth well.

Forgive, forgive me, queene, madame,
The short time I must live.
"Nowe Christ forgive thee, Aldingar,
As freely I forgive."

Here take thy queene, our king Harryè,
And love her as thy life,
For never had a king in Christentye.
A truer and fairer wife.

King Henrye ran to claspe his queene,
And loosed her full sone:
Then turned to look for the tinye boye;
--The boye was vanisht and gone.

But first he had touched the lazar man,
And stroakt him with his hand:
The lazar under the gallowes tree
All whole and sounde did stand.

The lazar under the gallowes tree
Was comelye, straight and tall;
King Henrye made him his head stewàrde
To wayte withinn his hall.

EDOM O' GORDON



It fell about the Martinmas,
Quhen the wind blew shril and cauld,
Said Edom o' Gordon to his men,
We maun draw till a hauld.

And quhat a hauld sall we draw till,
My mirry men and me?
We wul gae to the house o' the Rodes,
To see that fair ladie.

The lady stude on her castle wa',
Beheld baith dale and down:
There she was ware of a host of men
Cum ryding towards the toun.

O see ze nat, my mirry men a'?
O see za nat quhat I see?
Methinks I see a host of men:
I marveil quha they be.

She weend it had been hir luvly lord,
As he cam ryding hame;
It was the traitor Edom o' Gordon,
Quha reckt nae sin nor shame.

She had nae sooner buskit hirsell,
And putten on hir gown,
But Edom o' Gordon and his men
Were round about the toun.

They had nae sooner supper sett,
Nae sooner said the grace,
But Edom o' Gordon and his men
Were light about the place.

The lady ran up to hir towir head,
Sa fast as she could hie,
To see if by hir fair speechè
She could wi' him agree.

But quhan he see this lady saif,
And hir yates all locked fast,
He fell into a rage of wrath,
And his look was all aghast.

Cum doun to me, ze lady gay,
Cum doun, cum doun to me:
This night sall ye lig within mine armes,
To-morrow my bride sall be.

I winnae cum doun ze fals Gordòn,
I winnae cum doun to thee;
I winna forsake my ain dear lord,
That is sae far frae me.

Give owre zour house, ze lady fair,
Give owre zour house to me,
Or I sall brenn yoursel therein,
Bot and zour babies three.

I winnae give owre, ze false Gordòn,
To nae sik traitor as zee;
And if ze brenn my ain dear babes,
My lord sall make ze drie.

But reach my pistoll, Glaud my man,
And charge ze weil my gun:
For, but an I pierce that bluidy butcher,
My babes we been undone.

She stude upon hir castle wa',
And let twa bullets flee:
She mist that bluidy butchers hart,
And only raz'd his knee.

Set fire to the house, quo' fals Gordòn,
All wood wi' dule and ire:
Fals lady, ze sall rue this deid,
As ze bren in the fire.

Wae worth, wae worth ze, Jock my man,
I paid ze weil zour fee;
Quhy pu' ze out the ground-wa' stane,
Lets in the reek to me?

And ein wae worth ze, Jock my man,
I paid ze weil zour hire;
Quhy pu' ze out the ground-wa' stane,
To me lets in the fire?

Ze paid me weil my hire, lady;
Ze paid me weil my fee:
But now I'm Edom o' Gordons man,
Maun either doe or die.

O than bespaik hir little son,
Sate on the nurses knee:
Sayes, Mither deare, gi' owre this house,
For the reek it smithers me.

I wad gie a' my gowd, my childe,
Say wald I a' my fee,
For ane blast o' the western wind,
To blaw the reek frae thee.

O then bespaik hir dochter dear,
She was baith jimp and sma;
O row me in a pair o' sheits,
And tow me owre the wa.

They rowd hir in a pair o' sheits,
And towd hir owre the wa:
But on the point of Gordons spear
She gat a deadly fa.

O bonnie bonnie was hir mouth,
And cherry were her cheiks,
And clear clear was hir zellow hair,
Whereon the reid bluid dreips.

Then wi' his spear he turnd hir owre,
O gin hir face was wan!
He sayd, Ze are the first that eir
I wisht alive again.

He turnd hir owre and owre againe,
O gin hir skin was whyte!
I might ha spared that bonnie face
To hae been sum mans delyte.

Busk and boun, my merry men a',
For ill dooms I doe guess;
I cannae luik in that bonnie face,
As it lyes on the grass.

Thame, luiks to freits, my master deir,
Then freits wil follow thame:
Let neir be said brave Edom o' Gordon
Was daunted by a dame.

But quhen the ladye see the fire
Cum flaming owre hir head,
She wept and kist her children twain,
Sayd, Bairns, we been but dead.

The Gordon then his bougill blew,
And said, Awa', awa';
This house o' the Rodes is a' in flame,
I hauld it time to ga'.

O then bespyed hir ain dear lord,
As hee cam ovr the lee;
He sied his castle all in blaze Sa far as he could see.

Then sair, O sair his mind misgave,
And all his hart was wae;
Put on, put on, my wighty men,
So fast as ze can gae.

Put on, put on, my wighty men,
Sa fast as ze can drie;
For he that is hindmost of the thrang
Sall neir get guid o' me.

Than sum they rade, and sum they rin,
Fou fast out-owr the bent;
But eir the foremost could get up,
Baith lady and babes were brent.

He wrang his hands, he rent his hair,
And wept in teenefu' muid:
O traitors, for this cruel deid
Ze sall weep tiers o' bluid.

And after the Gordon he is gane,
Sa fast as he might drie.
And soon i' the Gordon's foul hartis bluid
He's wroken his dear ladie.





God prosper long our noble king,
Our lives and safetyes all;
A woefull hunting once there did
In Chevy-Chace befall;

To drive the deere with hound and horne,
Erle Percy took his way,
The child may rue that is unborne,
The hunting of that day.

The stout Erle of Northumberland
A vow to God did make,
His pleasure in the Scottish woods
Three summers days to take;

The cheefest harts in Chevy-chace
To kill and beare away.
These tydings to Erle Douglas came,
In Scotland where he lay:

Who sent Erle Percy present word,
He wold prevent his sport.
The English erle, not fearing that,
Did to the woods resort

With fifteen hundred bow-men bold;
All chosen men of might,
Who knew full well in time of neede
To ayme their shafts arright.

The galland greyhounds swiftly ran,
To chase the fallow deere:
On munday they began to hunt,
Ere day-light did appeare;

And long before high noone they had

An hundred fat buckes slaine;
Then having dined, the drovyers went
To rouze the deare againe.

The bow-men mustered on the hills,
Well able to endure;
Theire backsides all, with speciall care,
That day were guarded sure.

The hounds ran swiftly through the woods,
The nimble deere to take,
That with their cryes the hills and dales
An eccho shrill did make.

Lord Percy to the quarry went,
To view the slaughter'd deere;
Quoth he, Erle Douglas promised
This day to meet me heere:

But if I thought he wold not come,
Noe longer wold I stay.
With that, a brave younge gentleman
Thus to the Erle did say:

Loe, yonder doth Erle Douglas come,
His men in armour bright;
Full twenty hundred Scottish speres
All marching in our sight;

All men of pleasant Tivydale,
Fast by the river Tweede:
O cease your sports, Erle Percy said,
And take your bowes with speede:

And now with me, my countrymen,
Your courage forth advance;
For there was never champion yett,
In Scotland nor in France,

That ever did on horsebacke come,
But if my hap it were,
I durst encounter man for man,
With him to break a spere.

