

HISTORY

OF

Adam Bell, Clim of the Clough,

AND

William of Cloudeslie,

Who were three Archers good enough,

The best in the North Country.



PAISLEY:

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HISTORY

OF

ADAM BELL, CLIM of the CLOUGH,

AND

WILLIAM of CLOUDESLEIE.

MERRY 'twas in the green forest,
 Among the leaves so green,
 Whereas men hunt both east and west,
 With bows and arrows keen,
 To raise the deer out of the den,
 Such fights have not been seen,
 As by three men of the North country,
 By them it is I mean.
 The one of them high Adam Bell,
 Another Clim of the Clough;
 The third was William of Cloudeslie,
 An archer good enough.
 They were out-law'd for venison,
 Those yeomen every one;
 They swore them brethren on a day,
 To English woods to gang.
 Now lyth and listen, gentlemen,
 That merry love to be;
 Since two of them were single men,
 The third wedded free.

William was the wedded man,
Much more then was his care,
Said to his brethren on a day,
To Carlisle he would fare.
To speak with fair Alice his wife,
And with his children three ;
By my good truth, said Adam Bell,
Not by counsel of me :
If you go to Carlisle, brother,
And from this wild wood wend,
If that the justice do you take,
Your life is at an end.
If that I come not to-morrow,
Betime to you again,
Trust you that I am a prisoner ;
Or else that I am slain.
He took his leave of brethren two,
And to Carlisle he's gone ;
There he knock'd at his window,
Both shortly and anon :
Where be you, fair Alice he said,
My wife and children three :
Lightly let in mine own husband,
William of Cloudeslic :
Alas ! then said fair Alice dear,
And sighed very sore ;
This place has been beset for you,
Full half a year and more.
Now I am here, said Cloudeslic,
I would that I in were ;

low fetch us meat and drink enough,
 And let us make good cheer.
 He fetch'd him meat and drink plenty,
 Like a true wedded wife ;
 And pleas'd him with what she had,
 Whom she lov'd as her life.
 There lay an old wife in that place,
 A little before the fire,
 Which William found in charity,
 Much more than seven years,
 Then she arose and forth she goes,
 Ill might her speed therefore,
 For she had set no foot on ground,
 For full seven years before.
 He went unto the Justice's hall,
 As fast as she could hie :
 This night, said she, is come to town,
 William of Cloudeffie.
 Thereat the justice was full fain,
 And the sheriff also !
 Thou shalt not travel hither for nought,
 Unregarded ere thou go.
 They gave to her a right good gown,
 Of fine scarlet in grain :
 So took the gift, and home she went,
 And crouch'd her down again.
 They raise the town of merry Carlisle,
 In all the haste they can,
 And thronging fast unto the house
 As thick as they might gang.

There they beset the yeoman,
 About on every side ;
 William heard great noise of the folk,
 That thitherward fast hy'd.
 Alice opened a back window,
 And looking all about,
 Saw both the Justice and the Sheriff,
 And with them a great rout.
 Alas ! treason, then cry'd Alice,
 Ever woe may thou be ;
 Go into my chamber, she said,
 Sweet William of Cloudestie.
 He took his sword and his buckler,
 His bow and children three,
 And went into the strongest chamber,
 Where he thought sure to be.
 Fair Alice, like a lover true,
 With poll-ax in her hand,
 Said, he shall die that cometh in,
 This door while I may stand.
 Cloudestie bent a right good bow,
 That was of trusty tree,
 He smote the justice on the breast,
 His arrow burst in three
 Ill fate on his heart, said William,
 This day thy coat put on ;
 If it had been no better than mine,
 It had been near the bone,
 Yield thee, Cloudestie, said the Justice,
 Thy bow and arrows fro ?

rage on his heart, said fair Alice,
 Who tell my husband so.
 Let fire on the house, said the sheriff,
 Since no better it will be,
 And burn me therein, William, he said,
 His wife and children three :
 They fir'd the house in many a place,
 Till the fire flew on high ;
 Alas, alas ! said fair Alice,
 I see we here shall die.
 William opened a back window,
 That was in's chamber high,
 And there with sheet, did he let down,
 His wife and children three.
 For christian love do them no harm,
 But wreak you all on me.
 William shot so wond'rous well,
 Till all his arrows were gone ;
 And fire so fast about him fell,
 That bow strings burnt in twain.
 The sparkles burnt, and burnt upon
 Good William of Cloudeffie ;
 But then was he a woeful man,
 'Twas cowards of me.
 Rather had I, said William,
 My sword in rout to run,
 Than here amongst mine enemies wood,
 So cruelly to burn.
 He took his sword and buckler then,
 Amongst them all he ran ;

