

ADAM BELL,
CLYM OF THE CLOUGH,

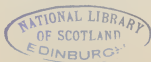
AND

WILLIAM OF CLOUDESLEIE.



They fought together as brethren true,
Like hardy men and bolde;
Many a man to the ground they threw,
And many a heart made colde.

GLASGOW:
FRANCIS ORR AND SONS.





ADAM BELL,
CLYM OF THE CLOUGH,

AND

WILLIAM OF CLOUDESLEIE.

MERRY it was in the green forest,
Among the leaves so green,
Wheras men hunt both east and west,
With bows and arrows keen.

To raise the deer out of their den,
Such sights have oft been seen;
As by three yeomen of the north countrie,
By them it is I mean.

One of them hight Adam Bell,
The other Clym of the Clough,
The third was William of Cloudeslie,
An archer good enough.

They were outlawed for venyson,
These yeomen, everychone;
They swore them brethren on a day
To Englewood to gone.

Now lith and listen, gentlemen,
That of mirth love to here;
Two of them were single men,
The third had a wedded fere.

William was the wedded man,
 Much more then was his care;
 He said to his brethren upon a day,
 To Carlile he would fare.

To speak to fair Alice, his wife,
 And with his children three;
 By my trowth, then, said Adam Bell,
 Not by councel of me.

For if ye go to Carlile, brother,
 And from this wild wood wende,
 If that the Justice may you take,
 Your life were at an ende.

If that I come not to-morrow, brother,
 By prime to you again,
 Trust ye then that I am taken,
 Or else that I am slain.

He took his leave of his brethren two,
 And to Carlile he's gone;
 There he knocked at his own window,
 Shortly and anone.

Where be you, fair Alice, he said,
 My wife and children three?
 Lightly let in thine own husband,
 William of Cloudeslie.

Alas! then said fair Alice,
 And sighed wondrous sore,
 This place hath been beset for you
 This half a year and more.

Now I am here, said Cloudeslie,
 I would that I in were;
 Now fetch us meat and drink enough,
 And let us make good cheer.

She fetched him meat and drink plenty,
 Like a true wedded wife,
 And pleased him with that she had,
 Whom she loved as her life.

There lay an old wife in that place,
 A little beside the fire,
 Which William had found of charity
 For more than seven yere.

Up she rose, and forth she goes,
 Evil mote she speed, therefore;
 For she had set no foot on ground
 For seven yere before.

She went unto the Justice hall,
 As fast as she could hie;
 This night, she said, is come to town
 William of Cloudeslie.

Thereof the Justice was full fain,
 And so was the Sherife also,
 Thou shalt not travail, dame, for nought,
 Thy meed's here ere thou go.

They gave to her a right good gowne,
 Of scarlate and of graine;
 She took the gift, and home she went,
 And laid her down agaiyne.

They rais'd the town of merry Carlile,
 In all the haste they can;
 And came thronging to William's house
 As fast as they might gone.

There they beset that good yeoman,
 Around on every side;
 William heard great noise of folks
 That thitherward fast hyed.

Alice opened a back window,
 And looked all about;
 She was aware of the Justice and Sherife both,
 And with then a great route.

Alas! treason! cried Alice,
 Ever wo may thou be;
 Go into my chamber, husband, she said,
 Sweet William of Cloudeslie.

He took his sword and his buckler,
 His bow and his children three,
 And went into his strongest chamber,
 Where he thought surest to be.

Fair Alice, like a lover true,
 Took a pole-axe in her hand,
 Said, he shall die that cometh in
 This door, while I may stand.

Cloudeslie bent a right good bow,
 That was of trusty tree,
 He smote the Justice on the breast,
 That his arrow burst in three.

A curse on his heart, said William,
 This day thy coat did on!
 If it had not been better than mine,
 It had gone near thy bone.

Yield thee, Cloudeslie, said the Justice,
 Cast thy bow and thy arrows thee fro:
 A curse on his heart, said fair Alice,
 That my husband councelleth so.

Set fire to the house, said the Sherife,
 Sith it will no better be,
 And burn we therein William, he said,
 His wife and children three.

They fired the house in many a place,
 The fire flew up on hie;
 Alas! then cried fair Alice,
 I see we here shall die.

William opened a back window,
 That was in his chamber hie,
 And there with sheets he did let down
 His wife and children three.

Here you have my treasure, he said,
 My wife and children three:
 For Christ's sake do them no harm,
 But wreck you all on me.

