

**ENTERTAINING
HISTORY
OF
JOHN CHEAP
The Chapman ;**

CONTAINING :

Above a Hundred Merry Exploits done by him
and his fellow traveller and companion, Drouthy
Tom, a sticked shaver.

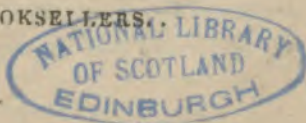
IN THREE PARTS



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58.



ENTERTAINING
HISTORY

OF

JOHN CHEVALIER
The Chevalier;

CONTAINING

Above a Hundred Years Experience of his
and his fellow travellers and companions, Monthly

Tells a wonderful story.

IN THREE PARTS



BY G. GILBERT

Printed by G. GILBERT, in the Strand, near St. Dunstons Church.

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HISTORY OF JOHN CHEAP.

PART I.

The following Relation is taken from his own mouth verbatim.

JOHN CHEAP, the chapman, was a comical, short, thick fellow, with a broad face and a long nose; both lame and lazy, and something lecherous among the lasses. He chose rather to sit idle than work at any time, as he was a hater of hard labour. No man needed offer him cheese and bread after he cursed he would not have it; for he would blush at bread and milk when hungry, as a beggar doth at a bawbee. He got the name of John Cheap, the Chapman, by selling twenty needles for a penny, and twa leather laces for a farthing.

I WAS born at the Hottom, near the Habertchoy Mill. My father was a Scotch Highlander, and my mother a York-shire Wench, which causes me to be of a mongrel kind; I made myself a chapman when very young, in hopes of being rich when I became old.

My first journey was through Old Kilpatrick, I got no meat nor money until the evening I be-

gan to ask for lodging, then every wife to get me away would either give me a cogful of kail, or a piece of cake. Well says I to myself, if this be the way, I shall begin in the morning to ask for lodging, or any time when I am hungry. Thus I continued going from house to house, until my belly was like to burst, and my pockets could hold no more; at last I came to a farmer's house, but thinking it not dark enough to prevail for lodging, I sat down upon a stone at the end of the house, till day light would go away; and as I was getting up to go into the house, out comes the goodwife, and sat down at the end of the stone. I being at the other, there she began to let off her water with full force, which I bore with very modestly, till near an end; then she made the wind follow with such force, as made, as I thought the very stone I leaned upon to move, which made me burst out into laughter; then up gets the wife and runs for it; I followed hard after into the house, and as I entered the door, I heard the goodman saying, Ay, ay, goodwife, what's the haste, you run sae fast.

No more passed, until I addressed the goodman for quarters; which he answered, 'indeed lad, we hae nae beds but three, my wife and I ourselves twa, and the twa bits o' little anes, Willy and Jenny lie in ane; the twa lads, our twa servant men, Willy Black and Tom I've, lie

in anither; auid Maggs my mither, and the lass Jean Tirrem lie thegither, and that fills them a'.' O but, says I, goodman, there is some of them fuller than others, you may let me lie with your mither and the lass; I shall lie heads and thraws wi' them, and keep on my breeks. A good keep me, quo' the lass frae a' temptations to sin, although thou be but a callan, heth I'll rather lie wi' Sannock Garnor. Hout awa, quo, the auld wife, the poor lad may lie an a bottle o' straw beyond the fire. No, no, cries the goodwife, he's no be here the night, or I'se no be here. Dear goodwife, said I, what ails you at me! If you will not let me stay, you'll not hinder me to go where I please. Ay, ay, said she, gae where you like; then I got in beyond the fire, beside the goodman. Now, said I goodwife, I like to be here. A d—I be here, and ye be here the night, said she. Ho, ho, said I, but I'm here first and first comed, first served, goodwife; but if the ill thief be a friend of yours, you'll hae room for him too. Ye thief-like widdifu' said she, are ye evening me to be sib to the foul thief; tis weel kend I am com'd o' gude honest folks. It may be so, goodwife, said I, but ye look rather the other way, when you would lodge the devil in your house, and ea' out a poor chapman to die, such a stormy night as this. What do ye say, says she, there wasna a bonnier night since win-

