

THE  
OLD SCOTTISH TRAGICAL  
BALLAD  
OF  
SIR JAMES THE ROSE.

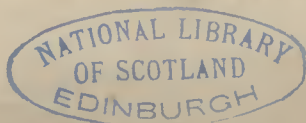
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Of high and warlike name,  
The bravest was Sir James the Rose,  
A knight of meikle fame.

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DUNDEE

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THE  
SIR JAMES THE ROSE.

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Of all the Scottish northern chiefs,  
Of high and warlike name,  
The bravest was Sir James the Rose  
A knight of meikle fame.

His growth was like the youthful oak,  
That crowns the mountain's brow,  
And waving o'er his shoulders broad,  
His locks of yellow flew.

Wide were his fields, his herds were large,  
And large his flocks of sheep,  
And numerous were his goats and deer,  
Upon the mountains steep.

The chieftain of the good elan Rose,  
A firm and warlike band,  
Five hundred warriors drew the sword,  
Beneath his high command.

In bloody fight thrice had he stood,  
Against the English keen,  
Ere two and twenty opening springs  
The blooming youth had seen.

The fair Matilda dear he loved—  
A maid to beauty rare ;  
Ev'n Margaret on the Scottish throne  
Was never half so fair.

Long had he wooed, long she refused,  
 With seeming scorn and pride ;  
 Yet oft her eyes confessed the love  
 Her fearful words denied.

At length she blessed his well-tried love,  
 Allowed his tender claim ;  
 She vowed to him her tender heart,  
 And owned an equal flame.

Her father, Buchan's eruel lord,  
 Their passion dis-approved ;  
 He bade her wed Sir John the Græme,  
 And leave the youth she loved.

One night they met as they were wont,  
 Deep in a shady wood,  
 Where on the bank beside the burn,  
 A blooming saugh tree stood.

Concealed among the underwood  
 The crafty Donald lay,  
 The brother of Sir John the Græme,  
 To watch what they might say.

When thus the maid began, My Sire  
 Our passion dis-approves,  
 He bids me wed Sir John the Græme,  
 So here must end our loves.

My father's will must be obeyed,  
 Nought boots me to withstand,  
 Some fairer maid in beauty's bloom  
 Shall bless you with her hand.

Soon will Matilda be forgot,  
 And from thy mind effaced ;  
 But may that happiness be thine,  
 Which I can never taste.

What do I hear ! is this thy vow ?  
 Sir James the Rose replied ;  
 And will Matilda wed the Graeme,  
 Though sworn to be my bride ?

His sword shall sooner pierce my heart  
 Than reave me of thy charms—  
 And clasped her to his throbbing breast,  
 Fast locked within his arms.

I spoke to try thy love, she said,  
 I'll ne'er wed man but thee ;  
 The grave shall be my bridal bed  
 If Graeme my husband be.

Then take, dear youth, this faithful kiss  
 In witness of my troth,  
 And every plague become my lot,  
 That day I break my oath—

They parted thus—the sun was set—  
 Up hasty Donald flies,  
 And turn thee, turn thee, beardless youth,  
 He loud insulting cries.

Soon turned about the fearless chief,  
 And soon his sword he drew ;  
 For Donald's blade before his breast,  
 Had pierced his tartans through.

This for my brother's slighted love,  
 His wrongs sit on my arm—  
 Three paces back the youth retired,  
 And saved himself from harm.

Returning swift his sword he reared,  
 Fierce Donald's head above ;  
 And through the brain and crashing bone,  
 His furious weapon drove,

Life issued at the wound—he fell  
 A lump of lifeless clay ;  
 So fall my foes, quoth valient Rose,  
 And stately strode away.

Thro' the green wood in hast he passed,  
 Unto Lord Buchan's hall,  
 Beneath Matilda's window stood,  
 And thus on her did call :

Art thou asleep, Matilda dear ?  
 Awake my love awake ;  
 Behold thy lover waits without,  
 A long farewell to take.

