

Four Excellent

Old Songs,

CALLED,

Bessy Bell & Mary Gray,

With the History of the Ballad.

The Valiant Scotsmen,

Burns' Honest Man,

Birks of Invermay.



Falkirk, Printed by T. Johnston.

1816.

BESSY BELL & MARY GRAY.

History of the BALLAD.

THERE is a place called Lednoch, about four computed miles from Perth; here it was where the celebrated *Bessy Bell* and *Mary Gray* lived. The father of the former was Laird of Kinvaid, in the neighbourhood of Lednoch; and that of the latter, was Laird of Lednoch. The two young ladies were extremely handsome, and maintained the strictest friendship and intimacy with one-another. When *Miss Bell* was on a visit to *Miss Gray*, the plague broke out, in 1666, to avoid which, they built themselves a bower about a mile west from Lednoch house, in a very retired and romantic situation. In this retreat they lived for some time, and were often visited by a young gentleman who, being enamoured with both of them, composed the following celebrated ballad in their praise. But alas! the mutual lover, at last having caught the infection, communicated it to the two ladies, who fell unhappy victims to its virulence.— Their bodies were afterwards conveyed to another part of Mr GRAY's ground, called, Dornoch-haugh, and there buried. On the top of a little hill, about a mile and a half north of the house of Lednoch, stood a Cross of great antiquity; at the foot of this Cross are three Wells, commonly called, the *Bishops Wells*, within a small distance of each other; where the Bishops of St. Andrew's, Dunkeld, and Dunblane were wont to assemble, and drink to one-another, while each of them stood at the well within his own Diocess.

O Bessy Bell and Mary Gray,
 they were twa bonny lasses;
 The bigg'd a bow'r on yon burn-brae,
 and thack'd it o'er wi' rashes.

Fair Bessy Bell I loo'd yestreen,
 and thought I ne'er could alter,
 But Mary Gray's twa pauky een,
 they gar my fancy faulter.

Now Bessy's hair's like a lint-tap,
 she smiles like a May-morning,
 When Phœbus starts from Thetis' lap,
 the hills with rays adorning.

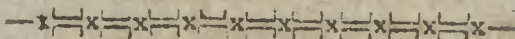
White is her neck, fast is her hand,
 her waist and feet's fu' genty;
 With ilka grace she can command,
 her lips, O wow! they're dainty.

And Mary's locks they're like a craw,
 her eyes like diamonds glances,
 She's ay so clean redd up, and bra',
 she kills when e'er she dances.

Blyth as a kid, with wit at will,
 she blooming, tight, and tall is;
 And guides her airs fae gracefu' still,
 O Jove, she's like thy Pallas.

Dear Bessy Bell, and Mary Gray,
 ye unco fair oppress us;
 Our fancies jee between you twa,
 ye are sic bonny lasses.

Wae's me! for baith I canno' get,
 to ane by law we're flinted;
 Then I'll draw cuts, and tak my fate,
 and be with ane contented.



THE
 VALIANT SCOTSMEN.

SCOTSMEN! from your heath-clad moun-
 tains,

Arm, descend, and save your land;
 From your glens, your lakes & fountains,
 Rise, and guard her sea-wash'd strand.

Think on WALLACE, Scotland's pride;
 Think on BRUCE, and Bannockburn,
 Think on the Scot*, who lately dy'd;
 Him imitate, whom yet ye mourn!

Husbands think on Wives and Children!
 Soothe their fears, prevent their woes;
 Yes, tell them, Life's warm stream ye'll
 drain,
 Ere they bleed by cruel foes.

* ABERCROMBY.

Lovers, ye whose hearts are throbbing,
Ye whose souls your passion warms,
Think on foreign soldiers robbing
Thy fair maid of all her charms:

Rise, and Champion-like; defending
Innocence from brutal lust!
On your foes your wrath descending,
Lay them sprauling in the dust.

Ye, in life's exalted stations,
On to feats of glory lead,
Shew the Chief who plunders nations
Scots nor death, nor danger dread.

Throng and thronger round the banner,
Grasp the spear, the lance, the shield;
Shew proud Gaul our Scottish manner
Is to die, but never yield.

From hill and dale, from glen or grotto,
Round the British Flag resort;
Justify our nation's motto,
No man touches me unburt.



BURNS' HONEST MAN.

WHAT tho' on hamely fare we dine,
 Wear hodden grey, and a' that;
 Gi'e fools their silk, & knaves their wine,
 A man's a man for a' that.

For a' that, and a' that,
 Their tinsel show, and a' that;
 An honest man, tho' ne'er so poor,
 Is chief o' men for a' that.

Ye see yon birkie, ca'd a lord,
 Wha struts, and stares, and a' that,
 Tho' hundreds worship at his word,
 He's but a cuif for a' that.

For a' that, and a' that,
 His ribbon, star, and a' that;
 A man of indepent mind
 Can look and laugh at a' that.

The King can mak' a belted Knight,
 A Marquis, Duke, and a' that,
 But an honest man's aboon his might,
 Guid faith he mauna fa' that.

For a' that, and a' that,
 His dignities, and a' that,
 The pith o' sense, and pride o' worth,
 Are grander far than a' that.

Then let us pray, that come it may,
 As come it shall for a' that,
 When sense and worth o'er a' the earth,
 Shall bear the gree, and a' that;
 For a' that, and a' that,
 It's coming yet, for a' that;
 And man and man, the world o'er,
 Shall brithers be, and a' that.

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BIRKS OF INVERMAY.

The smiling morn, the breathing spring,
 Invite the tuneful birds to sing;
 And, while they warble from each spray,
 Love melts the universal lay:
 Let us, my love, be timely wise,
 Like them improve the hour that flies,
 And in soft raptures waste the day
 Among the birks of Invermay.

For soon the winter of the year,
 And age, life's winter, will appear;
 At this thy living bloom will fade,
 As that will strip the verdant shade;
 Our taste of pleasure then is o'er,
 The feather'd songsters are no more;
 And when they droop, and we decay,
 Adieu the Birks of Invermay.

Behold the hills and vales around,
 With lowing herds and flocks abound;
 The wanton kids, and frisking lambs,
 Gambol and dance about their dams;
 The busy bees with humming noise,
 And all the reptile kind rejoice!
 Let us, like them, then, sing and play
 About the Birks of Invermay.

Hark! how the waters, as they fall,
 Loudly my love to gladness call;
 The wanton waves sport in the beams,
 And fishes play throughout the streams.
 The circling sun does now advance,
 And all the planets round him dance;
 Let us as joyful be as they,
 Among the Birks of Invermay.

CHORUS.

All Nature, thro' her works divine,
 Teach lovers to improve their time;
 That they may not with sighing say,
 We've lost the joys of Invermay.

F I N I S.