ter came in than this? O goodwife, what are ye saying, do ye no mind when you and I was at the east end of the house, such a noise of wind and water was then. A wae worth the filthy body, said she, is not that in every part? What, said the goodman; I wat weel there was nae rain when I came in. The wife then pushes me out, and bolted the door behind me. Well, said I, but I shall be through between thy mouth and thy nose ere the morn. It being now so dark, and I a stranger, could see no place to go to, went into the eorn yard, but finding no loose straw, I fell a drawing one of their stacks, sheaf by sheaf, until I pulled out a threave or two, and got into the hole myself, where I lay as warm as a pye. The goodman, on the morning, perceiving the heap of eorn sheaves, came running to carry it away, and stop the hole in the staek wherein I lay with some of the sheaves, so with the steighling of the straw, and him talking to others, cursing the thieves who had done it, swearing they had stole six sheaves of it; I then skiped out of the hole, ho, ho, said I, goodman, you're not to bury me alive in your staek: he then began to chide me, vowing to keep my pack for the damage I had done; whereupon I took his servants witnesses he had robbed me; when hearing me urge him so, he gave me my pack again,

and off I came to the next house, and told the whole of the story:

After this I travelled up by the water of Clyde, near the foot of Tintock hill, where I met with a sweet companion, who was an older traveller than I, and he gave me some information how to blow the goodwife, and sleek the goodman; with him I kept company for two months; and as we travelled down Tweed towards the border, we being both hungry, and could get nothing to buy for the belly, we came unto a wife who had been kirning, but she would give us nothing, nor sell so much as one halfpenny worth of her sour milk: Na, na, said she, I'll neither sell butter, bread nor milk, 'tis a' little enough to sair my ain family; ye that's chapman may drink water, ye diinna work sair. Ay, but goodwife, said I, I have been at Temple-bar, where I was sworn ne'er to drink water if I could get better. What do ye say, said she, about Temple-bar! a town just about twa threc miles and a bittock frae this; a thief ane was to swear you there, an' it wasna auld Willy Miller the cobbler the ill thief, a nither minister nor a magistrate ever was in it a'. O but, says the other lad, the Temple-bar he means by is at London. Yea, yea, lad, an' ye be com'd frae Lunun ye're little worth. London, said he, is but at home to the place he comes from. A dear man, quoth she, and where in the warl' comes

he frae? All the way from Italy, where the Pope of Rome dwells, says he. A sweet be wi' us, quoth she, for the fouks there awa is a' witches and warlocks, deils, brownies, and fairies. Well I wat that's true, said I, and that thou shalt know, thou hard hearted wretch, who would have people to starve, or provoke them to steal. With that I rose, lifts twa or thre long straws, and casting knots on them, into the byre I went, and throws a knotted straw on every cow's stake, saying, thy days shall not be long. The wife followed, wringing her hands, earnestly praying for herself and all that was hers. I then came out the door, and lifted a stone, and threw it over the house, muttering some words, which I knew not myself, and concluded with these words; thou monster, Diable, brother to Beelzebub, god of Ekron, take this wife's kirn, butter, and milk, sap and substance, without and within, so that she may die in misery, as she would have others to live.'

The wife hearing the aforesaid sentence, clapt her hands; and called out another old woman as foolish as herself, who came crying after us to come back; back we went, where she made us eat heartily of butter and cheese; and earnestly pleaded with me to go and lift my cantrips, which I did, upon her promising never to deny a hungry traveller meat nor drink, whether they had

money to pay for't or not; and never to serve the poor with the old proverb, "Go home to your own parish," but gave them less or more as you see them in need. This she faithfully promised to do while she lived, and with milk we drank to the cow's good health and her own, not forgetting her husband's and the bull's, as the one was good-man of the house, and the other of the byre; and away we came in all haste, lest some of a more understanding nature should come to hear of it, and follow after us.

In a few days thereafter we came to an ale-house in a muir far distant from any other, it being a sore day of wind and rain, we could not travel, but were obliged to stay there: and the house being very throng, we could get no beds but the servant lass's, which we were to have for a penny worth of pins and needles, and she was to lie with her master and mistress. But as we were going to bed, in comes three Highland drovers on their way from England; the landlord told them that the beds were all taken up but one, that two chapmen were to lie in: one of them swore his broad sword should fail him if a chapman lay there that night. They took our bed and made us sit by the fire all night; I put on a great many peats, and when the drovers were fast asleep I put on a big brass pan full of water and boiled their brogs therein for the space

of half an hour, then lays them as they were, every pair by themselves; so when they rose, every one began to chide another, saying, "Hup, pup, ye spewing a brog:" for not one of them would serve a child ten years old, being so boiled in. The landlord persuaded them that their feet were swelled with the hard travelling, being so wet the last night, and they would go on well enough if they had travelled a mile or two. Now the Highlandmen laughed at me the night before when they lay down in the bed I was to have; but I laughed as much to see them trot away in the morning with boiled brogues in their hands.