Erle Douglas on his milke-white steede,
Most like a baron bolde,
Rode foremost of his company,
Whose armour shone like gold.

Show me, sayd hee, whose men you bee,
That hunt soe boldly heere,
That, without my consent, doe chase
And kill my fallow-deere.

The first man that did answer make
Was noble Percy hee;
Who sayd, Wee list not to declare,
Nor shew whose men wee bee:

Yet wee will spend our deerest blood,
Thy cheefest harts to slay.
Then Douglas swore a solempne oathe,
And thus in rage did say,

Ere thus I will out-braved bee,
One of us two shall dye:
I know thee well, an erle thou art;
Lord Percy, soe am I.

But trust me, Percy, pittye it were,
And great offence to kill
Any of these our guiltlesse men,
For they have done no ill.

Let thou and I the battell trye,
And set our men aside.
Accurst bee he, Erle Percy sayd,
By whome this is denyed.

Then stept a gallant squier forth,
Witherington was his name,
Who said, I wold not have it told
To Henry our king for shame,

That ere my captaine fought on foote,
And I stood looking on.
You be two erles, sayd Witherington,
And I a squier alone:

He doe the best that doe I may,
While I have power to stand:
While I have power to weeld my sword
He fight with hart and hand.

Our English archers bent their bowes,
Their harts were good and trew;
Att the first flight of arrowes sent,
Full four-score Scots they slew.

Yet bides Earl Douglas on the bent,
As Chieftain stout and good.
As valiant Captain, all unmov'd
The shock he firmly stood.

His host he parted had in three,
As Leader ware and try'd,
And soon his spearmen on their foes
Bare down on every side.

To drive the deere with hound and horne,
Douglas bade on the bent
Two captaines moved with mickle might
Their speres to shivers went.

Throughout the English archery
They dealt full many a wound:
But still our valiant Englishmen
All firmly kept their ground:

And throwing strait their bows away,
They grasp'd their swords so bright:
And now sharp blows, a heavy shower,
On shields and helmets light.

They closed full fast on every side,
Noe slackness there was found:
And many a gallant gentleman
Lay gasping on the ground.

O Christ! it was a grieffe to see;
And likewise for to heare,
The cries of men lying in their gore,
And scattered here and there.

At last these two stout erles did meet,
Like captaines of great might:
Like lyons wood, they layd on lode,
And made a cruell fight:

They fought untill they both did sweat,
With swords of tempered steele;
Untill the blood, like drops of rain,
They tricklin downe did feele.

Yeeld thee, Lord Percy, Douglas sayd
In faith I will thee bringe,
Where thou shalt high advanced bee
By James our Scottish king:

Thy ransome I will freely give,
And this report of thee,
Thou art the most couragious knight,
That ever I did see.

Noe, Douglas, quoth Erle Percy then,
Thy proffer I doe scorne;
I will not yeelde to any Scott,
That ever yett was borne.

With that, there came an arrow keene
Out of an English bow,
Which struck Erle Douglas to the heart,
A deepe and deadlye blow:

Who never spake more words than these,
Fight on, my merry men all;
For why, my life is at an end;
Lord Percy sees my fall.

Then leaving liffe, Erie Percy tooke
The dead man by the hand;
And said, Erle Douglas, for thy life
Wold I had lost my land.

O Christ! my verry hart doth bleed
With sorrow for thy sake;
For sure, a more redoubted knight
Mischance cold never take.

A knight amongst the Scotts there was
Which saw Erle Douglas dye,
Who streight in wrath did vow revenge
Upon the Lord Percy:

Sir Hugh Mountgomery was he call'd,
Who, with a spere most bright,
Well-mounted on a gallant steed,
Ran fiercely through the fight;

And past the English archers all,
Without all dread or feare;
And through Earl Percyes body then
He thrust his hatefull spere;

With such a vehement force and might
He did his body gore,
The staff ran through the other side
A large cloth-yard and more.

So thus did both these nobles dye,
Whose courage none could staine:
An English archer then perceiv'd
The noble erle was slaine;

He had a bow bent in his hand,
Made of a trusty tree;
An arrow of a cloth-yard long
Up to the head drew hee:

Against Sir Hugh Mountgomerye,
So right the shaft he sett,
The grey goose-winge that was thereon,
In his harts bloode was wette.

This fight did last from breake of day,
Till setting of the sun;
For when they rang the evening-bell,
The battel scarce was done.

With stout Erle Percy there was slaine
Sir John of Egerton,
Sir Robert Ratcliff, and Sir John,
Sir James that bold barròn:

And with Sir George and stout Sir James,
Both knights of good account,
Good Sir Ralph Raby there was slaine,
Whose prowesse did surmount.

For Witherington needs must I wayle,
As one in doleful dumpes;
For when his leggs were smitten off,
He fought upon his stumpes.

And with Erle Douglas, there was slaine
Sir Hugh Montgomerye,
Sir Charles Murray, that from the feeld
One foote wold never flee.

Sir Charles Murray, of Ratcliff, too,
His sisters sonne was hee;
Sir David Lamb, so well esteem'd,
Yet saved cold not bee.

And the Lord Maxwell in like case
Did with Erle Douglas dye:
Of twenty hundred Scottish speres,
Scarce fifty-five did flye.

Of fifteen hundred Englishmen,
Went home but fifty-three;
The rest were slaine in Chevy-Chace,
Under the greene woode tree.

Next day did many widowes come,
Their husbands to bewayle;
They washt their wounds in brinish teares,
But all wold not prevayle.

Theyr bodyes, bathed in purple gore,
They bare with them away:
They kist them dead a thousand times,
Ere they were cladd in clay.

The news was brought to Eddenborrow,
Where Scottlands king did raigne,
That brave Erle Douglas suddenlye
Was with an arrow slaine:

O heavy newes, King James did say,
Scotland may witness bee,
I have not any captaine more
Of such account as hee.

Like tydings to King Henry came,
Within as short a space,
That Percy of Northumberland
Was slaine in Chevy-Chace:

Now God be with him, said our king,
Sith it will noe better bee;
I trust I have, within my realme,
Five hundred as good as hee:

Yett shall not Scotts nor Scotland say,
But I will vengeance take:
I'll be revenged on them all,
For brave Erle Percyes sake.