William shot so wondrous well,
 Till his arrows were all ago,
 And the fire so fast upon him fell,
 That his bowstring brent in two.

The sparkles brent and fell upon
 Good William of Cloudeslie;
 Then was he a wofull man, and said,
 This is a coward's death to die.

Leever had I, said William then,
 With my sword in the route to renue,
 Then here among my enemies wode,
 Thus cruelly to brene.

He took his sword and his buckler,
 And among them all he ran;
 Where the people were most in prece
 He smote down many a man.

There might no man abide his strokes,
 So fiercely on them he ran;
 Then they threw windows and doors on him,
 And so took that good yeoman.

Then they him bound, both hand and foot,
 And in deep dungeon cast;
 Now Cloudeslie, said the Justice,
 Thou shalt be hanged in haste.

A pair of new Gallows, said the Sherife,
 Now shall I for thee make;
 And the gates of Carlile shall be shut:
 No man shall come in therat.

Then shall not help Clym of the Clough,
 Nor yet shall Adam Bell,
 Though they came with a thousand men,
 Nor all the devils in hell.

Early in the morning the Justice uprose,
 To the gates first can he gone,
 And commanded to be shut full close,
 Lightill evrychone.

Then went he to the market place,
 As fast as he could hye;
 There a pair of new Gallows, he set up,
 Beside the pillorye.

A little boy among them asked,
 What meant that Gallows tree?
 They said to hang a good yeoman,
 Called William of Cloudeslie.

That little boy was the town swine-herd,
 And kept fair Alice swine;
 Oft had he seen Wiliam in the wood,
 And given him there to dine.

He went out at a crevis of the wall,
 And to the wood did gone,
 There met he with these wightie yeomen,
 Shortly and anone.

Alas! then said the little boy,
 Ye tarry here too long,
 Cloudeslie is taken dampned to death,
 And ready for to honge.

Alas! then said good Adam Bell,
 That ever we saw this day;
 He had better have tarried with us,
 As oft we did him pray.

He might have dwelt in the green forest,
 Under the shadows green;
 And have kept both him and us at rest,
 Out of all trouble and teen.

Adam bent a right good bow,
 A great hart soon he slayne:
 Take that child, he said to thy dinner,
 And bring mine arrow againe.

Now go we hence, said these wyghtye yeomen,
 Tarry we no longer here;
 We shall him borrowe by God his grace,
 Though we buy it full dere.

To Carlile went these bold yeomen,
 All in a morning of May,
 Here is one fit of Cloudeslie,
 And another is to say.

Part the Second.

And when they came to merry Carlile,
 All in the morning tide,
 They found the gates them shut untill
 About on every side.

Alas! then said good Adam Bell,
 That ere we were made men!
 These gates be shut so wondrous fast,
 We may not come therin.

Then bespake him Clym of the Clough,
 With a wyle we will us in bring;
 Let us say we be messengers,
 Streight come now from our King.

Adam said, I have a letter written,
 Now let us wisely werke,
 We will say we have the King's seal,
 I hold the porter no clerk.

Then Adam Bell beat on the gates,
 With strokes great and strong:
 The porter marvelled who was therat,
 And to the gates he throng.

Who is there now, said the porter,
 That maketh all this knocking?
 We be two messengers, quoth Clym of the Clough,
 Be come right from our King.

We have a letter quoth Adam Bell,
 To the Justice we must it bring;
 Let us in our message to do,
 That we may away to the King.

Here cometh none in, the porter said,
 By him that died on a tree,
 Till a false thief be first hanged,
 Called William of Cloudeslie.

Then spake the yeoman Clym of the Clough,
 And swore by Mary free,
 And if that we stande long without,
 Like a thefe thou hang'd shalt be.

Lo! here we have the King's seal:
 What Lurdon, art thou wode?
 The porter went it had been so,
 And lightly did his hode.

Welcome is my Lord's seal, he said,
 For that ye shall come in,
 He opened the gate full shortlye;
 An evil opening for him.

Now we are in, said Adam Bell,
 Whereof we are full fain;
 But Christ he knows, that harrow'd hell,
 How we get out again.

Had we the keys said Clym of the Clough,
 Right well then should we speed;
 Then might we come out well enough,
 When we see time and need.

They called the porter to councell,
 And wrang his neck in two,
 And cast him in a deep dungeon,
 And took his keys him fro.

Now I am porter, said Adam Bell,
 See, brother, the keys are here;
 The worst porter to merry Carlile,
 That they had this hundred yere.

