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SHEPHERD LUBIN

AND HIS

DOG TRAY.

A TALE.



*"An orphan lad poor Lubin was,
" No friend, no relative had he!
" His happiest hour was dash'd with woe,
" His mildest treatment—tyranny."*



GLASGOW:
PRINTED FOR AND SOLD BY
Brash & Reid.

SHEPHERD LUBIN.



I.
YOUNG Lubin was a shepherd boy,
Who watch'd a rigid master's sheep,
And many a night was heard to sigh,
And many a day was seen to weep:

II.
For not a lambkin e'er was lost,
Or wether stray'd to field remote;
But Lubin ever was to blame,
Nor careful he, nor penn'd his cote.

III.
Yet not a trustier lad was known,
To climb the promontory's brow;
Nor yet a tenderer heart e'er beat,
Beside the brook in vale below.

IV.
From him stern winter's drifting snow,
Its pelting sleet, or frost severe;
Or scorching summer's sultry ray,
Ne'er forc'd a murmur, or a tear.

V.
For ah! the varying seasons had
To ev'ry hardship form'd his frame;
Tho' still his tender feeling heart,
By nature nurs'd, remain'd the same.

*VI.

But whither shall the orphan fly
 To meet protection's fostering power?
 Oppression waits the future day,
 When misery marks the natal hour.

VII.

An orphan lad poor Lubin was,
 No friend, no relative had he!
 His happiest hour was dash'd with wo,
 His mildest treatment—tyranny.

VIII.

It chanc'd that o'er the boundless heath
 One winter's day his flocks had spread;
 By hunger urg'd to seek the blade,
 That lurk'd beneath its snowy bed.

IX.

And, hous'd at eve, his fleecy charge,
 He, forrowing, mis'd a favourite lamb,
 That shunn'd the long persisting search,
 Nor answer'd to its bleating dam.

X.

With heavy heart he shap'd his way,
 And told so true, so sad a tale,
 That almost pierc'd the marble breast
 Of ruthless Rufus of the vale.

XI.

Poor Lubin own'd his flocks had stray'd,
 Own'd he had suffer'd them to go;
 Yes!—he had learn'd to pity them,
 For often he had hunger'd too:

XII.

And had he to their pinching wants,
 The unnipp'd neighb'ring bounds deny'd;
 They sure had dropp'd—as surely too,
 The pitying shepherd boy had died.

XIII.

Then die!—th' unfeeling master said,
 And spurn'd him from his closing door;
 Which, till he found his favourite lamb,
 He vow'd should ne'er admit him more.

XIV.

Dark was the night, and o'er the waste
 The whistling winds did fiercely blow,
 And 'gainst his poor unshelter'd head,
 With arrowy keenness came the snow:

XV.

The small thick snow that Eurus drives
 In freezing fury o'er the plain,
 And with unsparing vengeance, scores
 The callous face of hardiest swain.

XVI.

Yet thus he left his master's house,
 And shap'd his sad uncertain way;
 By man unnotic'd and forfook,
 And follow'd but by—trusty Tray—

XVII.

Poor trusty Tray! a faithful dog;
 Lubin and he were young together:
 Still would they grace each other's side,
 Whate'er the time, whate'er the weather.

XVIII.

Unlike to worldly friends were they,
 Who separate in Fortune's blast—
 They still were near when fair the sky,
 But nearer still when overcast.

XIX.

When Lubin's random step involv'd
 His body 'neath the drifted snow,
 Tray help'd him forth; and when Tray fell,
 Poor Lubin dragg'd him from below.

XX.

Thus, 'midst the horrors of the night,
 They enter'd on the houseless heath;
 Above their heads no comfort broke,
 Nor round about, nor underneath.

XXI.

No little cheering star they saw,
 To light them on their dreary way;
 Nor yet the distant twinkling blaze
 Of cottage industry saw they.

XXII.

Nay, e'en that most officious guide
 Of those who roam and those who mope;
 Retiring Will-o'-th'-Wisp, refus'd
 To trim the lamp of treach'rous hope.

XXIII.

Nor parish bell was heard to strike,
 The hour of "tardy-gaited night;"
 No noise—but winds and screams of those
 Ill-omen'd birds that shun the light.

XXIV.

Benumb'd at length his stiff'ning joints,
 His tongue to Tray cou'd scarcely speak;
 His tears congeal'd to icicles—
 His hair hung clatt'ring 'gainst his cheek.

XXV.

As thus he felt his fault'ring limbs
 Give omen of approaching death,
 Aurora from her eastern hill
 'Rush'd forth, and stay'd his fleeting breath;

XXVI.

And shew'd to his imperfect sight
 The harmless cause of all his wo!
 His little lambkin, cold and stiff!
 Stretch'd on its bed of glist'ning snow!

XXVII.

His heart's best chord was yet in tune,
 Unsnapp'd by cold severity;
 Touch'd was that chord—his dim eye beam'd,
 Suffused sensibility.

XXVIII.

" 'Tis just! he said, that where thou liest,
 " The careless shepherd boy shou'd lie;
 " Thou diedst, poor fool! for want of food!
 " I fall, for suffering thee to die.

XXIX.

" But oh, my master!"—broken—short—
 " Was every half-word now he spoke—
 " Severe has been, thy constant will,
 " And galling sure thy heavy yoke.

XXX.

“ But yet ‘in all my best,’ have I
 “ Without a ‘plaint my hardships bore;
 “ Rufus!—may all my pangs be past—
 “ Master!—my sufferings are no more!

XXXI.

“ A warmer couch hast thou to press,
 “ Secure from cramping frosts thy feet;
 “ And cou’dst thou boast so free a breast,
 “ Thou yet might’st die a death as sweet.

XXXII.

“ My trusty dog—that wistful look
 “ Is all that makes my poor heart heave;
 “ But hie thee home,—proclaim me dead,
 “ Forget to think—and cease to grieve.”

XXXIII.

So saying, shrunk the hapless youth,
 Beneath the chilling grasp of death;
 And, clasping poor Tray’s shaggy neck,
 Sigh’d gently forth his parting breath!

XXXIV.

His faithful, fond, sagacious dog,
 Hung watchful o’er his master’s clay;
 And many a moan the old fool made,
 And many a thing he strove to say.

XXXV.

He paw’d him with his hard-worn foot,
 He lick’d him with his scarce warm tongue;
 His cold nose strove to catch his breath,
 As to his clos’d lips close it clung.

XXXVI.

But not a sign of lurking life,
 Thro' all his frame he found to creep ;
 He knew not what it was to die,
 But knew his master did not sleep.

XXXVII.

For still had he his slumbers watch'd,
 Through many a long and dismal night ;
 And rous'd him from the pallet hard,
 To meet his toil e'er morning light.

XXXVIII.

And well his brain remember'd yet,
 He never patter'd tow'rds his bed ;
 Or lodg'd his long face on his cheek,
 But straight he stirr'd, or rais'd his head.

XXXIX.

Yes, he remember'd and with tears,
 His loving master's kind replies ;
 When dumbly he contriv'd to say,
 " The cock has crow'd, my master rise !"

XL.

But now the paw, the scratch, the whine,
 To howlings chang'd, alone can tell
 The suff'rings of instinctive love,
 When fruitless prov'd its simple spell.

XLI.

Great grief assail'd his untaught heart,
 And quickly laid its victim low !
 His master's cheek, his pillow cold,
 Their common bed the colder snow !

F I N I S.