

WATTY AND MEG;

8

H.F.

OR, THE

*Wife Reformed.*

A TRUE TALE.

*We dream in Courtship, but in Wedlock wake.*

POPE.

118



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WATTY AND MEG.

**K**EEN the frosty winds war-blawin',  
Deep the snaw had wreath'd the plo

Watty, wearied a' day sawin',  
Daunert down to Mungo Blue's.

Dryster Jock was sitting cracky  
Wi' Pate Tamson o' the hill,  
'Come awa,' quo' Johnny, 'Watty,  
Haith we'se hae anither gill.'

Watty, glad to see Jock Jabos,  
And sae mony neebours roun',  
Kicket frae his shoon the snaw ba's,  
Syne ayont the fire sat down.

Owre a boord, wi' bannocks heaped,  
Cheese, an' stoups, an' glasses stood;  
Some war roarin', ithers sleepit,  
Ithers quietly chew'd their cude.

Jock was sellin' Pate some tallow,  
A' the rest a racket hel';  
A' but Watty, wha, poor fallow!  
Sat and smoket by himsel'.

Mungo fill'd him up a toothfu',  
Drank his health and Meg's in ane;  
Watty, puffin' out a mouthfu',  
Pledg'd him wi' a dreary grane.

'What's the matter, Watty, wi' you?  
Troth your chafts are fa'ing in;

something's wrang—P'm vext to see you—  
 Gudesake! but ye're desperate thin!  
 Aye, (quo' Watty) things are alter'd,  
 But its past redemption now;  
 O! I wish I had been halter'd  
 When I married Maggy Howe!  
 We been poor, and vext, and raggy,  
 Tried wi' troubles no that sma';  
 Whem I bore—but marrying Maggy  
 Laid the cape-stane o' them a'.  
 Night and day she's ever yelpin,  
 Wi' the weans she ne'er can gre  
 When she's tir'd wi' perfect skelpin,  
 Then she flees like fire on me.  
 O ye, Mungo! when she'll clash on  
 Wi' her everlasting clack,  
 Whiles I've had my nieve, in passion,  
 Liftet up to break her back.  
 O! for gudesake, keep fra cuffets,  
 Mungo shook his head and said,  
 Weel I ken what sort o' life it's;  
 Ken ye, Watty, how I did?  
 After Bess and I war kippled,  
 Soon she grew like ony bear,  
 Rak my shins, and, when I tipped,  
 Harl'd out my very hair!  
 For a wee I quietly knuckled,  
 But, whan naething would prevail,  
 In my claes and cash I buckled—  
 Bess, for ever fare ye weel!

Then her din grew less and less ay,  
 Haith I gart her change her tune:  
 Now a better wife than Bessy  
 Never stept in leather shoon.

Try this, Watty.—Whan ye see her  
 Ragin like a roarin flood,  
 Swear that moment that ye'll lea her;  
 That's the way to keep her gude.

Laughing, sangs, and lasses' skirls,  
 Echo'd now out thro' the roof,  
 Done! quo' Pate, and syne his arls  
 Nail'd the Dryster's wauket loof.

I' the thrang o' stories telling,  
 Shaking hands and joking queer,  
 Swith! a chap comes on the hallan,  
 'Mungo, is our Watty here?'

Maggy's weel-kent tongue and hurry  
 Dartet through him like a knife;  
 Up the door flew—like a fury  
 In cam Watty's scawlin wife.

Nasty, gude-for-naething being!  
 O ye snuffy, drucken sow!  
 Bringin wife and weans to ruin,  
 Drinkin here wi' sic a crew!

Deil nor your twa legs war broken!  
 Sic a life nae flesh endures—  
 Toilin like a slave to sloken  
 You, ye dyvor! and your whores!

Rise! ye drunken beast o' Bethel!  
 Drink's your night and day's desire.

Rise, this precious hour! or faith I'll  
Fling your whisky i' the fire.'

Vatty heard her tongue unhallow'd,  
Pay'd his groat wi' little din,  
Left the house, while Maggy fallow'd,  
Flyting a' the road behin'.

Folk frae every door cam lamping,  
Maggy curst them ane and a';  
Clappit wi' her hands, and stamping,  
Lost her bauchels i' the snaw.