And now will we our bows bend,
 Into the town we'll go,
 For to deliver our dear brother,
 That lyeth in care and wo.

Then they bent their good ewe bows,
 And looked their strings were round;
 The market place in merry Carlile,
 They beset in that stound.

And as they looked them beside,
 A pair of new Gallows they see,
 And the Justice with a guest of squires,
 That judged William hang'd to be.

And Cloudeslie lay ready there in a cart,
 Fast bound both foot and hand;
 And a strong rope about his neck,
 All ready for to hang.

The Justice called to him a lad,
 Cloudeslie's clothes he should have,
 To take the measure of that yeoman,
 Therafter to make his grave.

I have seen as great mervaile, said Cloudeslie,
 As between this and prime,
 He that maketh a grave for me,
 Himself may lie therin.

Thou speakest proudly, said the Justice,
 I will thee hang with my hand;
 Full well heard this his brethren two,
 There still as they did stand.

Then Cloudeslie cast his eyes aside,
 And saw his brethren twayne,
 At a corner of the market place,
 Ready the Justice to slaine.

I see comfort, said Cloudeslie,
 Yet hope I well to fare,
 If I might have my hands at will,
 Right lytle wold I care.

Then spake up then good Adam Bell,
 To Clym of the Clough so free,
 Brother, see you mark the Justice well,
 Lo, yonder you may him see;

And at the Sherife shote I will,
 Strongly with an arrow kein;
 A better shot in merry Carlile
 This seven yere was not seen.

They loosed their arrows both at once,
 Of no man had they dread;
 The one hit the Justice, the other the Sherife,
 That both their sides gan bleed.

All men voyded that them stood nye,
 When the Justice fell to the ground;
 And the Sherife also nigh him by,
 Either had his deaths wound.

All the citizens fast gan fly,
 They durst no longer abide:
 There lyghtly they loosed Cloudeslie,
 Where he with ropes lay tied.

William start to an officer of the town,
 His axe fro his hand he wrung,
 On each side then he smote them down,
 He thought he tarried long.

William said to his brethren two,
 This day let us live and die;
 If ere you have need as I have now,
 The same you'l find by me.

They shot so well into that tide,
 Their strings were of silk full sure,
 That they swept the streets on every side;
 That batayle did long endure.

They fought together as brethren true,
 Like hardy men and bold;
 Many a man to the ground they threw,
 And many a heart made cold.

But when their arrows were all gone
 Men preceed to them full fast,
 They drew their swordes then anone,
 And their bows from them cast.

Then they went lyghtly on their way,
 With swords and bucklers round;
 By that it was mid of the day,
 They made many a wound.

There was an out-horn in Carlile blown,
 And the bells backward did ring,
 Many a woman said alas!
 And many their hands did wring.

The Mayre of Carlile forth has gone,
 With him a full great rout,
 These yeoman dreaded him full sore,
 Their lives were in great doubt.

The Mayre came armed then apace,
 With pole-axe in his hand;
 Many a strong man with him was,
 There in that stoure to stand.

The Mayre smote Cloudeslie with his bill,
 His buckler he brust in two,
 Ful many a yeoman with great evil
 Cried, alas! treason! for wo,
 Keep well the gates fast, they bade,
 That these traitors out not go.

But all for nought was that they wrought,
 So fast they down were laid;
 They all three so manfully fought,
 They gotten without abraid.

Have here your keys, said Adam Bell,
 Mine office I here forsake,
 And if you do by my counsell,
 A new porter do ye make.

He then throw their keys at their heads,
 And bade them well to thryve,
 And all that letteth any good yeoman,
 To come and comfort his wyfe.

Thus be these good yeomen gone to the wood,
 As lyghtly as leaf on lynd;
 They leugh and be merry, in their mood,
 Their enemies were ferr behind.

When they came to the Engle-wood,
 Under the trusty tree,
 There they found them bows full good,
 And arrows full great plenty.

So God me help, said Adam Bell,
 And Clym of the Clough so free;
 I would we were in merry Carlile,
 Before that fair meynye.

They set them down, and made good cheer,
 And eat and drank full well,
 Here ends a fyt of these yeomen;
 Another I will you tell.



Part the Third.

As they sat in the Engle-wood,
 Under the green-wood tree,
 They thought they heard a woman weep,
 But her they might not see,

Sore then sighed the fair Alice,
 That ever I saw this day,
 For now is my dear husband slain,
 Alas! and wel-a-way!

Might I have spoken with his brethren,
 Or either of them twayne,
 To shew them what to him befel,
 My heart were out of payne.