For I have slain fierce Donald Græme  
 His blood is on my sword ;  
 And far, far distant are my men,  
 Nor cau defend their lord.

To Skye I will direct my flight,  
 Where my brave brothers bide,  
 To raise the mighty of the Isles,  
 To combat on my side.

O do not so the maid replied,  
 With me till morning stay ;  
 For dark and dreary is the night,  
 And dangerous is the way.

All night I'll watch thee in the park,  
 My faithful page I'll send  
 In haste to raise the brave clan Rose,  
 Their master to defend.

He laid him down beneath a bush,  
 And wrapped him in his plaid ;  
 While trembling for her lover's fate,  
 At distance stood the maid.

Swift ran the page o'er hill and dell,  
 Till in a lowly glen,  
 He met the furious Sir John Graeme  
 With twenty of his men.

Where goest thou little page, he said,  
 So late? who did thee send?  
 I go to raise the brave clan Rose,  
 Their master to defend.

For he has slain fierce Donald Graeme  
 His blood is on his sword,  
 And far, far distant are his men,  
 Nor can assist their lord.

And has he slain my brother dear?  
 The furious chief replies;  
 Dishonour blast my name but he  
 By me ere morning dies.

Say page where is Sir James the Rose?  
 I will thee well reward—  
 He sleeps into Lord Buchan's park,  
 Matilda is his guard.

They spurred their steeds and furious flew  
 Like lightening o'er the lea;  
 They reached Lord Buchan's lofty tower  
 By dawning of the day.

Matilda stood without the gate,  
 Upon a rising ground,  
 And watched each object in the dawn,  
 All ear to every sound.

Where sleeps the Rose? began the Graeme  
 Or has the felon fled?  
 This hand shall lay the wretch on earth,  
 By whom my brother bled,

Last day at noon, Matilda said,  
 Sir James the Rose passed by,  
 Well mounted on his noble steed,  
 And onward fast did he.

By this time he's in Edinburgh Town,  
 If horse and man hold good ;—  
 Your page then lied who said he was  
 Now sleeping in the wood.

She wrung her hands, and tore her hair,  
 Brave Rose thou art betrayed,  
 And ruined by thoe e very means  
 From whence I hoped thine aid.

And now the valiant knight awoke,  
 The virgin shrieking heard ;  
 Straight up he rose and drew his sword,  
 When the fierce band appeared.

Your sword last night my brother slew,  
 His blood yet dims its shine ;  
 And ere the Sun shall gild the morn,  
 Your blood shall reek on mine.

Your words are brave, the chief returned,  
 But deeds approve the man,  
 Set by your men and hand to hand  
 We'll try what valour can.

With dauntless step he forward strode,  
 And dared him to the fight ;  
 The Græme gave back, he feared his arm  
 For well he knew his might.

Four of his men, the bravest four,  
 Sunk down beneath his sword ;  
 But still he scorned the poor revenge,  
 And sought their haughty lord,



Behind him basely came the Græme,  
 And pierced him in the side ;  
 Out sprouting came the purple stream,  
 And all his tartaus dyed.

But yet his hand dropped not the sword,  
 Nor sunk he to the ground.  
 Till through his enemy's heart the steel,  
 Had forced a mortal wound.

Græme, like a tree by wind o'er thrown,  
 Fell breathless on the clay ;  
 And down beside him sunk the Rose,  
 And faint and dying lay.

Matilda saw and fast she ran,  
 O spare his life, she cried ;  
 Lord Buehan's daughter begs his life,  
 Let her not be denied.

Her well-known voice the hero heard,  
 And raised his death closed eyes,  
 He fixed them on the weeping maid,  
 And weakly this replies :

In vain Matilda begs a life,  
 By deaths arrest denied ;  
 My race is run—adieu, my love ;  
 Then closed his eyes and died.

The sword yet warm from his left side,  
 With frantic hand she drew ;  
 I come, Sir James the Rose, she cried,  
 I come to follow you.

The hilt she leant against the ground,  
 And bared her snowy breast,  
 Then fell upon her lovers face,  
 And sunk to endless rest,