

THE
BATTLE OF
BOTHWELL BRIGG;

AN
OLD SCOTCH BALLAD.



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“Oh what is become o’ your leal goodman,
That now you are a’ your lane?
If he has join’d wi’ the rebel gang
You will never see him again.”

“O say nae ‘the rebel gang,’ Ladye;
It’s a term nae heart can thole,
For them wha rebel against their God,
It is justice to control.

“When rank oppression rends the heart,
And rules wi’ stroke o’ death,
Wha wadna spend their dear heart’s blood
For the tenets of their faith?

“Then say na ‘the rebel gang,’ Ladye,
For it gi’es me muckle pain;
My John went away with Earlston,
And I’ll never see either again.”

“O wae is my heart for thee, Janet,
O sair is my heart for thee;
These Covenant men were ill advised;
They are fools, you may credit me.

“Where’s a’ their boastfu’ preaching now,
 Against their king and law,
 When mony a head in death lies low,
 And mony mae maun fa’?”

“Ay, but death lasts no for aye, Ladye,
 For the grave maun yield its prey;
 And when we meet on the verge of heaven,
 We’ll see wha are fools that day:

“We’ll see wha looks in their Saviour’s face,
 With holiest joy and pride,
 Whether they who shed his servant’s blood,
 Or those that for him died.

“I wadna be the highest dame
 That ever this country knew,
 And take my chance to share the doom
 Of that persecuting crew.

“Then ca’ us na ‘rebel gang,’ Ladye,
 Nor take us fools to be.
 For there isna ane of a’ that gang,
 Wad change his state wi’ thec.”

“O weel may you be, my poor Janet,
 May blessings on you combine!
 The better you are in either state,
 Tho less shall I repine;

“But wi’ your fightings and your faith,
 Your ravings and your rage,
 There you have lost a leal helpmate,
 In the blossom of his age.

“And what’s to come o’ ye, my poor Janet,
 Wi’ these twa babies sweet?
 Ye ha’e naebody now to work for them,
 Or bring you a meal o’ meat ;

“It is that which makes my heart sae wae,
 And gars me, while scarce aware,
 Whiles say the things I wadna say,
 Of them that can err nae mair.”

Poor Janet kiss’d her youngest babe,
 And the tears fell on his cheek,
 And they fell upon his swaddling bands,
 For her heart was like to break

“Oh little do I ken, my dear, dear babes,
 What misery’s to be mine !
 But for the cause we ha’e espoused,
 I will yield my life and thine.

“Oh had I a friend, as I ha’e nane,—
 For nane daro own me now,—
 That I might send to Bothwell Brigg,
 If the killers wad but allow,

“To lift the corpse of my brave John :
 I ken where they will him find,—
 He wad meet his God’s foes face to face,
 And he’ll ha’e nae wound behind.”

“But I went to Bothwell Brigg, Janet,—
 There was nane durst hinder me,—
 For I wantit to hear a’ I could hear,
 And to see what I could see ;

“And there I found your brave husband,
 As viewing the dead my lane ;
 He was lying in the very foremost rank,
 In the midst of a heap o’ slain.”

Then Janet held up her hands to heaven,
 And she grat, and she tore her hair,
 “O sweet Ladye, O dear Ladye,
 Dinna tell me ony mair !

“There is a hope will linger within,
 When earthly hope is vain,
 But, when ane kens the very worst,
 It turns the heart to stane !”

“Oh wae is my heart, John Carr,’ said I,
 ‘That I this sight should see !’
 But when I said these waefu’ words,
 He lifted his eyne to me.

“‘O art thou there my kind Ladye,
 The best o’ this world’s breed,
 And are you ganging your leifou lane,
 Amang the hapless dead ?’

“‘I ha’e servants within my ca’, John Carr,
 And a chariot in the dell,
 And if there is ony hopo o’ life,
 I will carry you hame mysell.’

“‘O Lady, there is nae hope o’ life ;
 And what were lifo to me ?
 Wad ye save me frae the death of a man,
 To hang on a gallows tree ?

“ ‘I ha’e nae hame to fly to now,
 Nae country, and nae kin ;
 There is not a door in Fair Scotland
 Durst open to let me in.

“ ‘But I ha’e a loving wife at hame,
 And twa babies, dear to me ;
 They ha’e naebody now that dares favour them,
 And of hunger they a’ maun dee.

“ ‘Oh for the sako of thy saviour dear,
 Whose mercy thou hopest to share,
 Dear Lady, take the sackless things
 A wee beneath thy care !

“ ‘A lang farewell, my kind Ladye !
 O’er weel I ken thy worth.
 Gae send me a drink o’ the water o’ Clyde,
 For my last drink on earth.’

“ ‘O dinna tell ony mair, Ladyo,
 For my heart is cauld as clay ;
 There is a spear that pierces here,
 Frae every word ye say.’

“ ‘Ho wasna fear’d to dee, Janet,—
 For he gloried in his death,
 And wish’d to be laid with those who had bled
 For the same endearing faith.

“ ‘There wère three wounds in his boardly breast
 And his limb was broke in twain,
 And the sweat ran down wi’ his red heart’s blood.
 Wrung out by the deadly pain.

“ I row’d my apron round his head,
 For fear my men should tell,
 And I hid him in my Lord’s castle,
 And I nursed him there mysell.

“ And the best leeches in a’ the land
 Have tended him as he lay,
 And he never has lack’d my helping hand,
 By night nor yet by day.

“ I durstna tell you before, Janet,
 For I fear’d his life was gane,
 But now he’s sae weel, ye may visit him,
 And ye’se meet by yoursells alane.”

Then Janet she fell at her Lady’s feet,
 And she claspit them ferventlye,
 And she steepit them a’ wi’ the tears o’ joy
 Till the good Lady wept to see.

“ Oh ye are an angel sent frae heaven,
 To lighten calamitye!
 For, in distress, a friend or foe
 Is a’ the same to thee.

“ If good deeds count in heaven, Ladye,
 Eternal bliss to share,
 Ye ha’e done a deed will save your soul,
 Though you should never do mair.”

“ Get up, get up, my kind Janet,
 But never trow tongue or pen,
 That a’ the warld are lost to good,
 Except the Covenant men.”

Wha wadna ha'e shared that Lady's joy
 When watching the wounded hind,
 Rather than those of the feast and the dance,
 Which her kind heart resign'd?

Wha wadna rather share that Lady's fate,
 When the stars shall melt away,
 Than that of the sternest anchorite,
 That can naething but graen and pray?

Where Bothwell's bridge connects the margin steep,
 And Clyde, below, runs silent, strong, and deep,
 The hardy peasant by oppression driven
 To battle, deemed his cause the cause of heaven;
 Unskilled in arms, with useless courage stood,
 While gentle Monmouth grieved to shed his blood
 But fierce Dundee, inflamed with deadly hate,
 In vengeance for the great Montrose's fate,
 Let loose the sword, and to the hero's shade
 A barbarous hecatomb of victims paid.