Where the people thickest were,
He smote down many a man.
There might no man abide his strokes,
So fierce on them he ran ;
They threw windows and doors on him,
And so took that yeoman.
There they bound him both hand and foot
In deep dungeons him cast ;
Now, Cloudeslie, then said the justice,
Thou shalt be hang'd in haste.
One vow I make, said the sheriff,
A new gallows thou shalt have ;
The gates of Carlisle shall be shut,
There shall no man thee save.
There shall no help Clim of the Clough,
Nor yet of Adam Bell,
Though they come with a thousand more,
Nor all the de'ls in hell.
Next morning the justice arose,
To the gates fast is gone,
And commanded to shut them close,
And lightly every one.
Then went he to the market place,
As fast as he could hie ;
A new gallows there he set up,
Besides the pillory.
A little boy stood among them,
And ask'd, what meant that tree ;
They said, to hang a good yeoman,
Call'd William of Cloudeslie.

That little boy was town swine herd;
 And kept fair Alice's swine,
 He had seen Cloudeſlic in the wood,
 And gave him three to dine,
 He went through a crevice of the wall:
 Swift to the wood he run;
 There he met with theſe wight yeomen,
 Speedily and anon.
 Alas! then, ſaid the little boy,
 You tarry here too long;
 Cloudeſlic's ta'en and doom'd to death,
 And ready to be hang'd,
 Alas! then, ſaid good Adam Bell,
 That e'er we ſaw this day:
 We might have tarried here with us,
 For eſt we did him pray.
 We might have ſtaid in the foreſt,
 Under the ſhadows green,
 And kept himſelf and us at reſt,
 Out of trouble and teen.
 Adam then bent a right good bow,
 A great hart ſoon had ſlain;
 Take that, child, he ſaid, to thy dinner,
 And bring my arrow again.
 We go hence, ſaid the jolly yeomen,
 Tarry no longer here;
 We ſhall him borrow by good fate,
 Though we buy it full dear.
 So Carliffe went theſe good yeomen,
 In a merry morn of May;

Here is a fit of Cloudeslic,
And another for to say.
And when they came to merry Carlisle
In fair morning tide,
They found the gates closely shut,
Around on every side.
Alas! then said good Adam Bell,
That e'er we were made men:
Those gates are shut so wond'rous well,
We may not come therein,
At length then spake Clim of the Clough,
A while we will us bring;
Let us say we be messengers,
And straight come from the King:
Adam, said then, I've a letter,
Well, let us wisely walk:
We will say we have the king's seal;
I hold porter no clerk.
Then Adam Bell beat at the gate,
With strokes both great and strong,
The porter heard such noise thereat,
And to the gates did throng.
Who is there, said the porter then,
That makes all this knocking,
We are two messengers, they said,
And come straight from the king;
We've a letter, said Adam Bell,
To justice must it bring;
Let us in our message to do,
And return to the king.

Here comes none in, said the porter,
 By him that dy'd on tree,
 Till that false traitor be hang'd,
 Call'd William of Cloudeslie.
 At length did speak Clim of the Clough,
 And swore by Mary free,
 That he should stand long without,
 Like a thief hang'd thou shalt be.
 O! here we have the king's great seal,
 What burden art thou wood;
 The porter ween'd it had been so,
 And lightly did his hood.
 Welcome is my lord's seal, he said,
 For that thou shalt come in;
 We open'd the gates full shortly,
 An evil opening for him.
 Now when we are in, said Adam Bell,
 Whereof we are right fain;
 But fortune knows assuredly,
 How we'll win out again.
 Had we the keys, said Clim of the Clough,
 Right well then would we speed;
 When might we come out well enough,
 When we see time and need.
 They call'd the porter to council,
 And wrung his neck in two,
 And cast him in a deep dungeon,
 And took the keys him fro,
 O porter, said Adam Bell,
 Brother, the keys we've here