PART II.

WE again came to a place near Sutry-hill, where the ale was good, and very civil usage, and our drouth being very great, the more we drank the better we loved it. Here we fell in company with a Quack Doctor, who bragged us with bottle about for two days and two nights; only when one fell drunk, we pushed and prieked him up with a big pin to keep him from sleeping; he bought of our hair, and we of his drugs,—he having as much knowledge of the one as we had of the other; only I was sure I had as much as would set a whole parish to the midden or mug all at once; but the profit, though all to

come, went to the landlady to make up the loss of having the lime pished off the door cheeks.

But at last our money ran short, and the landlady had no chalk or faith to credit us, seeing by our coats, courage, and conduct, that we would little mind performance against the day of payment; so that we began to turn sober and wise behind the hand, and every one of us to seek supply from another; and then we collected all the money we had amongst us on the table, it was but four pence halfpenny, which we lovingly divided among us, being only three bawbees a-piece; and as drouthy Tom's stock and mine was conjunct, we gave the Quack again his sh—ng stuff and his stinking mugs, and he gave us our goods and pickles of hair, which we equally divided betwixt us, the whole of it only came to eighteen shillings and sixpence prime cost, and so we parted, I went for East Lothian and Tom for the West; but my sorting of goods being unsuitable for the country, I got little or no money next day; and it being Saturday, I prevailed to get staying in a great farmer's house, about two miles from Haddington; they were all at supper when I came in; I was ordered to go round the servants and collect a soup out of every cog, which was sufficient to have served three men: the goodwife ordered me to be laid in the barn all night, but the bully-faced goodman swore he had too

much stuff in it to venture me there; the good-wife, said I should not lie in the house, for I would be o'er near the lasses' bed; then the lads swore I would not go with them, for I was a for-jesket like fellow, and who kens whether I was honest or not; he may fill his wallet wi' our elaes and gang his wa' or day light. At last I was conducted out to the swine's stye, to sleep with an old sow and seven pigs, and there I lay for two nights. Now I began to reflect on the sour fruits of drinking, and own all the misery just that was come upon me. In the night the young pigs came grunting about me very kindly, thinking I was some friend of their mother's come to visit them; they gave me but little rest, always coming kissing me with their cold noses, which caused me to beat them off with my staff, which made them to make a terrible noise, so that the old mother came up to argue the matter, running upon me with open mouth, but I gave her such a rout over her long snout, as caused her to roar out murder in her own language, and alarmed the servants, who came to see what was the matter. I told them their old sow was going to swallow me up alive, bid them go and bring her meat, which they did, and the brute became peaceable.

On the Sabbath morning I came into the house, the goodman asked me if I could shave any: yes, said I, but never did on the sabbath

day, I faney, said he, you are some Westland Whig? Sir, said I, you may suppose me to be what you think proper to-day, but yesternigh you used me like a Tory, when you sent me into the sty to lie in your sow's oxter, who is a fister companion for a devil than any human creature; the most abominable brute upon the earth, said I, who was forbidden to be eaten under the law, and eursed under the gospel. Be they eursed or be they blessed, said he, I wish I had anew of them: but an' ye will not take aff my beard, ye'se get nae meat here the day; then said I, if ye will not give me meat and drink for money, until the sabbath be past, I'll take on my waller, and go along with you to the kirk, and tell your minister how you used me as a hog. No, said the goodwife, you will not want your crowdle, man. But my heart being full of sorrow and revenge a few of them sufficed me, whereon I passed over that long day, and at night went to sleep with my old companions, which was not sound, being afraid of mistress sow coming to revenge the quarrel we had the night before.