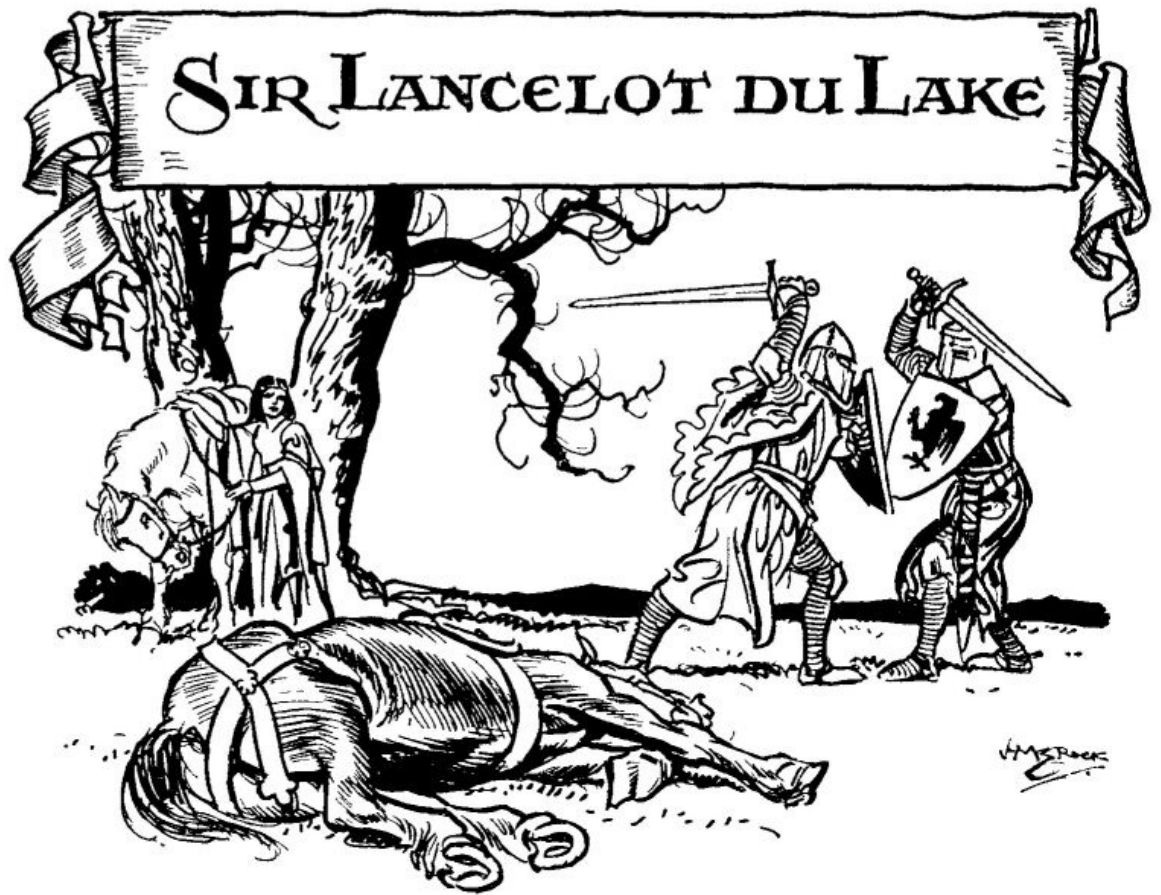
This vow full well the king perform'd
After, at Humbledowne;
In one day, fifty knights were slayne,
With lords of great renowne:

And of the rest, of small acount,
Did many thousands dye:
Thus endeth the hunting of Chevy-Chase,
Made by the Erle Percy.

God save our king, and bless this land
With plenty, joy, and peace;
And grant henceforth, that foule debate
'Twixt noblemen may cease.



SIR LANCELOT DU LAKE



When Arthur first in court began,
And was approved king,
By force of armes great victorys wanne,
And conquest home did bring,

Then into England straight he came
With fifty good and able
Knights, that resorted unto him,
And were of his round table:

And he had justs and turnaments,
Whereto were many prest,
Wherein some knights did far excell
And eke surmount the rest.

But one Sir Lancelot du Lake,
Who was approved well,
He for his deeds and feats of armes
All others did excell.

When he had rested him a while,
In play, and game, and sportt,
He said he wold goe prove himselfe
In some adventurous sort.

He armed rode in a forrest wide,
And met a damsell faire,
Who told him of adventures great,
Whereto he gave great eare.

Such wold I find, quoth Lancelott:
For that cause came I hither.
Thou seemest, quoth shee, a knight full good,
And I will bring thee thither.

Wheras a mighty knight doth dwell,
That now is of great fame:
Therefore tell me what wight thou art,
And what may be thy name.

"My name is Lancelot du Lake."
Quoth she, it likes me than:
Here dwelles a knight who never was
Yet matcht with any man:

Who has in prison threescore knights
And four, that he did wound;
Knights of King Arthurs court they be,
And of his table round.

She brought him to a river side,
And also to a tree,
Whereon a copper bason hung,
And many shields to see.

He struck soe hard, the bason broke;
And Tarquin soon he spyed:
Who drove a horse before him fast,
Whereon a knight lay tyed.

Sir knight, then sayd Sir Lancelett,
Bring me that horse-load hither,
And lay him downe, and let him rest;
Weel try our force together:

For, as I understand, thou hast,
So far as thou art able,
Done great despite and shame unto
The knights of the Round Table.

If thou be of the Table Round,
Quoth Tarquin speedilye,
Both thee and all thy fellowship
I utterly defye.

That's over much, quoth Lancelott tho,
Defend thee by and by.
They sett their speares unto their steeds,
And eache att other flie.

They coucht their speares (their horses ran,
As though there had beene thunder),
And strucke them each immidst their shields,
Wherewith they broke in sunder.

Their horsses backes brake under them,
The knights were both astound:
To avoyd their horsses they made haste
And light upon the ground.

They tooke them to their shields full fast,
Their swords they drewe out than,
With mighty strokes most eagerlye
Each at the other ran.

They wounded were, and bled full sore,
They both for breath did stand,
And leaning on their swords awhile,
Quoth Tarquine, Hold thy hand,

And tell to me what I shall aske.
Say on, quoth Lancelot tho.
Thou art, quoth Tarquine, the best knight
That ever I did know:

And like a knight, that I did hate:
Soe that thou be not hee,
I will deliver all the rest,
And eke accord with thee.

That is well said, quoth Lancelott;
But sith it must be soe,
What knight is that thou hatest thus
I pray thee to me show.

His name is Lancelot du Lake,
He slew my brother deere;
Him I suspect of all the rest:
I would I had him here.

Thy wish thou hast, but yet unknowne,
I am Lancelot du Lake,
Now knight of Arthurs Table Round;
King Hauds son of Schuwake;

And I desire thee to do thy worst.
Ho, ho, quoth Tarquin tho'
One of us two shall ende our lives
Before that we do go.

If thou be Lancelot du Lake,
Then welcome shalt thou bee:
Wherefore see thou thyself defend,
For now defye I thee.

They buckled them together so,
Like unto wild boares rashing;
And with their swords and shields they ran
At one another slashing:

The ground besprinkled was with blood:
Tarquin began to yield;
For he gave backe for wearinesse,
And lowe did beare his shield.

This soone Sir Lancelot espyde,
He leapt upon him then,
He pull'd him downe upon his knee,
And rushing off his helm,

Forthwith he stricke his necke in two,
And, when he had soe done,
From prison threescore knights and four
Delivered everye one.

GIL MORRICE





Gil Morrice was an erles son,
His name it waxed wide;
It was nae for his great riches,
Nor zet his mickle pride;
Bot it was for a lady gay,
That livd on Carron side.

Quhair sail I get a bonny boy,
That will win hose and shoen;
That will gae to Lord Barnards ha',
And bid his lady cum?
And ze maun rin my errand, Willie;
And ze may rin wi' pride;
Quhen other boys gae on their foot
On horse-back ze sail ride.