The worst porter in merry Carlisle,
That came this hundred years.
Come, we will our strong bows bend,
Into the town we'll go,
For to deliver our brother,
That lies in grief and woe.
Then they all bent their good yew bows,
And look'd their strings were round;
The market place of merry Carlisle,
They beset in that round.
And as they look'd them beside,
A pair of gallows they see,
And the justice, with quest of 'squires,
Judg'd William hang'd to be.
And Cloudeſſie lay in a cart,
Fast bound both feet and hands,
And a strong rope about his neck,
All ready for to hang.
The justice call'd to him a lad,
Cloudeſſie's clothes should have,
To take measure of that yeoman,
And make for him a grave.
I've seen as great things, said Cloudeſſie,
As between this and prime;
He that makes a grave for me,
Himself may lie therein.
Thou speakest proudly, said the justice,
I'll hang thee with my own hand.
Full well heard this his brethren two,
There still as they did stand.

When William cast his eyes aside,
 Into the market-place,
 And saw his two brethren prepar'd,
 The justice for to chace.
 See comfort, said Cloudestie;
 Yet hope I well to fare,
 I might have my hands set free,
 Right little might I care.
 When at last spoke good Adam Bell,
 To Clim o' th' Clough so free,
 Brother, see you mark Justice well,
 Yonder you may him see.
 Now at the sheriff shoot I will,
 Strong with an arrow keen:
 A better shot of merry Carlisle,
 These seven years was not seen.
 They loos'd their arrows both at once,
 Of no man they had dread;
 One hit the Justice t' other the sheriff,
 That both their sides 'gan to bleed,
 All men voided that stood nigh,
 When justice fell to the ground,
 And the sheriff dropp'd nigh him by;
 Either has his death's wound.
 All the citizens 'gan to fly,
 They durst no longer abide;
 Where sightly they loos'd Cloudestie
 Where he with ropes lay ty'd.
 William stepp'd to an officer o' th' town,
 The axe from his hand wrung,

On each side he did smite them down,
He thought he tarry'd long.
William said to his brethren two,
This day let's live or die :
If e'er you need as I do now,
The same you'll find by me.
They shot so very well that tide,
Their springs were of silk sure,
They kept the streets on every side,
The battle did long endure.
They fought together like brethren true,
Like hardy men and bold ;
Many men to the ground they threw,
Made many a heart cold,
And when their arrows were all gone,
Men press'd on them full fast ;
They drew their swords now then anon,
And their blows from them cast.
As they went light in their way,
With swords and bucklers round,
By that it was mid of the day,
They made many a wound.
Many an out horn in Carlisle blown,
The bells backward did ring,
Many a woman said alas !
And many hands did wring,
The Mayor of Carlisle forth come was,
And with him a great rout ;
These yeomen dreaded him full sore,
Their lives were then in doubt.

The Mayor came armed, a full pace,
 With poll-ax in his hand;
 Many a strong man with him was,
 Within a stance to stand,
 The Mayor smote Cloudeslic with his bill,
 His buckler burst in two;
 All many a yeoman with great ill,
 They cry'd, for woe.
 Keep we the gates hard fast they bade,
 These traitors let not go;
 But all for nought was what they wrought,
 For so fast down they laid,
 Till they three that manfully fought,
 Were got out of braide.
 Here are our keys, said Adam Bell,
 Mine office I forsake;
 And if you do buy my counsel,
 A porter do you make.
 He threw the keys full at their heads,
 Bidding evil to thrive,
 And all that lets a good yeoman,
 To come comfort his wife.
 Thus these yeoman are gone to the wood,
 Under the trusty tree;
 They laugh'd, were merry in their mood,
 Their enemies were free.
 When they came to the English wood,
 Under the trusty tree;
 There they found bows strong full as good,
 And arrows in great plenty.

O fate, help me, said Adam Bell,
 And Clime of the Clough so free,
 Would we were in merry Carlisle;
 Before that fair menzie.

Then they sat down, and made good cheer,
 And eat and drank full well :

Here's a fit of these bold yeoman,
 Another I will you tell.

As they sat in the English wood,
 Under ths trusty tree,

They thought they heard a woman weepin
 But her they could not see.

Sore then sigh'd the fair Alice,
 That e'er I saw this day ;

For now is my dear husband slain;
 Alas ! and well-a-day.

Might I have spoke with his brethren,
 Or either of the twain,

To let them know what him besel,
 My heart were out of pain.

