

THE

MONK

AND

MILLER'S WIFE.

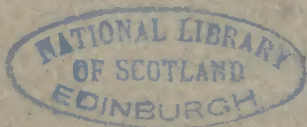
A TALE.

BY ALLAN RAMSAY.



KILMARNOCK:

Printed for the Booksellers.



The Monk and Miller's Wife.

AN honest miller won'd in Fife,
That had a young and wanton wife,
Wha sometimes thol'd the parish priest
To mak her man a twa-horn'd beaxt,
He paid right mony visits till her,
And, to keep in wi' Hab the miller,
Endeavour'd aft to mak him happy,
Where'er he kend the ale was nappy.
Sic condescension in a pastor,
Knit Halbert's love to him the faster:
And by his converse, troth 'tis true,
Hab learn'd to preach when he was fou.
Thus all the three were wonder pleas'd:
The wife well serv'd, the man well eas'd:
This grounds his corns, and that did cherish
Himsel wi' dining round the parish:
Boss, the gudewife, thought it nae skaith,
Since she was fit to serve them baith.

When equal is the night and day,
And Ceres gives the schools the play,
A youth sprung frae a gentle pater,
Bred at St. Andrew's *alma-mater*.
Ae day gaun hameward, it fell late,
And him benighted by the gate:
To lie without, pit-mirk did shore him,
He coudna see his thumb before him;
But clack—clack—clack, he heard a mill,
Whilk led him be the lugs theretill.
To tak the thread of tale a-lang,
This mill to Halbert did belang:
Not less this note your notice claims,
The scholar's name was Master James.

enter'd James; Hab saw and ken'd him, and offer'd kindly to befriend him; but both Hab, beanna leave my mill o' the mill; yet;—but step ye west the kill; bowshot, and ye'll find my hame: the warm ye, and crack wi' our dame; Arriv'd, he knock'd, for doors were steekit; straight thro' a window Bessie keekit, and cries, "Wha's that gies fowk a fright, At sic untimeous time of night?" James, with good humour maist discreetly, would her his circumstance completely; dinna ken ye (quoth the wife), And up and down the thieves are rife; hae, there's a key, gang in your way; At the neist door, there's braw ait strae; streek down upon't; my lad, and learn; They're no ill lodg'd that get a bara; us, after meikle chitter clatter, nes fand he couldna mend the matter; and since it mightna better be, ' resignation took the key, lock'd the barn—clam up the mou; here was an opening near the ho; ro' which he saw a gleam of light, at gae diversion to his sight; this he quickly could discern; thing wa' sep'rate house and barn; and th' this rive was n. the wa; done within the house he saw; he saw (what ought not to be seen, and scarce gae credit to his een,) the parish priest, of reverend fame, active courtshp with the dame!

To lengthen out description here,
 Wad but offend the modest ear,
 And beet the lewder youthfu' flamel
 That we by satire strive to tame.
 Suppose the wicked action o'er,
 And James continuing still to glowr,
 What saw the wife, as fast as able,
 Spread a clean servit on the tabie,
 And syne, frae the ha' ingle, bring ben
 A piping het young roasted hen,
 And twa good bottles stout and clear,
 Ane of strong ale, and ane of beer.

But wicked luck: just as the priest
 Shot in his fork in chucky's breast,
 Th' unwelcome miller gae a roar,
 Cry'd, "Bessy, haste ye, ope the door."
 With that the haly letcher fled,
 And darn'd himsel behint a bed;
 While Bessy huddled all things by,
 That nought the cuckold might espy;
 Syne loot him in,—but out of tune,
 Spier'd why he left the mill sae soon?
 "I come, said he, as manners claims,
 To crack and wait on Master James,
 Whilk I should do, tho' na'er sae bissy:
 "I sent him here, gudewife, where is he?"
 "Ye sent him here!" (quo Bessy, grumblin)
 "Kend I this James? a chiel came rumblin'
 But how was I assur'd, when dark,
 That he had been nae thievish spark,
 Or some rude wench, gotten a doze,
 That a weak wife could ill oppose?
 And what came of him, speak nae langer,
 Cries Halbert, in a highland anger.

I sent him to the barn; quoth she, 'Gae quickly bring him in, quoth he.
 James was brought in—the wife was hank'd.
 The priest stood close—the miller crack'd—
 Then ask'd his sunken gloomy spouse,
 What supper had she in the house,
 That might be suitable to gie
 Ane of their lodger's quality.
 Quoth she, 'You may well ken, gudeman,
 Your feast comes frae the pottage-punk
 Pottage, (quoth Hal) ye senseless rawpie!
 Think ye this youth's a gilly-gawpie,
 And that his gentle stomach's master
 To worry up a pint of plaister,
 Like our mill-knives that lift the loom,
 Whase kytes can streek out like raw plaidin,
 Swithe roast a hen, or fry some chickens,
 And send for ale frae Maggy Picken's
 Hout I, (quoth she) ye may weel ken,
 'Tis ill brought butt that's do there,
 When but last o'wk, nae farder gane,
 The laird got a' to pay his kaine,
 Then James, wha had as good a guerd,
 Of what was in the house as Bess,
 With pawkie smile, this pleaster end,
 To please himsel, and ease his friends,
 First open'd wi' a bleesoration,
 His wondrous skill in conjuration,
 Said he, 'By this fell art I'm able
 To whop aff ony great man's table,
 Whate'er I like to make a meal of,
 Either in part, or yet the hale of;
 And if ye please, I'll shaw my art—'
 Cries Halbert, 'Faithy, wi' a' my heart

