



THE
HISTORY
OF
JOHN CHEAP
THE
CHAPMAN.

CONTAINING

Above a hundred merry Exploits, done
by him and his fellow traveller, Drou-
thy Tom, a sticket Shaver.

IN TWO PARTS. -



EDINBURGH:
Printed for the Booksellers in Scotland.



HISTOR^y OF
JOHN CHEAP,
THE CHAPMAN.

PREFACE.

JOHN CHEAP the Chapman, was a very comical short thick fellow, with a broad face and 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 to offer him cheese and bread, after he curst it 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 20 needles for a penny, and twa leather laces for a farthing.

He swore no oaths but one, which was, Let me never sin.

He used no imprecations, but let me neither cheat nor be cheated, but rather cheat than be cheated.

He gave bad counsel to none but children, to burn the bone combs, that their mother might buy another when he came again.

PART I.

THE FOLLOWING RELATION WAS TAKEN
FROM HIS OWN MOUTH VERBATIM.

I JOHN CHEAP, by chance, at some certain time, doubtless against my will, was born at the Hottom, near Rubmydock Mill. My father was a Scotch Highlander, and my mother a Yorkshire wench, but honest, 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; but fortune was fickle, and so was I, for I had not been a chapman above two days, until I began to consider the danger of deep ditches, midden dubs, biting dogs, bogles in barns, bangster wives and weet sacks, and what comfort is it, says I, to lie in the cow's oxter, the length of a cold winter night; to sit behind backs till the kail be a' cuttied up, and then to lick colly's leavings.

My first journey was through old Kilpatrick, I got no meat nor money, until the evening, I began 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, and 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 a 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 make 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 so fast.

No more passed, until I addressed the goodman for quarters; to which he answer

ed, Indeed lad, we haenae beds but three, my wife and I, oursells twa, and the twa bits o' little anes, Willy and Jenny lie in ane, the twa lads, our twa servant men, Willy Black and Tam Ive, lie in anither, auld Maggs, my mither, and the lass Jean Tirram 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, altho' thou be but a callan, heth I'll rather lie wi' Sannock Gardner. Hute awa, quo' the auld wife, the poor lad may lie on a battle e' strae 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 deil be here, an' ye be here the night, said she. Ho, ho, said I, but I'm here first, and first com'd first serv'd, good-

wife, 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' good honest folks; it may be so, goodwife, said I, but ye look rather the other way, when ye would lodg^d the devil in your house, and ca' a poor chapman out to die, such a stormy night as this. What do ye say, says she, there was nae a bonnier night since winter came in than this, O goodwife, what are you saying, do you not 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, a wat weel there was nae rain when I came in. The wife then shoots me out and bolted the door behind me. Well, said I, but I shall be through between thy mouth and thy nose ere the morrow. It being now so dark, and I, a stranger, could see no place to go to, went into the corn-yard, but finding no loose straw I fell a drawing one of their stacks, sheafbysheaf, until I pulled out a threave or two, and got into the hole myself,

where I lay as warm as a pie. The goodman in the morning, perceiving the heap of corn sheaves, came running to carry it away, and stop up the hole in the stack, wherein I lay with some of the sheaves; so with the stealing of the straw, and him stealing to others, cursing the thieves who had done it, swearing they had stole six threaves of it; I then skipped out of the hole, ho, ho, said I, goodman, you're not to bury me alive in your stack; 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.

My next exploit was near Carluke, between Hamilton and Lanark; where on a cold stormy night, I came to a little town with four or five houses in it; I went twice through it, but none of them would give me the credit to stand all night among their horses, or yet to lie in their cow's oxter: at last I prevailed with the wife, if her husband was willing to let me stop, she would,

and sent me to the barn to ask him ; and meeting him at the barn door, carrying in strae for his horses, I told him his wife had granted to let me stay, if he was not against it, to which he answered, "if I should lie in his midden dib; I should get no quarters from him that night ; a wheen lazy idle villians, turns a' to be chapmen, comes through the kintry fashing fouks, ay seeking quarters ; the next day ye'll be gann wi' a pouthered perriwig, and a watch at your arse, and winna let fouk stand afore your chop door, ye'll be sae saucy." I hearing thus my sentence from the goodman, expected no relief, but to lie without ; yet I perceived when he came out of the barn, he only drew the door behind him. So when he was gone, I slips into the barn, and by the help of one of the kipples, climbs up the mou, and there dives down among the sheaves, and happed myself all over so that I lay as warm as the goodman himself. But in the morning, long before day, two fellows came into the barn and fell a threshing, so that by their disturbance I could sleep no more ; at last I got up, with my hair hanging o-

ver my face, and when he that stood on the opposite side perceived me, I made my eyes to roll and w̄ayed my face in a frightful manner, so that the poor fellow supposed he had seen the devil, or something as ill, gave a roar, as if he had been sticked, and out at the door he runs; the other following after, him, crying, Wa' Johnny man, what did you see? O! Sandy, Sandy, the deil's on the top of the mou, sleaving his mouth at me; I'll no be sae weel this month man, my heart's out o' its hool, wow but you be a fearful like face indeed, it would fright ony living creature out o' their senses.

I hearing the fear they were in, cried to them not to be frightened, for was not the devil, but a poor chapman, who could not get quarters the last night; a foul fa' thy carcass, Sir, for our Jock is through the midden dib, dirt and a' thegither; he who went last came back again, the other ran into the house and told what he had seen. The goodman and his wife came running, he with the grape in his hand, and she with the Bible, the one crying out, Sandy, is't true that the deil was in the barn? na, na,

said she, it's but a chapman, but poor Jock has gotten a fright wi' him. They laughed heartily at the sport. took me into breakfast, and by this time poor Johnny was gone to bed very sick.