Cloudeffie walk'd a little aside,

Look'd under the green wood linn,
 He saw his wife and children thre,

Full woe in heart and mind,

Welcome, my dear wife, said William,
 Under this trusty tree,

I too thought yesterday, by St. John,
 Thou should'st me never see.

I'm well, she says, that you be here,
 My heart is out of woe ;

Come, says he, be merry and glad,
 And thank my brethren two.
 Whereof to speak, said Adam Bell;
 I wish it is no hurt;
 The meat we must sup withal,
 It reflecteth yet on foot.
 Then went they down into the land,
 These noble men all three;
 Each of them slew an heart of Greece,
 The best that they could see.
 Here, have the best, Alice, my wife,
 Said William of Cloudeslic,
 Because ye holdly stood by me,
 When I was slain full nigh.
 And then they all to supper went,
 With such meat as they had;
 And thankful for their fortune good,
 They were merry and glad.
 And when they had all supped well,
 So certain without lease,
 Cloudeslic said, we'll to our king,
 And get a charter of peace.
 Alice shall be our sojourning,
 In the nunnery beside:
 My two dear sons shall with her go,
 And there they shall abide.
 My eldest son shall go with me,
 For him I have no care;
 For he shall bring you word again,
 How that we all do fare.

These yeomen thus to London gone,
As fast as they could hie,
Till they came to the King's palace,
Where they most sure would be.
Now when they came to the King's court,
Unto the palace gate,
Of no man would they ask leave,
Boldly went in thereat.
They presently approach'd the hall,
Of no man they had dread ;
The porter came and did there call,
And with them 'gan to chide.
The Usher said, what would you have,
I pray you tell to me :
You might have been officers sent ;
Good Sirs, from whence come ye :
We be out-laws of the forest,
Sure without any lease,
And hither we come to the king,
For a charter of peace.
Now when they came before the King,
'Twas the laws of the land ;
They kneeled down without leering,
And each held up his hand.
They said, lord, we beseech thee here,
That thou wouldst grant us grace ;
For we have slain your fallow deer,
In many sundry place,
What be your names, then said the king,
Anon pray tell to me,

dam Bell, Clim of the Clough,
And William of Cloudeffie.

ut ye be thieves then said the king,

That men have told to me?

ere to you I shall make a vow,

Ye shall be hang'd all three.

e shall be dead without mercy,

As I'm king of the lands;

le had his officers every one,

Fast on them to lay hands.

herefore they took these yeomen,

Arrested them all three:

o may I thrive, said Adam Bell,

This game not pleaseth me.

ut, good lord, we beseech you now,

That you will grant us grace,

nsomuch as to you we came,

Or else may from you pass;

With such weapons as we have here,

'Till we go from your place,

And if we live this hundred years,

We'll ask of you no grace.

e speak proudly, then said the king,

Ye shall be hang'd all three:

hat were a pity, said the Queen,

If any grace might be.

My lord, when I first saw this land,

To be your wedded wife,

The first boon that e'er I should ask,

You would grant without strife.

I never asked one till now,
 Therefore, good lord, grant me ;
 Now ask it, madam, said the king,
 And granted it shall be.
 Then, good lord, I do you beseech,
 These yeomen grant to me ;
 Madam you might have ask'd a boon,
 That might have been worth all three,
 Ye should have ask'd towers and towns,
 Parks and forests plenty ;
 None pleasant for me to pay, she said,
 Nor none so leas to me,
 Madam, sith it is your desire,
 Your asking granted be ;
 But I had rather given you,
 Good market-towns e'en three ;
 The queen was then a glad woman,
 And said, lord, grant mercy ;
 I dare undertake for them all,
 That true men they shall be.
 But, good lord, speak some mercy word,
 That these may comfort see ;
 I grant you grace then said the king,
 Wash, and to meat go ye,
 They had not sitten but a while,
 Certain without leasung,
 There came 2 messengers from the north
 With letters to the king.
 When they came to his majesty before,
 They kneel'd upon their knee ;

Saying, your officers greet you well,
Out of the north country.

How fares my justices, said the king,
And my sheriff also?

Sir, they be slain without leasing,
With many officers more.

Who then hath slain them, said the king?
I want that you tell me:

Adam Bell, and Clim of the Clough,
With William of Cloudestie,

Alas! for truth then said the king,
My heart is wond'rous fore;

I had rather a thousand pounds,
I had known this before:

For I have granted them great grace,
So that for thanketh me;

But had I known all this before;
They had been hang'd all three.