Cloudeslie walked a little beside,
 Lookt under the green wood lynde,
 He saw his wife and children three,
 Full wo in heart and mind.

Welcome, dear wife, then said William,
 Under this trusty tree;
 I had ween'd yesterday, by swete Saint John,
 Thou shouldest me never see.

Now well is me that ye be here,
 My heart is out of wo;
 Dame, he said, be merry and glad,
 And thauk my brethren two.

Hereof to speak, said Adam Bell,
 I wis it is no boot;
 The meat that we must sup withall,
 It runneth yet on foot.

Then went they down into a launde,
 These noble archers three,
 Each of them slew a hart of Greece,
 The best that they could see.

Have here the best, Alice, my wife,
 Said William of Cloudeslie,
 Because ye boldly stood by me
 When I was slain full nie.

Then went they lightly to suppere,
 With such meat as they had,
 And thanked God of their fortune,
 They were both merry and glad.

And when they all had supped well,
 Certain withouten lease,
 Cloudeslie said, we will to our King,
 To get us a charter of peace.

Alice shall be at our sojourning,
 In a nunnery here beside ;
 My two sons also shall with her go,
 And there they shall abyde.

Mine eldest son shall go with me,
 For him have you no care ;
 And he shall bring you word again
 How that we all do fare.

Thus be these yeomen to London gone,
 As fast as they might hie ;
 Till they came to the King's palace,
 Where they would needes be.

And when they came to the King's court,
 Unto the palace gate,
 Of no man would they ask the leave,
 But boldly went in thereat.

They preceed prestly into the hall,
 Of no man had they dread ;
 The porter came, and did them call,
 And with them gan to chide.

The usher said, what would ye have ?
 I pray you tell to me ;
 You might thus make officers shent ;
 Good Sirs, of whence be ye ?

Sir, we be outlaws of the forest,
 Certain withouten lease;
 And hither come we to the King,
 To get a charter of peace.

And when they came before the King,
 As was the law of the land,
 They kneeled down without lettyug,
 And each held up his hand.

They said, lord, we beseech thee here
 That ye will grant us grace;
 For we have slain your fallow deer
 In many a sundry place.

What be your names? then said the King,
 Anone that tell you me;
 They said, Adam Bell, Clym of the Clough,
 And William of Cloudeslie.

Be ye those theves. then said the King,
 That bene told of to me?
 Here to God I make an avowe,
 Ye shall be hanged all three.

Ye shall be dead without mercy,
 As I'm King of this land;
 He commanded his officers everyone
 Fast on them to lay hand.

There they took these good yeomen,
 And arested them all three;
 So may I thrive, said Adam Bell,
 This game liketh not me.

But, good lord, we beseech you now
 That ye would grant us grace;
 That as freely we did to you come,
 As freely we may pass!

With such weapons as we have here,
 Till we get from your place ;
 And if we live this hundredth yere,
 We will ask you no grace.

Ye speak too proudly, said the King,
 Ye shall be hanged all three ;
 That were great pity, said the Queen,
 If any grace might be.

When I came first into this land,
 To be your wedded wife,
 The first boon that I wolde you ask,
 Ye would it grant belyfe.

And I asked you never one till now,
 Therefore, lord, grant it me ;
 Now ask it, Madam, said the King,
 And granted it shall be.

Then, good my lord, I you beseech
 These yeomen grant ye me ;
 Madam, ye might have asked a boon
 That was worth all the three.

Ye might have asked towns and towers,
 Parkes and forests plente ;
 None so pleasant, by my fay, she said,
 Nor none so lefe to me.

Madam, sith it is your desire,
 Your asking granted shall be,
 But I had lever given you
 Good market towns three.

The Queen was then a glad woman,
 And said, lord, gramercy ;
 I dare undertake for them all
 That true men they shall be.

But good my lord, speak some merry word,
 That comfort they may see ;
 I grant you grace, then said the King,
 Rise, fellows, and to meat go ye.

They had not sitten but a while,
 Certain without leasing,
 There came messengers from the north,
 With letters to our King.

And when they came before the King,
 They knelt down on their knee,
 And said, lord, your officers greet you well
 Of Carlile, in the north countrie.

How fareth my Justice, said the King,
 And my Sherife also ?
 Sir, they be slain without leasing,
 And many an officer mo.

Who hath them slain ? then said the King,
 Anon that do tell me ;
 Adam Bell, and Clym of the Clough,
 And William of Cloudeslie.