On the morning I went into the house, the goodman ordered me the pottage pot to liek; for, says he, it is an old property of chapmen. Well, I had no sooner began to it, than out came a great mastiff dog from below the bed, and grips me by the breast, then turns me over upon my

back, and takes the pot himself. Ay, ay, said the goodman, I think your brother pot-licker and you cannot agree about your breakfast. Well, said I, goodman, you said that pot-licking was a chapman's property, but your dog proves the contrary. So away I comes, and meeting the goodwife at the door, bade her farewell for ever; but what, said I, is your husband's name? to which she answered, John Swine: I was thinking so, said I, he has such dirty fashions; but whether was yon his mother or his sister I lay with these two nights?

All that day I travelled the country west from Haddington, but could get no meat; when asked if they had any to sell, they told me they never did sell any bread, and I found, by sad experience, they had none to give for nothing. I came into a little country village, and went through it all, house after house, and could get neither bread nor ale to buy. At last I came into a poor weaver's house, and asked him if he would lend me a hammer: Yes, said he: what are ye going to do with it? Indeed, said I, I am going to knock out all my teeth with it, for I can get no bread to buy in all the country, for all the stores and staeks you have in it. What, said he, was you in the minister's? I know not, said I, does he keep an alehouse? O no, said he, he preaches every Sunday: and what does he preach? said I, is it to

harden your hearts? haud well together? have no charity? hate strangers? hunger the poor? eat and drink all yourselves? better burst your bellies than give it to beggars, or let good meat spoil? If your minister be as haughty as his people, I'm positive he'll drive a louse to London for the hide and tallow. Here I bought the weaver's dinner for twopence, and then set out again, keeping my course westward. It being now night, I came to a farmer's house south from Dalkeith; the goodman being very civil, and desirous of news, I related the whole passages of the two days and nights by-past, whereat he was greatly diverted, and said, I was the first he heard of, that ever that man gave quarters to before, though he was an elder in the parish. So the goodman and I fell so thick, that he ordered me to be laid on a shake-down bed by the fire, where I lay more snug than among the swine. Now there were three women lying in a bed in the same apartment, and they not minding that I was there, first one of them rose and let her water go below the chimney grate, where I had a perfect view of her bonny thing, as the coal burned so clearly all the night; and then another rose and did the same; last of all got up the old matron, as she appeared to be, like a second handed goodwife, or a whirled o'er maiden, six times overturned, and as she let her dam go, she also, with full force,

when done, let a f—t like the blast of a trumpet, which made the ashes on the hearth stone to fly up like dust about her buttocks, whereat I was forced to laugh out, which made her to run for it, but to smother the laughter I stapt the blankets in my mouth; she went to bed and awakened the other two, saying, O dole! what will I tell you? yon chapman body has seen a' our a—ses the night! Shame fa' him, said they, for we had nae mind he was there; I wat weel, says one of them, I'se no rise till he be awa': but said the old woman, giu he has seen mine, I canna help it, it's just like other folk's, an' feint a hair I care. On the morning the old matron got up first, and ordered up the house, then told me to rise now, for chapmen and every body were up; then she asked me if I had a custom of laughing in my sleep? Yes, said I, when I see any daft like thing I can look and laugh at it as well sleeping as waking. A good preserve us, said she ye'r an unco' body; but ye needna wait on your porridge time, I'se gie you cheese and bread in your pouch; which I willingly aaccepted, and away I came.

Then I kept my course west by the foot of Pentland hills, where I got plenty of hair, good and cheap, besides a great plenty of old brass, which was an excellent article to make my little pack seem big and weighty. Then I came into a little country villiage, and going in by the side

of a house, there was a great big cat sitting in a weaver's window, beiking herself in the sun, and washing her face with her feet; I gave her a civil knap on the nose, which made her turn back in through the window, and the weaver having a plate full of hot pottage in the innerside to cool, poor baudrins ran through the middle of them, burnt her feet, and threw them on the ground ran through the house crying fire and murder in her own language, which caused the weary wicked wabster to come to the door, where he attacked me in a furious rage, and I, to avoid the first shoek, fled to the top of the midden, where, endeavouring to give me a kick, I eatched him by the foot, and tumbled him back into the midden-dub, where both his head and shoulders went under dirt and water; but before I could reeover my elwand or arms, the wicked wife and her twa sons were upon me in all quarters, the wife hung in my hair, while the twa sons boxed me both behind and before, and being thus overpowered by numbers, I was fairly beat by this wicked webster, his troops being so numerous.