The king open'd the letter anon,
Himself to read it thro';

He found how these out-laws had slain
Three hundred men and more.

First the justice and the sheriff,
The mayor of Carlisle town;

Of all the constables, catch poles,
In short they left not one.

The bailiffs and the beadles both,
With serjeants of the law;

Yea forty for'sters of the fee,
These out-laws have kill'd a'.

And broke his parks and flain his deer,
Of all they choos'd the best ;
So perilous out-laws they were,
Walked not east or west.

When the king this letter had read,
In heart he sigh'd full sore ;
Take up the table, then said he,
For I can eat no more.

The king then call'd his best archers,
The butts with him to go ;
I'll see these fellows shot, said he,
Who hath wrought all this woe.

The king's bow-men busk'd them blythe,
The queen's archers also ;
And so did these wight yeomen,
With whom they thought to go.

There twice or thrice they shot about,
For to essay their hand ;
There was no shot these yeomen shot,
That any prick might stand.

Then spake William of Cloudeslie,
By him that by me dy'd,

I hold him ne'er a good archer,
That shoots at butts so wide :

Whereat then, boldly said the king,
I pray thee tell to me ;

At such a bus, Sir, then he said,
As us'd in our country.

William went into the field,
His two brethren with him :

here they set up two hazel rods,
 Twenty score pace between.
 hold an archer, said Cloudeſſie,
 That cleaves your wand in two;
 There is none ſuch, reply'd the king,
 For no man can do ſo,
 will eſſay, Sir, ſaid Cloudeſſie,
 Ere that I further go;
 Cloudeſſie, with a bearing arrow,
 Did cleave the wand in two.
 Thou'rt the beſt archer, ſaid the king,
 That ever I did ſee;
 But for your love, ſaid William,
 I'll do more maſterly.
 I have a ſon of ſeven years old,
 He is to me full dear,
 will tie him unto a ſtake,
 You ſhall ſee him that's here.
 I'll lay an apple on his head,
 Go ſix ſcore paces fro',
 And I myſelf with broad arrow,
 Will cleave the apple in two.
 So haſte thee then ſaid the good king,
 By him that died by thee;
 thou doſt not as thou haſt ſaid,
 Hang'd ſurely thou ſhalt be:
 But if thou touch his head or gown,
 In fight, that men may ſee,
 By all the ſtars that are in heav'n,
 I hang you ſhall all three.

That I have promis'd, said William,
I never will forsake ;
So there even before the king,
In earth he drove a stake,
And bound thereto his eldest son,
Bade him stand still thereat ;
He turn'd the child's face him fro',
Because he should not start.
Then on his head an apple set,
And his bow then he bent ;
Full six score paces they were met,
To which Cloudeſlie went.
There he drew a fair broad arrow,
His bow was great and long,
He set that arrow in his bow,
That was both stiff and strong.
He pray'd the people that were there,
That they would all still stand ;
For he that shoots for such a wager,
Had need of steady hand.
Much people pray'd for Cloudeſlie,
That sav'd his life might be ;
And when he made ready to shoot,
Was many a weeping eye,
Then Cloudeſlie clave the apple in two,
Which many a man did see ;
Now God forbid, then said the king,
That you should shoot at me.
give thee eighteen-pence a day,
And my bow shalt thou bear,

sea over all the North country,
 I make thee chief keeper.
 I'll give thee thirteen-pence a day,
 Said the queen, by me say,
 Come fetch my payment when thou wilt,
 No man shall say thee nay,
 William, I make thee gentleman,
 Of clothing and of fee,
 Thy brethren of my bed-chamber,
 They are lovely to see.
 Your son, for he's of tender age,
 Of my cellarists shall be:
 And when he comes to man's estate,
 Better prefer'd shall be.
 And William bring your wife, said she,
 I long full sore to see;
 She shall be chief gentlewoman,
 To govern my nursery.
 The yeoman thank'd them courteously,
 To some bishop we'll wand:
 Of all the sins that we have done,
 Be absolv'd off at his hand.
 So forth be gone these good yeomen,
 As fast as they could lie,
 After came and liv'd with the king,
 And dy'd good yeomen three.
 Thus end the lives of these good men,
 Send them eternal bliss;
 And all that with hand-bow shooteth,
 Of heaven may never miss.

FINIS,