

The Tragical History

OF

GILL MORICE,

An Ancient Ballad.



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GILL MORICE.

GILL MORICE was an Earl's son,
His name it waxed wide;
It was not for his great riches,
Nor yet his meikle pride.
His face was fair, lang was his hair,
In the wild woods he staid,
But his fame was by a fair lady,
That lived on Carron side.—

Whare will I get a bonny boy
That will win hose and shoon,
That will gae to Lord Barnard's ha',
And bid his lady come.
Ye maun rin this errand Willie,
And maun rin wi' pride,
When other boys gae on their feet,
On horseback ye shall ride.

O no! O no! my master dear,
I dare not for my life,
I'll no gae to the bauld Baron's
For to tryst forth his wife.
My bird Willie, my boy Willie,
My dear Willie, he said,
How can you strive against the stream,
For I shall be obeyed.

But O! my master dear, he cried,
 In green wood ye're your lane,
 Gie o'er sick thoughts I would ye redd,
 For fear ye should be ta'en.
 Haste, haste, I say, gae to the ha,
 And bid her come wi' speed;
 If ye refuse my high command,
 I'll gar thy body bleed.

Gae bid her take this gay mantle,
 'Tis a' gowd but the hem;
 Bid her come to the good green wood,
 And bring nane but her lane.
 And there it is a silken sark,
 Her ain hand sewed the sleeve,
 And bid her come to Gill Morice,
 Speir nae bauld Baron's leave.

Yes, I will gae your black errand,
 Though it be to my cost,
 Sin' ye by me will not be warned,
 In it ye shall find frost.
 The Baron he's a man of might,
 He ne'er could bide a taunt,
 As ye shall see before it's night,
 How sma' ye hae to vaunt.

Now sin I maun your errand rin,
 Sair, sair against my will,
 I'se make a vow, and keek it true,
 It shall be done for ill.

And when he came to broken brig,
 He bent his bow and swam,
 And when he came to grass growing,
 Set down his feet and ran.

And when he came to Barnard's ha'
 Would neither chap nor ca',
 But set his bent bow to his breast,
 And lightly lap the wa',
 He would tell nae man his errand,
 Though twa stood at the gate,
 But straight into the ha' he came,
 Where great folks sat at meat.

Hail! hail! my gentle sire and dame;
 My message winna wait,
 Dame, ye maun to the green wood gang,
 Before that it be late.
 Ye're bidden take this gay mantle,
 It's a' gowd but the hem,
 Ye maun go to the good green'wood,
 E'en by yourself alané.

There it is a silken sark,
 Your ain hand sewed the sleeve,
 Ye maun come speak to Gill Morice,
 Speir nac bauld Baron's leave.
 The lady stamped wi' her foot,
 And winked wi' her e'e,
 But all that she could do or say,
 Forbidden he wouldna be.

It's surely to my bower woman,
 It ne'er could be to me ;
 Then up and spake the wily nurse,
 (The bairn upon her knee,)
 If it be come from Gill Morice,
 'Tis dear welcome to me.

Ye lied, ye lied, ye filthy nurse,
 Sae loud's I hear you lie ;
 I brought it to Lord Barnard's Lady,
 I trow ye be not she.
 Then up and spake the bauld Baron,
 An angry man was he ;
 He's ta'en the table wi' his foot,
 In flinders gart a' flee.

Gae bring a robe of yon cleiding,
 That hangs upon the pin,
 And I'll gae to the good green wood,
 And speak with your leman.
 O bide at hame now Lord Barnard,
 I warn you, bide at hame,
 Ne'er wyte a man wi' violence,
 That ne'er wyte ye wi' name.

Gill Morice sits in yon green wood,
 He whistled and he sang ;
 O what mean a' these folk coming ?
 My mother tarries lang.
 And when he came to the green wood,
 Wi' mucklè dull and care,

It's there he saw brave Gill Morice,
Kaming his yellow hair.

Nae wonder, nae wonder Gill Morice,
My lady lo'ed you weel,
The fairest part of my body
Is blacker than thy heel.
Yet ne'ertheless, now Gill Morice,
For a' thy great beauty,
Ye's rue the day that ye was born,
That head shall gae wi' me.

Now he has drawn his trusty brand,
And slait it on the straw,
And through Gill Morice' fair body
He's gart cauld iron gae;
And he has ta'en Gill Morice' head,
And set it on a spear,
The meanest man in a' his train
Has got the head to bear.

And he has ta'en Gill Morice up,
Laid him across his steed,
And brought him to his painted bower,
And laid him on a bed.
The lady sat on castle wa'
Beheld baith dale and down,
And there she saw Gill Morice' head
Come trailing to the town.

Far mair I lo'e that bloody head,
But an that bloody hair,

Than Lord Barnard and a' his lands,
 As they lie here and there.
 And she has ta'en Gill Morice,
 And kissed baith mouth and chin;
 I ance was fu' of Gill Morice,
 As hip is o' the stane.

I got thee in my father's house
 Wi' muckle grief and shame,
 And brought thee up in green wood,
 Under the heavy rain.
 Oft have I by thy cradle sat,
 And seen thee soundly sleep,
 But now I'll go about thy grave,
 The saut tears for to weep.

And first she kissed his bloody cheek,
 And syne his bloody chin;
 Better I loe my Gill Morice,
 Than a' my kith and kin.
 Away, away ye ill woman,
 An ill death may you die,
 Gin I had kenn'd he'd been your son,
 He'd ne'er been slain by me.

Upbraid me not, Lord Barnard,
 Upbraid me not for shame,
 Wi' that same spear, oh pierce my heart,
 And put me out of pain;
 Since nothing but Gill Morice' head
 Thy jealous rage could quell,

Let that same hand now take her life,
That ne'er to thee did ill.

To me nae after days nor nights,
Will e'er be saft and kind ;
I'll fill the air with heavy sighs,
And greet till I am blind.
Enough of blood by me's been spilt
Seek not your death from me ;
I rather it had been mysel,
Than either him or thee.

With wae so wae I hear your 'plaint,
Sair sair I rue the deed,
That e'er this cursed hand of mine
Did gar his body bleed.
Dry up your tears, my winsome dame,
Ye ne'er can heal the wound,
You see his head upon my spear,
His heart's blood on the ground.

I curse the hand that did the deed,
The heart that thought the ill,
The feet that bore me with sic speed,
The comely youth to kill.
I'll aye lament for Gill Morice,
As gin he were mine ain ;
I'll ne'er forget the dreary day
On which the youth was slain.