On the Saturday night thereafter, I was like to be badly off for quarters, I travelled until many people were going to bed; but at last I came to a farmer's house asked what they would buy, naming twenty fine things which I never had, and then asked for quarters, which they very freeiy

granted, thinking I was some genteel packman, with a rich pack; and being weary with travel could take but little supper; being permitted to lie in the spence beside the goodman's bed, the goodwife being very hard of hearing, she thought that every body was so, for when she went to bed, she cries out A how hearie goodman, is na yon a braw moderate chapman we hae here the night, he took just seven soups o' our sowens, and that fill'd him fu'; a' dear Andrew man, turn ye about an' tak my cauld a—se in your warm lunehoeh. On the morrow I went to the kirk, with the goodman, and I missed him about the door, went into the middle of the kirk, but could see no empty seats but one big firm, where none sat but one woman by herself, and so I set myself down beside her, not knowing where I was, until sermon was over, when the minister began to rebuke her for using her Merry-bit against law or license; and then she began to whinge and yowl like a dog, which made me run out cursing, before the minister had given the blessing.

PART III.

I TRAVELLED then west by Falkirk, by the foot of the great hills; and one night after I had got lodging in a farmer's house, there happened a contest between the goodman and his mother, he being a young man unmarried, as I

understood, and formerly their sowens had been too thin; so the goodman, being a sworn birlyman of that barony, eame to survey the sowens before they went on the fire, and actually swore they were o'er thin; and she swore by her conscience they would be thick enough, if ill hands and ill een bade awa frae them. A sweet be here, mithers, said he, do you think that I'm a witch? Witch here, or witch there, said the wife, swearing by her saul, and that was nae banning, she said, they'll be gude substantial meat;—a what say you chapman? Indeed, goodwife, said I, sowens are but saft meat at the best, but, if you make them thick enough, and put a good lump of butter in them, they'll do very well for a supper. I trow sae lad, said she, ye ha'e some sense: so the old woman put on the pot with her sowens, and went to milk the cows, leaving me to steer; the goodman, her son, as soon as she went out, took a great cogful of water, and put it into the pot amongst the sowens, and then went out of the house and left me alone: I considering what sort of a pish-the-bed supper I was to get if I staid there, thought it fit to set out, but takes up a piteher of water, and fills up the pot until it was running over, and then takes up my paek, and comes about a mile farther that night, leaving the honest woman and her son to sup their watery witched sowens at their own pleasure.

The next little town I came to, and the very first house that I entered, the wife cried out, 'Plague on your snout, sir, ye filthy blackguard chapman-like b——h it ye are, the last time ye came here ye gart our Sandy burn the gude bane kame it I gid a saxpence for in Fa'kirk, ay did ye, ay, sae did ye een, and said ye wad gie him a muckle clear button to do it.' Me, said I, I never had ado with you a' the days of my life, and do not say that Sandy is mine. A wae worth the body, am I saying ye had ado wi' me, I wadna hae ado wi' the like o' you, nor I am sure wi' them I never saw. But what about the button and the bane kame, goodwife? Sannock is na this the man? Ay is't, cried the boy, gie me my button, for I burnt the kame, and she paid me for't. Gae awa, sir, said I, your mother and you are but mocking me. It was either you or ane like you, or some other body. O goodwife, I mind who it is now; 'twas just ane like me, when ye see the tane ye see the tither; they ca' him Jock Jimbither. A wae worth him, quoth the wife, if I dinna thrapple him for my gude bane kame. Now, said I, goodwife, be good, bridle your passion, and buy a bane kame and coloured napkin, I'll gie you a whaukin' penny-worth, will gar you sing in your bed, if I should sell you the tae half and gift you the tither, and gar you pay for every inch o't sweetly or a' be done. Hech,

man, said she, ye're a hearty fallow, and I hae need o' a' these things, but a bane kame I maun hae ; for our Sannoek's head is a' hotehen, and our John's is little better, for an' let them alane but ae eight days, they grow as grit as grossets. And here I sold a bane kame and a napkin, for she believed such a douse lad as I had no hand in making the boy burn the bone comb.