O no! Oh no! my master dear!
I dare nae for my life;
I'll no gae to the bauld baròns,
For to triest furth his wife.
My bird Willie, my boy Willie;
My dear Willie, he sayd:
How can ze strive against the stream?
For I sall be obeyd.

Bot, O my master dear! he cryd,
In grene wod ze're zour lain;
Gi owre sic thochts, I walde ze rede,
For fear ze should be tain.
Haste, haste, I say, gae to the ha',
Bid hir cum here wi speid:
If ze refuse my heigh command,
Ill gar zour body bleid.

Gae bid hir take this gay mantel,
'Tis a' gowd hot the hem;
Bid hir cum to the gude grene wode,
And bring nane bot hir lain:
And there it is a silken sarke,
Hir ain hand sewd the sleive;
And bid hir cum to Gill Morice,
Speir nae bauld barons leave.

Yes, I will gae zour black errand,
Though it be to zour cost;
Sen ze by me will nae be warn'd,
In it ze sail find frost.
The baron he is a man of might,
He neir could bide to taunt,
As ze will see before its nicht,
How sma' ze hae to vaunt.

And sen I maun zour errand rin
Sae sair against my will,
I'se mak a vow and keip it trow,
It sall be done for ill.
And quhen he came to broken brigade,
He bent his bow and swam;
And quhen he came to grass growing,
Set down his feet and ran.

And quhen he came to Barnards ha',
Would neither chap nor ca':
Bot set his bent bow to his breist,
And lichtly lap the wa'.
He wauld nae tell the man his errand,
Though he stude at the gait;
Bot straiht into the ha' he cam,
Quhair they were set at meit.

Hail! hail! my gentle sire and dame!
My message winna waite;
Dame, ze maun to the gude grene wod
Before that it be late.

Ze're bidden tak this gay mantèl,
Tis a' gowd bot the hem:
Zou maun gae to the gude grene wode,
Ev'n by your sel alane.

And there it is, a silken sarke,
Your ain hand sewd the sleive;
Ze maun gae speik to Gill Morice:
Speir nae bauld barons leave.
The lady stamped wi' hir foot,
And winked wi' hir ee;
Bot a' that she coud say or do,
Forbidden he wad nae bee.

Its surely to my bow'r-womàn;
It neir could be to me.
I brocht it to Lord Barnards lady;
I trow that ze be she.
Then up and spack the wylie nurse,
(The bairn upon hir knee)
If it be cum frae Gill Morice,
It's deir welcum to mee.

Ze leid, ze leid, ze filthy nurse,
Sae loud I heird zee lee;
I brocht it to Lord Barnards lady;
I trow ze be nae shee.
Then up and spack the bauld baròn,
An angry man was hee;
He's tain the table wi' his foot,
Sae has he wi' his knee;
Till siller cup and 'mazer' dish
In flinders he gard flee.

Gae bring a robe of zour cliding,
That hings upon the pin;
And I'll gae to the gude grene wode,
And speik wi' zour lemmàn.
O bide at hame, now Lord Barnàrd,
I warde ze bide at hame;
Neir wyte a man for violence,
That neir wate ze wi' nane.

Gil Morice sate in gude grene wode,
He whistled and he sang:
O what mean a' the folk comìng,
My mother tarries lang.
His hair was like the threeds of gold,
Drawne frae Minerva's loome:
His lipps like roses drapping dew,
His breath was a' perfume.

His brow was like the mountain snae
Gilt by the morning beam:
His cheeks like living roses glow:
His een like azure stream.
The boy was clad in robes of grene,
Sweete as the infant spring:

And like the mavis on the bush,
He gart the vallies ring.

The baron came to the grene wode,
Wi' mickle dule and care,
And there he first spied Gill Morice
Kameing his zellow hair:
That sweetly wavd around his face,
That face beyond compare:
He sang sae sweet it might dispel
A' rage but fell despair.

Nae wonder, nae wonder, Gill Morice,
My lady loed thee weel,
The fairest part of my bodie
Is blacker than thy heel.
Zet neir the less now, Gill Morice,
For a' thy great beautiè,
Ze's rew the day ze eir was born;
That head sall gae wi' me.

Now he has drawn his trusty brand,
And slaited on the strae;
And thro' Gill Morice' fair body
He's gar cauld iron gae.
And he has tain Gill Morice's head
And set it on a speir;
The meanest man in a' his train
Has gotten that head to bear.

And he has tain Gill Morice up,
Laid him across his steid,
And brocht him to his painted bowr,
And laid him on a bed.
The lady sat on castil wa',
Beheld baith dale and doun;
And there she saw Gill Morice' head
Cum trailing to the toun.

Far better I loe that bluidy head,
Both and that zellow hair,
Than Lord Barnard, and a' his lands,
As they lig here and thair.
And she has tain her Gill Morice,
And kissd baith mouth and chin:
I was once as fow of Gill Morice,
As the hip is o' the stean.

I got ze in my father's house,
Wi' mickle sin and shame;
I brocht thee up in gude grene wode,
Under the heavy rain.
Oft have I by thy cradle sitten,
And fondly seen thee sleip;
But now I gae about thy grave,
The saut tears for to weip.

And syne she kissd his bluidy cheik,

And syne his bluidy chin:
O better I loe my Gill Morice
Than a' my kith and kin!
Away, away, ze ill womàn,
And an il deith mait ze dee:
Gin I had kend he'd bin zour son,
He'd neir bin slain for mee.

Obraid me not, my Lord Barnard!
Obraid me not for shame!
Wi' that saim speir O pierce my heart!
And put me out o' pain.
Since nothing bot Gill Morice head
Thy jelous rage could quell,
Let that saim hand now tak hir life,
That neir to thee did ill.

To me nae after days nor nichts
Will eir be saft or kind;
I'll fill the air with heavy sighs,
And greet till I am blind.
Enouch of blood by me's been spilt,
Seek not zour death frae mee;
I rather lourd it had been my sel
Than eather him or thee.

With waefo wae I hear zour plaint;
Sair, sair I rew the deid,
That eir this cursed hand of mine
Had gard his body bleid.
Dry up zour tears, my winsome dame,
Ze neir can heal the wound;
Ze see his head upon the speir,
His heart's blude on the ground.

I curse the hand that did the deid,
The heart that thocht the ill;
The feet that bore me wi' sik speid,
The comely zouth to kill.
I'll ay lament for Gill Morice,
As gin he were mine ain;
I'll neir forget the dreiry day
On which the zouth was slain.



THE CHILD of ELLE



On yondre hill a castle standes

With walles and towres bedight,
And yonder lives the Child of Elle,
A younge and comely knighte.

The Child of Elle to his garden went,
And stood at his garden pale,
Whan, lo! he beheld fair Emmelines page
Come trippinge downe the dale.

The Child of Elle he hyed him thence,
Y-wis he stooode not stille,
And soone he mette faire Emmelines page
Come climbinge up the hille.

Nowe Christe thee save, thou little foot-page,
Now Christe thee save and see!
Oh telle me how does thy ladye gaye,
And what may thy tydinges bee?

My ladye shee is all woe-begone,
And the teares they falle from her eyne;
And aye she laments the deadlye feude
Betweene her house and thine.