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 more 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 neither meat nor drink, 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 chapmen may drink water, ye dinna work sair. Ay but goodwife, said I, I hae been at Temple-bar, where I was sworn not to drink water if I could get better. What do you say, said she, about Temple bar! a town just about twa-three miles and a bittock frae this

a thief ane was to swear you there, an' it wasnae auld Willy Miller the cobbler, the ill thief amther minister nor magistrate ever was in it a'. O but, says the other lad, the Temple-bar he means is at London. Yea, yea, lad, an' ye be com'd frae Lunin ye're nae muckle worth. London, said he, is but at hame to the place he comes from. A dear man, quo' she, and where in the warld 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. Weel I wat that is 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 three long straws, and casting knots on them, into the byre I went, and throws a knotted straw on every cow's st-ke, saying, thy days will not be long. The wife followed wringing her hands, earnestly praying for herself and all that was hers. I then came out at the door, and lifted a stone and threw it over the house, mutter-

ing some words which I knew not myself, and concluding with these words, Thou Monsieur 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 he 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 give them less or more as ye 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 goodman 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 alehouse 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 bed but the servant lassess, 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 lan lloid 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 fall 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 brogues 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 sheeing a prog;" for not one of them

would serve a child ten years old, being so boiled in. The landlord persuaded them 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 laugh'd at me the night before when they lay down in the bed I was to have : but I laugh'd as much to see them trot away in the morning with their boiled brogues in their hands.

PART II.

WE again came to a place near Surrey-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 pricked him up with a long pin to keep him from sleeping ; he bought of our hair, and we of his pills and 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 pish'd of the door cheeks.

* But at last our money ran short, and the landlady had no chalk nor faith to credit us, seeing by our coats, courage, and conduct that we would little mind performance against the day of payment; so then we began to turn sober and wise behind the hand, and every one of us to seek supply from another; and when we had collected all the money we had amongst us upon the table, it was but fourpence halfpenny, which we lovingly divided among us, being only three bowbees a piece; and as drouthy Tom's stock and mine was conjunct, we gave the Quack again his shiting 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 fac'd goodman swore he had too much stuff in it to venture me there: the goodwife said I should not lie in the house for I would be o'er near the lasses' bed; then the lads swore I should not go with them, for I was a forjesket like fellow, and wha kens whether he is honest or not, he may fill his wallet wi' our claes and gang his wa's 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 mothers come to visit them, they gave me but little rest, always coming kissing me with their cold nose, which caused me to beat them off with my staff, which made

them make a terrible noise, so that their old mother came 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 to 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 fancy, said he, you are some Westland Whig? Sir, said I, you may suppose me to be what you think proper to-day, but yesterday you used me like a Tory, when you sent me into the sty to lie in the sow's oxter, who is a fitter companion for a devil than any human creature; the next abominable brute upon the earth, said I, who was forbidden to be eaten under the law, and cursed under the gospel. Be they cursed or be they bless'd, said he, I wish I had anew of them; but an' ye will not take aff my

beard, ye's 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 wallet, and go along with you to the kirk, and tell your minister how you used me as a hog; no, said the goodwife, you shall not want your crowdie, 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 lick, for, says he, it is an old property of chapmen. Well, I had no sooner begun to it, than out came a great big 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, a-

way I comes, and meeting the good-wife at the door, bid 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 not get meat; when I 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 you 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 stacks you have in it; What, said he, were you in the minister's? I know not, said I, does he keep an alehouse? O na, 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 of the parish. So that the goodman and I fell so thick, 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 in below the chimney-grate, where

I had a perfect view of her bonny thing, as the coal fire burnt so clearly all the night; and then another arose and did the same; last of all got up the old matron, as she appeared to be, like a second handed goodwife, or a whir'd o'er maiden, six times overturned, and as she let her dam go, she also, with full force, when done, let a fart, 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 wakened the other two, saying, O dole! what will I tell you? yon chapman body has seen a' our arses 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 auld woman, gin he has seen mine, I canna help it, it's just like other fouk's, an' fin't 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 chapman and every body was up; then she asked me if I had an use

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're an unco body, but ye needna wait on our porridge time, I'se gie you cheese and bread into your pouch, which I willingly accepted, and away I came.

So I went to Linlithgow that night, where I met with drouthy Tam, my sweet and dear companion, and here we held a most terrible encounter with the tippeny for two nights and a day; and then we set out for Fife, on the hair order, by the way of Torryburn and Culross; and coming 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, who was one of the havrel sort: what happened, I know not, but she cried out, Ye misleard filthy fallow, ye put your hand atween my feet, mair need anither thing sud be there; an ill chance on your picture, cried an old wife, for mony a ane has tane me by there iu daffin, and I never said a word about it; ye daft jades, canna ye haud your

tongue, whan it's your shame that you speak. Gae awa, cried the lass, he, filthy body that he is, the last chapman that kissed me had a horse pack, but he'll hae naething in his but a wisp o' strae, some auld breeks, hair skins, maukin-skins; ony thing that bears bouk, and yet he wad kiss and handle me; I was made for a better fallow; ane o' them came by ae day, and sell'd our Meg twa ell and a quarter o' linèn, to be her bridal sark, for he had nae mair, and when she made it and put it on, it wadna hide her! —! hech hech he,

FINIS,