Alas for rewth ! then said the King,
 My heart is wondrous sore ;
 I had lever than a thousand pound
 I had known this before :

For I have granted to them grace,
 And that forthinketh me ;
 But had I known all this before,
 They had been hanged all three.

The King he opened the letter anone,
 Himself he read it thro,
 And found how these outlaws had slain
 Three hundred men and mo.

First the Justice, then the Sherife,
 And the Mayre of Carlile town;
 Of all the constables and catchipoles
 Alive were scant left one.

The baylies and the bedels both,
 And serjeants of the law,
 And forty fosters of the fell,
 These outlaws had yslaw :

And broke his parkes, and slew his deer,
 Of all they chose the best,
 So perelous outlaws as they were
 Walked not by east nor west.

When the King this letter had read,
 In his heart he sighed sore ;
 Take up the tables, anone he bade,
 For I may eat no more.

The King called his best archers,
 To the butts with him to go ;
 I will see these fellows shoot, he said,
 In the north have wrought this wo.

The King's bowmen busk them belyve,
 And the Queen's archers also,
 So did these three wyghtye yeomen,
 With them they thought to go.

There twice or thrice they shot about,
 For to assay their hand ;
 There was no shot these yeomen shot
 That any prycke might stand.

Then spoke William of Clondeslie,
 By him that for me died,
 I hold him never a good archer
 That shooteth at butts so wide.

At what a butt, now, wold ye shoot?
 I pray thee tell to me;
 At such a butt, Sir, then he said,
 As men use in my countrie.

William then went into a field
 With his two brethren;
 There they set up two hazel rods,
 Twenty score paces between.

I hold him an archer, said Cloudeslie,
 That yonder wand cleaveth in two;
 Here is none such, said the King,
 Nor no man can so do.

I shall essay, Sir, said Cloudeslie,
 Or that I farther go;
 And then with a bearing arrow
 He clave the wand in two.

Thou art the best archer, then said the King,
 Forsooth that ever I see;
 And yet for your love, said William,
 I will do more mastery.

I have a son is seven yere old,
 He is to me full dear;
 I will him tye unto a stake;
 All shall see that be here.

And lay an apple upon his head,
 And go six score paces him fro,
 And I myself with a broad arrow,
 Shall cleave the apple in two.

Now haste thee, do this, said the King,
 By him that died on tree;
 But if thou do not as thou hast said,
 High hanged shalt thou be.

An if thou touch his head or gown,
 In sight that men may see,
 By all the saints that be in heaven,
 I shall you hang all three.

What I have promised, said William,
 That I will ne'er forsake,
 And there even before the King,
 In the earth he drove a stake :

And bound thereto his eldest son,
 And bade him stand still therat;
 And turned the childe's face him fro,
 Because he should not start.

An apple upon his head he set,
 And then his bow he bent:
 Six score paces they were meten,
 And thither Cloudeslie went.

There he drew a fair broad arrow,
 His bow was great and long,
 He set that arrow in his bow,
 That was both stiffe and strong.

He prayed the people, that were there,
 That they all still wolde stand,
 For he that shooteth for such a wager,
 Behoveth a steadfast hand.

Much people prayed for Cloudeslie,
 That his life saved might be;
 And when he made him ready to shoot,
 There was many a weeping ee.

But Cloudeslie cleft the apple in two,
 His son he did not nie,
 Now God forbid then said the King,
 That thou should shoot at me.

I give thee eighteen pence a day,
 And my bow shalt thou bere,
 And over all the north countrie,
 I make thee chief ridere.

And I thirteen pence a day, said the Queen,
 By God, and by my fay;
 Come fetch thy payment when thou wilt,
 No man shall say the nay.

William I make thee a gentleman,
 Of clothing and of fee;
 And thy two brethren, yeomen of my Chamber,
 For they are seemly to see.

Your son, for he is of tender age,
 Of my wine cellar shall be,
 And when he cometh to man's estate,
 He better advanced shall be.

And William, bring me your wife, said the Queen,
 Me longeth her sore to see:
 She shall be my chief gentlewoman,
 To govern my nurserie.

The yeoman thanked them all curteously,
 To some Bishop we will wend,
 Of all the sins that we have done,
 To be assoyld at his hand.

So forth be gone these good yeomen,
 As fast as they might hie;
 And after came and dwelld with the King,
 And died good men all three.

Thus ended the lives of these good yeomen;
 God send them eternal blysse;
 And all that with a hand-bow shooteth,
 That of heaven they never misse.

Finis.