And here shee sends thee a silken scarfe
Bedewde with many a teare,
And biddes thee sometimes thinke on her,
Who loved thee so deare.

And here shee sends thee a ring of golde
The last boone thou mayst have,
And biddes thee weare it for her sake,
Whan she is layde in grave.

For, ah! her gentle heart is broke,
And in grave soone must shee bee,
Sith her father hath chose her a new new love,
And forbidde her to think of thee.

Her father hath brought her a carlish knight,
Sir John of the north countraye,
And within three dayes she must him wedde,
Or he vowes he will her slaye.

Nowe hye thee backe, thou little foot-page,
And greet thy ladye from mee,
And telle her that I her owne true love
Will dye, or sette her free.

Nowe hye thee backe, thou little foot-page,
And let thy fair ladye know
This night will I bee at her bowre-windowe,
Betide me weale or woe.

The boye he tripped, the boye he ranne,
He neither stint ne stayd
Untill he came to fair Emmelines bowre,
Whan kneeling downe he sayd,

O ladye, I've been with thine own true love,
And he greets thee well by mee;
This night will hee bee at thy bowre-windòwe,
And dye or sett thee free.

Nowe daye was gone, and night was come,
And all were fast asleepe,
All save the Ladye Emmeline,
Who sate in her bowre to weepe:

And soone shee heard her true loves voice
Lowe whispering at the walle,
Awake, awake, my deare ladyè,
Tis I thy true love call.

Awake, awake, my ladye deare,
Come, mount this faire palfràyè:
This ladder of ropes will lette thee downe
He carrye thee hence awaye.

Nowe nay, nowe nay, thou gentle knight,
Nowe nay, this may not bee;
For aye shold I tint my maiden fame,
If alone I should wend with thee.

O ladye, thou with a knichte so true
Mayst safelye wend alone,
To my ladye mother I will thee bringe,
Where marriage shall make us one.

"My father he is a baron bolde,
Of lynage proude and hye;
And what would he saye if his daughtèr
Awaye with a knight should fly

"Ah! well I wot, he never would rest,
Nor his meate should doe him no goode,
Until he hath slayne thee, Child of Elle,
And scene thy deare hearts bloode."

O ladye, wert thou in thy saddle sette,
And a little space him fro,
I would not care for thy cruel fathèr,
Nor the worst that he could doe.

O ladye, wert thou in thy saddle sette,
And once without this walle,
I would not care for thy cruel fathèr
Nor the worst that might befallè.

Faire Emmeline sighed, fair Emmeline wept,
And aye her heart was woe:
At length he seized her lilly-white hand,
And downe the ladder he drewe:

And thrice he clasped her to his breste,
And kist her tenderlìe:
The teares that fell from her fair eyes
Ranne like the fountayne free.

Hee mounted himselfe on his steede so talle,
And her on a fair palfràye,
And slung his bugle about his necke,
And roundlye they rode awaye.

All this beheard her owne damsèlle,
In her bed whereas shee ley,
Quoth shee, My lord shall knowe of this,
Soe I shall have golde and fee.

Awake, awake, thou baron bolde!
Awake, my noble dame!
Your daughter is fledde with the Child of Elle
To doe the deede of shame.

The baron he woke, the baron he rose,
And called his merrye men all:
"And come thou forth, Sir John the knighte,
Thy ladye is carried to thrall."

Faire Emmeline scant had ridden a mile,
A mile forth of the towne,
When she was aware of her fathers men
Come galloping over the downe:

And foremost came the carlish knight,
Sir John of the north countràye:
"Nowe stop, nowe stop, thou false traitoure,
Nor carry that ladye awaye.

"For she is come of hye lineàge,
And was of a ladye borne,
And ill it beseems thee, a false churl's sonne,
To carrye her hence to scorne."

Nowe loud thou lyst, Sir John the knight,
Nowe thou doest lye of mee;
A knight mee gott, and a ladye me bore,
Soe never did none by thee

But light nowe downe, my ladye faire,
Light downe, and hold my steed,
While I and this discourteous knighte
Doe trye this arduous deede.

But light now downe, my deare ladyè,
Light downe, and hold my horse;
While I and this discourteous knight
Doe trye our valour's force.

Fair Emmeline sighed, fair Emmeline wept,
And aye her heart was woe,
While twixt her love and the carlish knight
Past many a baleful blowe.

The Child of Elle hee fought so well,
As his weapon he waved amaine,
That soone he had slaine the carlish knight,
And layd him upon the plaine.

And nowe the baron and all his men
Full fast approached nye:
Ah! what may ladye Emmeline doe
Twere nowe no boote to flye.

Her lover he put his horne to his mouth,
And blew both loud and shrill,
And soone he saw his owne merry men
Come ryding over the hill.

"Nowe hold thy hand, thou bold baròn,
I pray thee hold thy hand,
Nor ruthless rend two gentle hearts
Fast knit in true love's band.

Thy daughter I have dearly loved
Full long and many a day;
But with such love as holy kirke
Hath freelye sayd wee may.

O give consent, shee may be mine,
And blesse a faithfull paire:
My lands and livings are not small,
My house and lineage faire:

My mother she was an earl's daughtèr,
And a noble knyght my sire--
The baron he frowned, and turn'd away
With mickle dole and ire.

Fair Emmeline sighed, faire Emmeline wept,
And did all trembling stand:
At lengthe she sprang upon her knee,
And held his lifted hand.

Pardon, my lorde and father deare,
This faire yong knyght and mee:
Trust me, but for the carlish knyght,
I never had fled from thee.

Oft have you called your Emmeline
Your darling and your joye;
O let not then your harsh resolves
Your Emmeline destroye.

The baron he stroakt his dark-brown cheeke,
And turned his heade asyde
To whipe away the starting teare
He proudly strave to hyde.

In deepe revolving thought he stoode,
And mused a little space;
Then raised faire Emmeline from the grounde,
With many a fond embrace.

Here take her, Child of Elle, he sayd,
And gave her lillye white hand;
Here take my deare and only child,
And with her half my land:

Thy father once mine honour wrongde
In dayes of youthful pride;
Do thou the injurye repayre
In fondnesse for thy bride.

And as thou love her, and hold her deare,
Heaven prosper thee and thine:
And nowe my blessing wend wi' thee,
My lovelye Emmeline.



CHILD WATERS

CHILD WATERS





Childe Waters in his stable stode
And stroakt his milke white steede:
To him a fayre yonge ladye came
As ever ware womans weede.

Sayes, Christ you save, good Childe Waters;
Sayes, Christ you save, and see:
My girdle of gold that was too longe,
Is now too short for mee.

And all is with one chyld of yours,
I feel sturre att my side:
My gowne of greene it is too straighte;
Before, it was too wide.

If the child be mine, faire Ellen, he sayd,

Be mine, as you tell mee;
Then take you Cheshire and Lancashire both,
Take them your owne to bee.

If the childe be mine, fair Ellen, he sayd,
Be mine, as you doe sweare;
Then take you Cheshire and Lancashire both,
And make that child your heyre.

Shee saies, I had rather have one kisse,
Child Waters, of thy mouth;
Than I wolde have Cheshire and Lancashire both,
That laye by north and south.

