

THE

Buchanshire Tragedy;

OR,

Sir James the Ross.



GLASGOW:

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SIR JAMES THE ROSS.

Of all the Scottish Northern Chiefs,
 Of high and warlike name,
 The bravest was Sir James the Ross,
 A Knight of meikle fame:

His growth was like the tufted fir,
 That crowns the mountain-brow,
 And waving o'er his shoulders broad,
 His locks of yellow flew.

The Chieftain of the brave Clan Ross,
 A firm undaunted band,
 Five hundred warriors drew the sword
 Beneath his high command:

In bloody fight thrice had he stood
 Against the English keen,
 E'er two and twenty op'ning springs
 His blooming youth had seen.

The fair Matilda dear he lov'd,
 A maid of beauty rare;
 Even Marg'ret on the Scottish throne,
 Was never half so fair.

Lang had he woo'd, lang she refus'd,
 with seeming scorn and pride;
 Yet, oft her eyes confess'd the love,
 Her faithful tongue deni'd.

At last, pleas'd with his well-tri'd faith,
 Allow'd his tender claim;
 She vow'd to him her virgin heart,
 And own'd an equal flame:

Her father, Buchan's cruel Lord,
 Her passion disapprov'd,
 And bade her wed Sir John the Grahame,
 And leave the youth she lov'd.

At night they met, as they were wont,
 Within a shady wood,
 Where on a bank, beside a burn,
 A blooming saugh-tree stood:

Conceal'd among the under-wood,
 The crafty Donald lay,
 (The brother of Sir John the Grahame,)
 To hear what they might say:

When thus the maid began, My sire
 Your passion disapproves,
 And bids me wed Sir John the Grahame,
 So here must end our loves:

My father's will must be obey'd,
 Nought boots me to withstand;
 Some fairer maid, in beauty's bloom,
 Must bless thee with her hand:

Matilda soon shall be forgot,
 And from thy mind effac'd;
 But may that happiness be thine,
 Which I can never taste.

What do I hear! Is this thy vow?
 Sir James the Ross repli'd;
 And will Matilda wed the Grahame,
 Tho' sworn to be my bride?

His sword shall sooner pierce my heart,
 Than 'reave me of thy charms:
 Then clasp'd her to his beating breast,
 Fast lock'd into his arms.

I spoke to try thy love, she said;

I'll ne'er wed man but thee:

My grave shall be my bridal-bed,

E'er Grahame my husband be.

Take then, dear youth, this faithful kiss,

In witness of my troth,

And every plague become my lot,

That day I break my oath.

They parted thus: the sun was set,

Up hasty Donald flies,

And turn thee, turn thee, beardless youth,

He loud insulting cries.

Soon turn'd about the fearless chief,

And forth his sword he drew,

(For Donald's blade before his breast

Had pierc'd his tartans thro';)

'Tis for my brother's slighted love,

His wrong sit on my arm;

Three paces back the youth retir'd,

To save himself frae harm.

Returning swift, his hand he rear'd

frae Donald's head above,

And thro' the brains and crashing bones

His sharp-edg'd weapon drove!

He stagger'd, reel'd, then tumbled down,

A lump of breathless clay!

So all my foes, quæ' valiant Ross,

And stately strode away.

Thro' the green wood he quickly' ly'd,

Unto Lord Buchan's hall,

And at Matilda's window stood,

And thus began to call:

Art thou asleep, Matilda dear?

Awake, my love, awake!

Thy luckless lover calls to thee,

A long farewell to take:

For I ha'e slain fierce Donald Grahame,

His blood is on my sword,

And distant are my faithful men,

Nor can assist their Lord.

To Sky I'll now direct my way,

Where my two brothers bide,

And raise the valiant of the Isles;

To combat on my side.

Do not so! the maid repli'd,

With me till morning stay,

For dark and dreary is the night,

And dangerous is the way:

All night I'll watch you in the park,

My faithful page I'll send

To run and raise the Ross's clan,

Their master to defend.

Underneath a bush he laid him down,

And wrapt him in his plaid,

While, trembling for her lover's fate,

At distance stood the maid.

The wif ran the page o'er hill and dale,

Till, in a lowly glen,

He met the furious Sir John Grahame,

With twenty of his men.

Where goest thou, little page? he said;

So late who did thee send?

To go to raise the Ross's clan,

Their master to defend:

For he hath slain fierce Donald Grahame,
 His blood is on his sword;
 And far, far distant are his men,
 • For to assist their Lord.

And has he slain my brother dear?
 the furious Grahame replies:
 Dishonour blast my name, but he,
 By me, e'er morning, dies.

Tell me where is Sir James the Ross,
 I will thee well reward;
 He sleeps into Lord Buchan's park,
 Matilda is his guard.

They spur'd their steeds in furious mood,
 And scour'd along the ley;
 They reach'd Lord Buchan's lofty tow'rs
 By dawning of the day.

Matilda stood without the gate,
 To whom thus Grahame did say,
 Saw ye Sir James the Ross last night,
 Or did he pass this way?

Last day at noon, Matilda said,
 Sir James the Ross pass'd by,
 He furiously prick'd his weary steed,
 And onward fast did hyc:

By this time he's at Edinburgh,
 If horse and man hold good.
 Your Page then lied, who said he was
 Now sleeping in the wood.

She wrung her hands and tore her hair,
 Brave Ross, thou art betray'd!
 And ruin'd by the means, she cri'd,
 From whence I hop'd thine aid.

By this the valiant Knight awak'd,
 The virgin's shrieks he heard,
 And up he rose, and drew his sword,
 When the fierce band appear'd.

Your sword last night my brother slew,
 His blood yet dews it shine;
 And ere the rising of the sun,
 Your blood shall reek on mine.

You word it well, the Chief repli'd,
 But deeds approve the man;
 Set by your men, and hand in hand,
 We'll try what valour can.

Oft boasting hides a coward's heart,
 My weighty sword you fear,
 Which shone in front on Flodden-field,
 When your's kept in the rear.

With dauntless step he forward strode,
 and dar'd him to the fight;
 The Grahame gave back, he fear'd his arm,
 For well he knew its might.

Four of his men, the bravest four, ...
 Sunk down beneath his sword,
 But still he scorn'd this base revenge,
 And sought their haughty Lord.

Behind him basely came the Grahame,
 And wound him in the side;
 Out spouting came the purple stream,
 And all his tartans dy'd!

But of his sword ne'er quat the grip,
 Nor dropt he to the ground,
 Till thro' his en'my's heart his steel
 Had forc'd a mortal wound.

Grahame, like a tree by wind o'erthrown,
 Fell breathless on the clay,
 And down beside him sunk the Ross,
 And faint and dying lay.
 The sad Matilda saw him fall,
 O spare his life! she cri'd;
 Lord Buchan's daughter craves his life,
 Let her not be deni'd.
 Her well-known voice the hero heard,
 He rais'd his death-clos'd eyes,
 And fix'd them on the weeping maid,
 And weakly thus replies:
 In vain Matilda begs the life,
 By death's arrest deni'd;
 My race is run!—Adieu, my love!
 Then clos'd his eyes and di'd.
 The sword yet warm, from his left side,
 With fantic hand she drew.
 I come, Sir James the Ross, she cries,
 I come to follow you!
 She lean'd the hilt against the ground,
 And bar'd her snowy breast;
 Then fell upon her lover's face,
 And sunk to endless rest!
 Then by this fatal Tragedy
 Let parents warning take,
 And ne'er entice their children dear
 Their sacred vows to break.

FINIS.