Lame, at length, she turn'd the gavel,  
Wi' a face as white's a clout,  
Ragin' like a very devil,  
Kickin' stools and chairs about:

Ye'll sit wi' your limmers round you!  
Hang you, Sir, I'll be your death;  
Little hauds my hands, confound you!  
But I cleave you to the teeth.'

Vatty, wha midst this oration  
Ey'd her whiles, but durst na speak,  
Sat, like patient Resignation,  
Trembling by the ingle check.

Had his wee drap brose he sippet,  
Maggy's tongue gaed like a bell;  
Quietly to his bed he slippet,  
Sighin' aften to himsel'—

Nane are free frae some vexation,  
Ilk ane has his ills to drée;  
But thro' a' the hale creation  
Is a mortal vext like me!

A' night lang he rowt and gauntet,  
 Sleep or rest he could na tak;  
 Maggy, aft wi' horror hauntet,  
 Murn'lin, startet at his back.

Soon as e'er the morning peepet,  
 Up raise Watty, waefu' chiel,  
 Kiss'd his weanies while they sleepit,  
 Waukent Meg, and sought fareweel:

' Fareweel, Meg! — and O! may Heaven  
 Keep you ay within his care;  
 Watty's heart ye've lang been grievin,  
 Now he'll never fash you mair.

Happy could I been beside you,  
 Happy baith at morn and e'en;  
 A' the ill's did e'er betide you,  
 Watty ay turn'd out your friend.

But ye ever like to see me  
 Vext and sighin', late and air;  
 Fareweel, Meg! I've sworn to lea thee,  
 So thou'lt never see me mair.'

Meg a' sabbin, sae to lose him,  
 Sic a change had never wist,  
 Held his hand close to her bosom,  
 While her heart was like to burst.

' O m' — Watty, will ye lea me,  
 Friendless, helpless, to despair;  
 O! for this ae time forgie me;  
 Never will I vex you mair.'

' Aye! ye've aft said that; and broken  
 A' your vows ten times a week.

No, no, Meg! See—there's a token  
Glitt'ring on my bonnet cheek.

Owre the seas I march this morning,  
Listet, testet, sworn an' a',  
Forc'd by your confounded girning.  
Fareweel, Meg! for I'm awa.'

Then poor Maggy's tears and clamour  
Gusht afresh, and louder grew;  
While the weans, wi' mournfu' yammer,  
Round their sabbin mither flew.

' Through the yirth I'll wander wi' you—  
Stay, O Watty! stay at hame.  
Here upon my knees I'll gi'e you  
Ony thing ye like to name.

' See your poor young lammies pleadin,  
Will ye gang and break our heart?  
No a house to put our head in,  
No a friend to tak our part.'

Ilka word cam like a bullet;  
Watty's heart begoud to shake:  
On a kist he laid his wallet,  
Dightet baith his een and spake:

' If ance mair I could by writing,  
Lea the sodgers and stay still,  
Wad you swear to drap your flyting?  
' Yes, O Watty! yes I will.'

' Then, (quo' Watty) mind be honz  
Ay to keep your temper strive;  
Gin ye break this dreadfu' promise,  
Never mair expect to thrive:

5

Marget Howel! this hour ye solemn  
Swear by every thing that's gude,  
Ne'er again your spouse to scaul' him,  
While life warms your heart and blood;

That ye'll ne'er in Mungo's seek me—  
Ne'er put drucken to my name—  
Never out at e'ning steek me—  
Never gloom when I come hame;

That ye'll ne'er, like Bessy Miller,  
Kick my shins, or rug my hair—

Lastly, I'm to keep the siller,  
This upon your saul ye swear?

'O—h!' quo' Meg;—'Aweel!' quo' Watty,  
Fareweel; faith I'll try the seas.'

'O stand still,' quo' Meg, and grat aye;  
'Ony, ony way ye please.'

Maggy syne, because he prest her,  
Swore to a' things owre again;  
Watty lap, an' danc'd, an' kiss'd her;  
Wow! but he was wond'rous fain.

Down he threw his staff victorious;  
Aff gaed bonnet, claes, an' shoon;  
Syne aneath the blankets glorious  
Held anither Honey-Moon!

FINIS.