And I had rather have one twinkling,
Childe Waters, of thine ee;
Then I wolde have Cheshire and Lancashire both,
To take them mine owne to bee.

To morrow, Ellen, I must forth ryde
Farr into the north countrie;
The fairest lady that I can find,
Ellen, must goe with mee.

'Thoughe I am not that lady fayre,
'Yet let me go with thee:'
And ever I pray you, Child Waters,
Your foot-page let me bee.

If you will my foot-page be, Ellen,
As you doe tell to mee;
Then you must cut your gowne of greene,
An inch above your knee:

Soe must you doe your yellow lockes,
An inch above your ee:
You must tell no man what is my name;
My foot-page then you shall bee.

Shee, all the long day Child Waters rode,
Ran barefoote by his side;
Yett was he never soe courteous a knighte,
To say, Ellen, will you ryde?

Shee, all the long day Child Waters rode,
Ran barefoote thorow the broome;
Yett hee was never soe curteous a knighte,
To say, put on your shoone.

Ride softlye, shee sayd, O Childe Waters,
Why doe you ryde soe fast?
The childe, which is no mans but thine,
My bodye itt will brast.

Hee sayth, seeth thou yonder water, Ellen,
That flows from bank to brimme?--
I trust to God, O Child Waters,
You never will see mee swimme.

But when shee came to the waters side,
Shee sayled to the chinne:
Except the Lord of heaven be my speed,
Now must I learne to swimme.

The salt waters bare up her clothes;
Our Ladye bare upp her chinne:
Childe Waters was a woe man, good Lord,
To see faire Ellen swimme.

And when shee over the water was,
Shee then came to his knee:
He said, Come hither, thou fair Ellèn,
Loe yonder what I see.

Seest thou not yonder hall, Ellen?
Of redd gold shines the yate;
Of twenty foure faire ladyes there,
The fairest is my mate.

Seest thou not yonder hall, Ellen?
Of redd gold shines the towre:
There are twenty four fair ladyes there,
The fairest is my paramoure.

I see the hall now, Child Waters,
Of redd golde shines the yate:
God give you good now of yourselfe,
And of your worthye mate.

I see the hall now, Child Waters,
Of redd gold shines the towre:
God give you good now of yourselfe,
And of your paramoure.

There twenty four fayre ladyes were
A playing att the ball:
And Ellen the fairest ladye there,
Must bring his steed to the stall.

There twenty four fayre ladyes were
A playinge at the chesse;
And Ellen the fayrest ladye there,
Must bring his horse to gresse.

And then bespake Childe Waters sister,
These were the wordes said shee:
You have the prettyest foot-page, brother,
That ever I saw with mine ee.

But that his bellye it is soe bigg,
His girdle goes wonderous hie:
And let him, I pray you, Childe Watères,
Goe into the chamber with mee.

It is not fit for a little foot-page,
That has run throughe mosse and myre,
To go into the chamber with any ladye,
That weares soe riche attyre.

It is more meete for a litle foot-page,
That has run throughe mosse and myre,
To take his supper upon his knee,
And sitt downe by the kitchen fyer.

But when they had supped every one,
To bedd they tooke theyr waye:
He sayd, come hither, my little foot-page,
And hearken what I saye.

Goe thee downe into yonder towne,
And low into the street;
The fayrest ladye that thou can finde,

Hyer her in mine armes to sleepe,
And take her up in thine armes twaine,
For filinge of her feete.

Ellen is gone into the towne,
And low into the streete:
The fairest ladye that she cold find,
Shee hyred in his armes to sleepe;
And tooke her up in her armes twayne,
For filing of her feete.

I pray you nowe, good Child Watèrs,
Let mee lye at your bedds feete:
For there is noe place about this house,
Where I may 'saye a sleepe.

'He gave her leave, and faire Ellèn
'Down at his beds feet laye:'
This done the nighte drove on apace,
And when it was neare the daye,

Hee sayd, Rise up, my litle foot-page,
Give my steede corne and haye;
And soe doe thou the good black oats,
To carry mee better awaye.

Up then rose the faire Ellèn,
And gave his steede corne and hay:
And soe shee did the good blacke oats,
To carry him the better away.

Shee leaned her backe to the manger side,
And grievouslye did groane:
Shee leaned her backe to the manger side,
And there shee made her moane.

And that beheard his mother deere,
Shee heard her there monand.
Shee sayd, Rise up, thou Childe Watèrs,
I think thee a cursed man.

For in thy stable is a ghost,
That grievouslye doth grone:
Or else some woman laboures of childe,
She is soe woe-begone.

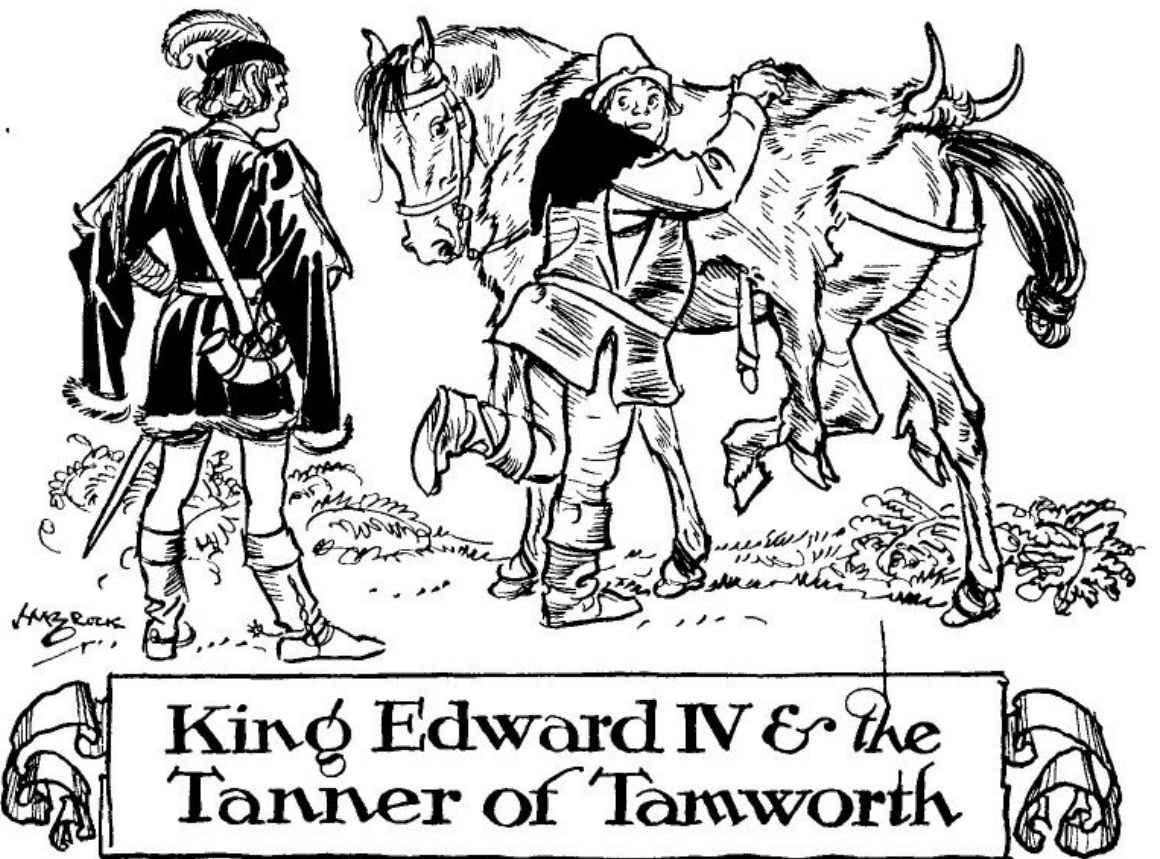
Up then rose Childe Waters soon,
And did on his shirte of silke;
And then he put on his other clothes,
On his body as white as milke.