The next house I came into, there was a very little tailor sitting on a table, like a t—d on a treneher, with his legs plet over other, made me imagine he was a sucking three-footed tailor ; first I sold him a thimble, and then he wanted needles which I showed him, one paper after another ; he looked their eyes and trying their nibs in his sleeve, dropt the ones he thought proper on the ground between his feet, where he sat in a dark corner near the fire, thinking I did not perceive him. O said he them needles of yours are not good, man, I'll not buy any of them. I do not think you need, said I, taking them out of his hand, and lights a eandle that was standing near by ; come, said I, sit about, you thieving dog, till I gather up my needles, then gathers up ten of them.

Come, said he, I'll buy twa penny worth of them frae ye, I hae troubled you sae muckle ; no, said I, you lousied dog, I'll sell you none, if there's ny on the ground, seek them up and stap them a a beast's a—se ; but if ye were a man, I would

burn you in the fire, though it be in your own house; but as you are a poor tailor, and neither a man nor a boy, I'll do nothing but expose you for what you are. O dear honest chapman, cried his wife, ye maunna do that, and I'se gie you cheese and bread. No, no, you thieves, I'm for nothing but vengeance; no bribes for such. So as I was lifting up my pack, there was a pretty black cat which I spread my napkin over, took the four corners in my hand, carrying her as a bundle, until I came about the middle of the town, then provoking the dogs to an engagement with me, so that there came upon me four or five collies, then I threw the poor tailor's cat in the midst of them, and a terrible battle ensued for some time, and baudrins had certainly died in the field, had I not interposed and got her off mortally wounded. The people who saw the battle alarmed the tailor, and he sallied out like a great champion, with his elwand in his hand. Go back, said I, you lousic dog, or I'll tell about the needles; at which word he turned about. I travelled down the side of a water called Avon; and as I was coming past a mill-dam, there was a big clownish fellow lifting a pitcher of water out of the dam, so he dipt it full and set it down on the ground, staring at me he rumbled in himself out of sight o'er head and ears, and as soon as he got out, I said,—Yo ho, friend, did you get the fish? What

an a fish, ye b——h? O, said I, I thought you had seen a fish, when you jumped in to make it jump out. What a d——l, sir, are you mocking me?—runs round his pitcher, and gives me a kick on the a—e, so that I fell designedly on his pitcher, and it tumbled down the bank and went in pieces: his master and another man looking and laughing at us, the poor fellow complained of me to him, but got no satisfaction.

The same evening as I was going towards the town of Linlithgow, I met an old crabbed fellow riding upon an old glaid mare, which he always was thrashing upon with his stick. Goode'en to you, goodman, said I, are you going to the bull wi' your mare? What do you say sir? they gang to the bull wi' a cow, you brute. O yes, goodman, you are right, said, I; but what do they ca' the he-beast that rides on the mare's back? They ca'd a cusser, sir: a well then, goode'en to you, master cusser. He rides a little bit, then turns back in a rage, saying, I say, sir, your last words are waur than your first: he comes then to ride me down, but I struck his beast on the face, and in a short turn about it fell, yet, or I could get my pack to the ground, he cut me on the head at the first stroke; I then getting clear of the pack, played it away for some time, till by blows on the face, I made him bleed at both mouth and nose; then he cried out, Chapman, we are baith

daft, for we'll kill oursells and mak naething o't; we had better 'gree: with all my heart, said I; and what will you buy? nothing but a pair of beard shears, said he, and give me them cheap; so I sold him a pair of B. shears, for three half-pence, and give him a needle, then parted good friends after the battle was over.

So I went to Linlithgow that night, where I met with Drouthy Tom, my sweet and dear companion, and here we held a most terrible encounter with the tippeuny for twa nights and a day; and then we set out for Fife, on the hair order, by the way of Torryburn and Culross; and came up to a parcel of women washing by a water-side, I buys one of their hair: the time I was cutting it off, Tom fell a courting and kissing and clapping one of them, what happened I know not, but she cried out, Ye mislear'd filthy fallow, ye put your hand atween my feet. Daft jade, canna ye haud your tongue when it's your ain shame that ye speak. Filthy body, the last chapman that kissed me had a horse pack, but he ll hae naething in his Paek but auld breeks, hare skins, mauken skins, or ony trash that fills the bag and bears bouk, and yet he wad kiss and handle me! I was made for a better fallow.