Bess fain'd hersel;—cried, "Lord be here!"
 And near hand fell a swoon for fear,
 James leugh, and bade her naething dread,
 Syne to his conjuring went wi' speed:
 And first he draws a circle round,
 Then utters mony a magic sound
 Of words, part Latin, Greek, and Dutch;
 Enow to fright a very witch.
 That done, he says, "Now, now, 'tis come,
 " And in the boat beside the linn;
 " Now set the board, gude wife, gae ben,
 " Bring frae yon boat a roasted hen."
 She wadna gang, but fiaby ventur'd;
 And soon as he the ambry enter'd,
 It smell'd sae weel, he short time sought it,
 And, wond'ring, 'tween his hands he brought it.
 They all, in an united body,
 Declar'd it a fine fat how-towdy.
 " Nae mair about it, (quoth the miller,)
 " The fowl looks well, and we'll fa' till her."
 Sae he't, says James; and in a doup
 They snapt her up baith stoop and roup.
 " Neist, O! (cries Halbert) coud your skill
 " But help us to a waught o' ale,
 " I'd be oblig'd t' ye a' my life,
 " And offer to the deil my wife,
 " To see if he'll discreeter make her,
 " But that I'm fleed he winna tak her."
 Said James, "Ye offer very fair;
 " The bargain's hadden; sae nae mair."
 Then thrice he shook a willow wand;
 With kittle words thrice gave command;
 That done, wi' look baith fear'd and grave,
 Said, "Now ye'll get what ye wad have;"

Twa bottles of as nappy liquor
 As ever ream'd in horn or bicker,
 Behint the ark that hauds your meal,
 Ye'll find twa standing corked weel.

He said, and fast the miller flew,
 And frae their nest the bottles drew;
 Then first the scholar's health he roasted,
 Whase art had gart him seed on roasted,
 His father's neist—and a' the rest
 Of his good friends that wish'd him best;
 Which were o'er langsome at the time,
 In a short tale to put in rhyme.

Thus while the miller and the youth
 Were blithely slookening of their drouth,
 Bess, fretting, scarcely held frae greeting;
 The priest, enclos'd, stood vex'd and sweeting.

O wow! said Hab, if ane might speer,
 Dear Master James, wha brought our cheer!
 Sic faits to us appear sae awfu',
 We hardly think your learning lawfu'.

To bring your doubts to a conclusion,
 Says James, ken I'm a Rosicrusian,
 Ane of the set that never carries
 On traffic with black deils, or fairies,
 There's mony a sp'rit that's no a deil,
 That constantly around us wheel.

Now, if you'll drap your foolish fear,
 I'll gar my Pacolet appear,

Hab fidg'd and leugh, his elbuck clew,
 Baith fear'd and fond a sp'rit to view;
 At last his courage wan the day,
 He to the scholar's will gae way.

Bessy be this begzn to smell
 A rat, but kept her mind to rseel:

She pray'd like howdy in her drink,
 But mean time got young James a wink.
 James frae his eye an answer sent,
 Which made the wife right well content:
 Then turn'd to Hab, and thus advis'd,
 ' Whate'er you see, be nought surpris'd;
 ' But for your saul move not your tongue;
 ' And ready stand wi' a great rung;
 ' Syne as the spirit gangs marching out,
 ' Be sure to lend him a sound rout:
 ' I bidna this by way of mocking,
 ' For nought delights him mair than knocking.'

Hab got a kent—stood by the hallan,
 And straight the wild mischievous callan
 Cries, ' Radamanthus Husky Mingo,
 ' Monk, Horner, Hipock, Jinko, Jingo,
 ' Appear in likeness of a priest,
 ' No like a deil, in shape o' beast,
 ' With gaping chafts to fleg us a' :—
 ' Wauk forth, the door stands to the wa.'

Then frae the hole where he was pent,
 The priest approach'd right weel content;
 Wi' silent pace strade o'er the floor,
 ' Till he was drawing near the door;
 ' Then to escape the cadgel ran,
 But was na miss'd by the gudeman,
 Wha lent him on the neck a lounder,
 That gart him owre the threshold founder.
 Darkness soon hid him frae their sight:
 Ben flew the miller in a fright;
 ' I trow (quoth he) I laid well on;
 ' But wow he's like our ain Mess John.'

FINIS.