And when he came to the stable dore,
Full still there he did stand,
That hee mighte heare his fayre Ellèn
Howe shee made her monànd.

Shee sayd, Lullabye, mine owne deere child,
Lullabye, dere child, dere;
I wold thy father were a king,
Thy mother layd on a biere.

Peace now, he said, good faire Ellèn,
Be of good cheere, I praye;
And the bridal and the churching both
Shall bee upon one day.

KING EDWARD IV & THE TANNER OF TAMWORTH



In summer time, when leaves grow greene,
And blossoms bedecke the tree,
King Edward wolde a hunting ryde,
Some pastime for to see.

With hawke and hounde he made him bowne,
With horne, and eke with bowe;
To Drayton Basset he tooke his waye,
With all his lordes a rowe.

And he had ridden ore dale and downe
By eight of clocke in the day,
When he was ware of a bold tannèr,
Come ryding along the waye.

A fayre russet coat the tanner had on
Fast buttoned under his chin,
And under him a good cow-hide,
And a marc of four shilling.

Nowe stand you still, my good lordes all,
Under the grene wood spraye;
And I will wend to yonder fellowe,
To weet what he will saye.

God speede, God speede thee, said our king.
Thou art welcome, Sir, sayd hee.
"The readiest waye to Drayton Basset
I praye thee to shew to mee."

"To Drayton Basset woldst thou goe,
Fro the place where thou dost stand?
The next payre of gallowes thou comest unto,
Turne in upon thy right hand."

That is an unreadye waye, sayd our king,
Thou doest but jest, I see;
Nowe shewe me out the nearest waye,
And I pray thee wend with mee.

Away with a vengeance! quoth the tanner:
I hold thee out of thy witt:
All daye have I rydden on Brocke my mare,
And I am fasting yett.

"Go with me downe to Drayton Basset,
No daynties we will spare;
All daye shalt thou eate and drinke of the best,
And I will paye thy fare."

Gramercye for nothing, the tanner replyde,
Thou payest no fare of mine:
I trowe I've more nobles in my purse,
Than thou hast pence in thine.

God give thee joy of them, sayd the king,
And send them well to priefe.
The tanner wolde faine have beene away,
For he weende he had beene a thiefe.

What art thou, hee sayde, thou fine fellowe,
Of thee I am in great feare,
For the clothes, thou wearest upon thy back,
Might beseeme a lord to weare.

I never stole them, quoth our king,
I tell you, Sir, by the roode.
"Then thou playest, as many an unthrift doth,
And standest in midds of thy goode."

What tydinges heare you, sayd the kynge,
As you ryde farre and neare?
"I heare no tydinges, Sir, by the masse,
But that cove-hides are deare."

"Cow-hides! cow-hides! what things are those?
I marvell what they bee?"
What, art thou a foole? the tanner reply'd;
I carry one under mee.

What craftsman art thou, said the king,
I pray thee tell me trowe.
"I am a barker, Sir, by my trade;
Nowe tell me what art thou?"

I am a poor courtier, Sir, quoth he,
That am forth of service worne;
And faine I wolde thy prentise bee,
Thy cuninge for to learne.

Marrye heaven forfend, the tanner replyde,
That thou my prentise were:
Thou woldst spend more good than I shold winne
By fortye shilling a yere.

Yet one thinge wolde I, sayd our king,
If thou wilt not seeme strange:
Thoughe my horse be better than thy mare,
Yet with thee I fain wold change.

"Why if with me thou faine wilt change,
As change full well maye wee,
By the faith of my bodye, thou proude fellowe
I will have some boot of thee."

That were against reason, sayd the king,
I sweare, so mote I thee:
My horse is better than thy mare,
And that thou well mayst see.

"Yea, Sir, but Brocke is gentle and mild,
And softly she will fare:
Thy horse is unrulye and wild, I wiss;
Aye skipping here and theare."

What boote wilt thou have? our king reply'd;
Now tell me in this stound.
"Noe pence, nor halfpence, by my faye,
But a noble in gold so round.

"Here's twentye groates of white moneye,
Sith thou will have it of mee."
I would have sworne now, quoth the tanner,
Thou hadst not had one pennie.

But since we two have made a change,
A change we must abide,
Although thou hast gotten Brocke my mare,
Thou gettest not my cove-hide.

I will not have it, sayd the kynge,
I sweare, so mought I thee;
Thy foule cove-hide I wolde not beare,
If thou woldst give it to mee.

The tanner hee tooke his good cove-hide,
That of the cow was bilt;
And threwe it upon the king's sadelle,
That was soe fayrelye gilte.
"Now help me up, thou fine fellowe,
'Tis time that I were gone:
When I come home to Gyllian my wife,
Sheel say I am a gentilmon."

The king he tooke him up by the legge;
The tanner a f----- lett fall.
Nowe marrye, good fellowe, sayd the king,
Thy courtesye is but small.

When the tanner he was in the kinges sadelle,
And his foote in the stirrup was;
He marvelled greatlye in his minde,
Whether it were golde or brass.

But when the steede saw the cows taile wagge,
And eke the blacke cowe-horne;
He stamped, and stared, and awaye he ranne,
As the devill had him borne.

The tanner he pulld, the tanner he sweat,
And held by the pummil fast:
At length the tanner came tumbling downe;
His necke he had well-nye brast.

Take thy horse again with a vengeance, he sayd,
With mee he shall not byde.
"My horse wolde have borne thee well enoughe,
But he knewe not of thy cowe-hide.

Yet if againe thou faine woldst change,
As change full well may wee,
By the faith of my bodye, thou jolly tannèr,
I will have some boote of thee."

What boote wilt thou have? the tanner replyd,
Nowe tell me in this stounde.
"Noe pence nor halfpence, Sir, by my faye,
But I will have twentye pound."

"Here's twentye groates out of my purse;
And twentye I have of thine:
And I have one more, which we will spend
Together at the wine."

The king set a bugle home to his mouthe,
And blewe both loude and shrille:
And soone came lords, and soone came knights,
Fast ryding over the hille.

Nowe, out alas! the tanner he cryde,
That ever I sawe this daye!
Thou art a strong thiefe, yon come thy fellowes
Will beare my cowe-hide away.

They are no thieves, the king replyde,
I sweare, soe mote I thee:
But they are the lords of the north countrèr,
Here come to hunt with mee.

And soone before our king they came,
And knelt downe on the grounde:
Then might the tanner have beene awaye,
He had lever than twentye pounce.

A collar, a collar, here: sayd the king,
A collar he loud gan crye:
Then woulde he lever than twentye pound,
He had not beene so nighe.

A collar, a collar, the tanner he sayd,
I trowe it will breed sorrowe:
After a collar cometh a halter,
I trow I shall be hang'd to-morrowe.

Be not afraid, tanner, said our king;
I tell thee, so mought I thee,
Lo here I make thee the best esquire
That is in the North countrie.

For Plumpton-parke I will give thee,
With tenements faire beside:
'Tis worth three hundred markes by the yeare,
To maintaine thy good cowe-hide.

Gramercye, my liege, the tanner replyde,
For the favour thou hast me showne;
If ever thou comest to merry Tamwòrth,
Neates leather shall clout thy shoen.



SIR PATRICK SPENS



The king sits in Dumferling toune,
Drinking the blude-reid wine:
O quhar will I get guid sailòr,
To sail this schip of mine.

Up and spak an eldern knicht,
Sat at the kings richt kne:
Sir Patrick Spens is the best sailòr,
That sails upon the se.

The king has written a braid letter,
And signd it wi' his hand;
And sent it to Sir Patrick Spens,
Was walking on the sand.

The first line that Sir Patrick red,
A loud lauch lauched he:
The next line that Sir Patrick red,
The teir blinded his ee.

O quha is this has don this deid,
This ill deid don to me;
To send me out this time o' the zeir,
To sail upon the se.

Mak hast, mak haste, my mirry men all,
Our guid schip sails the morne,
O say na sae, my master deir,
For I feir a deadlie storme.

Late late yestreen I saw the new moone
Wi' the auld moone in hir arme;
And I feir, I feir, my deir master,
That we will com to harme.

O our Scots nobles wer richt laith
To weet their cork-heild schoone;

Bot lang owre a' the play wer playd,
Thair hats they swam aboone.

O lang, lang, may thair ladies sit
Wi' thair fans into their hand,
Or eir they se Sir Patrick Spens
Cum sailing to the land.

O lang, lang, may the ladies stand
Wi' thair gold kems in their hair,
Waiting for thair ain deir lords,
For they'll se thame na mair.

Have owre, have owre to Aberdour,
It's fiftie fadom deip:
And thair lies guid Sir Patrick Spens,
Wi' the Scots lords at his feit.



THE EARL OF MAR'S DAUGHTER



The Earl of
Mar's Daughter



It was intill a pleasant time,
Upon a simmer's day,
The noble Earl of Mar's daughter
Went forth to sport and play.

As thus she did amuse hersell,
Below a green aik tree,
There she saw a sprightly doo
Set on a tower sae hie.

"O cow-me-doo, my love sae true,
If ye'll come down to me,
Ye 'se hae a cage o guid red gowd
Instead o simple tree:

"I'll put growd hingers roun your cage,
And siller roun your wa;

I'll gar ye shine as fair a bird
As ony o them a'."

But she hadnae these words well spoke,
Nor yet these words well said,
Till Cow-me-doo flew frae the tower
And lighted on her head.

Then she has brought this pretty bird
Hame to her bowers and ba,
And made him shine as fair a bird
As ony o them a'.

When day was gane, and night was come,
About the evening tide,
This lady spied a sprightly youth
Stand straight up by her side.

"From whence came ye, young man?" she said;
"That does surprise me sair;
My door was bolted right secure,
What way hae ye come here?"

"O had your tongue, ye lady fair,
Lat a' your folly be;
Mind ye not on your turtle-doo
Last day ye brought wi thee?"

"O tell me mair, young man," she said,
"This does surprise me now;
What country hae ye come frae?
What pedigree are you?"

"My mither lives on foreign isles,
She has nae mair but me;
She is a queen o wealth and state,
And birth and high degree.

"Likewise well skilld in magic spells,
As ye may plainly see,
And she transformd me to yon shape,
To charm such maids as thee.

"I am a doo the live-lang day,
A sprightly youth at night;
This aye gars me appear mair fair
In a fair maiden's sight.

"And it was but this verra day
That I came ower the sea;
Your lovely face did me enchant;
I'll live and dee wi thee."

"O Cow-me-doo, my luve sae true,
Nae mair frae me ye 'se gae;
That's never my intent, my luve,
As ye said, it shall be sae."

"O Cow-me-doo, my luve sae true,

It's time to gae to bed;"
"Wi a' my heart, my dear marrow,
It's be as ye hae said."

Then he has staid in bower wi her
For sax lang years and ane,
Till sax young sons to him she bare,
And the seventh she's brought hame.

But aye as ever a child was born
He carried them away,
And brought them to his mither's care,
As fast as he coud fly.

Thus he has staid in bower wi her
For twenty years and three;
There came a lord o high renown
To court this fair ladie.

But still his proffer she refused,
And a' his presents too;
Says, I'm content to live alane
Wi my bird, Cow-me-doo.

Her father sware a solemn oath
Amang the nobles all,
"The morn, or ere I eat or drink,
This bird I will gar kill."

The bird was sitting in his cage,
And heard what they did say;
And when he found they were dismist,
Says, Wae's me for this day!

"Before that I do langer stay,
And thus to be forlorn,
I'll gang unto my mither's bower,
Where I was bred and born."

Then Cow-me-doo took flight and flew
Beyond the raging sea,
And lighted near his mither's castle,
On a tower o gowd sae hie.

As his mither was wauking out,
To see what she coud see,
And there she saw her little son,
Set on the tower sae hie.

"Get dancers here to dance," she said,
"And minstrells for to play;
For here's my young son, Florentine,
Come here wi me to stay."

"Get nae dancers to dance, mither,
Nor minstrells for to play,
For the mither o my seven sons,
The morn's her wedding-day."

"O tell me, tell me, Florentine,
Tell me, and tell me true,
Tell me this day without a flaw,
What I will do for you."

"Instead of dancers to dance, mither,
Or minstrells for to play,
Turn four-and-twenty wall-wight men
Like storks in feathers gray;

"My seven sons in seven swans,
Aboon their heads to flee;
And I mysell a gay gos-hawk,
A bird o high degree."

Then sichin said the queen hersell,
"That thing's too high for me;"
But she applied to an auld woman,
Who had mair skill than she.

Instead o dancers to dance a dance,
Or minstrells for to play,
Four-and-twenty wall-wight men
Turnd birds o feathers gray;

Her seven sons in seven swans,
Aboon their heads to flee;
And he himsell a gay gos-hawk,
A bird o high degree.

This flock o birds took flight and flew
Beyond the raging sea,
And landed near the Earl Mar's castle,
Took shelter in every tree.

They were a flock o pretty birds,
Right comely to be seen;
The people viewed them wi surprise,
As they dancd on the green.

These birds ascended frae the tree
And lighted on the ha,
And at the last wi force did flee
Amang the nobles a'.

The storks there seized some o the men,
They coud neither fight nor flee;
The swans they bound the bride's best man
Below a green aik tree.

They lighted next on maidens fair,
Then on the bride's own head,
And wi the twinkling o an ee
The bride and them were fled.

There's ancient men at weddings been
For sixty years or more,
But sic a curious wedding-day
They never saw before.

For naething coud the companie do.
Nor naething coud they say
But they saw a flock o pretty birds
That took their bride away.

When that Earl Mar he came to know
Where his dochter did stay,
He signd a bond o unity,
And visits now they pay.



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