

WATTY & MEG;

OR THE

WIFE REFORMED.

A TALE.

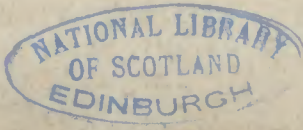
We were in Court by, but in a clock walk. - Page -



EDINBURGH;

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1801.



WATTY & MEG.

KEEN the frosty winds were blawin',
Deep the sna' had wreath'd the ploughs,
Watty, weary'd a' day sawin',
Dauncert down to Mungo Blue's.

Dryster Jock was sittin' cracky,
Wi' Pate Tamson o' the Hill,
"Come awa'," quo' Johnny, "Watty!
"Haith we'se ha'e anither gill."

Watty, glad to see Jock Jabos,
An' sae mony neibours roun',
Kicket frae his shoon the sna' ba's,
Syne ayont the fire sat down.

Owre a board, wi' bannocks heapct,
Cheesc, an' stoups, an' glasses stood;
Some war roarin', ithers sleepct,
Ithers quietly chew'd their cud.

Jock was sellin' Pate some tallow,
A' the rest a racket hell,
A' but Watty, wha, poor fellow,
Sat an' smocket by himsel'.

Mungo fill'd him up a toothfu',
Drank his health and Meg's in ane;
Watty, puffin' out a mouthfu',
Pledg'd him wi' a dreary grane,

- “ What’s the matter, Watty, wi’ you ?
 “ Troth, your chafts are fa’in’ in !
 “ Something’s wrang—I’m vex’t to see you—
 “ Gudesake ! but ye’re desperate thin !”
- “ Ay,” quo’ Watty, “ things are alter’t,
 “ But it’s past redemption now,
 “ Lord ! I wish I had been haltert
 “ When I marry’d Maggy Howe !
- “ I’ve been poor, an’ vex’t, an’ raggy,
 “ Try’t wi’ troubles no that sma’ ;
 “ Them I bore—but marryin’ Maggy
 “ Laid the cape-stane o’ them a’.
- “ Night an’ day she’s ever yelpin’,
 “ Wi’ the weans she ne’er can gree ;
 “ Whan she’s tir’d wi’ perfect skelpin’,
 “ Then she flees like fire on me.
- “ See ye, Mungo ! when she’ll clash on
 “ Wi’ her everlasting clack,
 “ Whyles I’ve had my neive, in passion,
 “ Liftet up to break her back ?”
- “ O, for gudesake, keep frae cuffets !”
 Mungo shook his head and said,
 “ Weel I ken what sort o’ life it’s ;
 “ Ken ye, Watty, how I did ?
- “ After Bess an’ I war kippel’t,
 “ Soon she grew like ony bear,
 “ Brack my shins ; an’, when I tippel’t,
 “ Harl’t out my very hair.
- “ For a wee I quietly knuckel’t,
 “ But whan naething wade prevail,

“ Up my claes an’ cash I buckel’t,
 “ *Bess ! for ever fare ye weel.*

“ Then her din grew less and less aye,
 “ Hath I gart her change her tune ;

“ Now, a better wife than Bessy
 “ Never stept in leather shoon.

“ Try this Watty—Whan ye see her
 “ Ragin’ like a roarin’ flood,

“ Swear, *that moment*, that ye’ll lea’ her ;
 “ That’s the way to keep her gude.”

Laughin’, sangs, an lasses’ skirls,
 Echo’d now out thro’ the roof ;
Done ! quo’ Pate, and syne his erls
 Nail’t the Dryster’s wauket loof.

I’ the thrang o’ stories tellin’,
 Shakin’ hauns, an’ ither chear,
 Swith ! a chap comes on the hallan,
 “ Mungo ! is our Watty here ?”

Maggy’s weel-kent tongue and hurry
 Dartet thro’ him like a knife,
 Up the door flew—like a fury,
 In can’ Watty’s scawlin’ wife.

“ Nasty, gude-for naething bein’,
 “ O ye snuffy, drucken sow !

“ Bringin’ wife an’ weans to ruin,
 “ Drinkin’ here wi’ sic a crew !

“ Devil nor your legs were broken !
 “ Sic a life nae flesh endures—

“ Toilin’ like a slave, to slocken
 “ You, ye dyvor, and your ’hores !

“ Rise ! ye drucken beast o’ Bethel !
 “ Drink’s your night and day’s desire ;
 “ Rise this precious hour ! or faith I’ll
 “ Fling your whisky i’ the fire !”

Watty heard her tongue unhallow’t,
 Pay’t his groat wi’ little din,
 Left the house, while Maggy follow’t,
 Flytin’ a’ the road behin’.

Fowk frae every door cam’ lampin’,
 Maggy curst them ane an’ a’,
 Clappet-wi’ her hauns, an’ stampin’,
 Lost her bauchels i’ the sna’.

Hame, at length, she turn’d the gavel,
 Wi’ a face as white’s a clout,
 Ragin’ like a very devil,
 Kickin’ stools an’ chairs about.

“ Ye’ll sit wi’ your limmers round you !
 “ Hang you, Sir ! I’ll be your death !
 “ Little hauds my hauns, confound you !
 “ But I’ll cleave you to the teeth.”

Watty, wha, ’midst this oration,
 Ey’d her whyles, but durstna’ speak,
 Sat like patient Resignation,
 Trem’lin’ by the ingle cheek.

Sad, his wee drap brose he sippet,
 Maggy’s tongue gaed like a bell,
 Quietly to his bed he slippet,
 Sighin’ aften to himsel’.

“ Nane are free frae *some* vexation,
 “ Ilk ane has his ills to dree ;

“ But, thro’ á’ the hale creation,
 “ Is a mortal vex’t like me !”

A’ night lang he row’t an’ gauntet,
 Sleep or rest he coud’na’ tak’ ;
 Maggy, aft wi’ horror hauntet,
 Mum’lan, startet at his back.

Soon as e’er the mornin’ peepet,
 Up raise Watty, waefu’ chiel,
 Kist his weanies while they sleepet,
 Wauken’t Meg, an’ sought fareweel.

“ Fareweel, Meg !—An’, O ! may Heaven
 “ Keep you aye within his care :
 “ Watty’s heart ye’ve lang been grievin’,
 “ Now he’ll never fash you mair.

“ Happy cou’d I been beside you,
 “ Happy baith at morn an’ e’en ;
 “ A’ the ills did e’er betide you,
 “ Watty aye turn’t out your frien’.

“ But ye ever like to see me
 “ Vex’t an’ sighin’, late an’ air ;
 “ Fareweel, Meg ! I’ve sworn to lea’ thee,
 “ So thou’ll never see me mair.”

Meg, a’ sabbin’, sac to lose him,
 Sic a change had never wist,
 Held his haun close to her bosom,
 While her heart was like to burst.

“ O my Watty ! will ye lea’ me,
 “ Frien’less, helpless, to despair !
 “ O ! for this ae time, forgi’e me :
 “ Never will I vex you mair.”

“ Ay ! ye’ve aft said *that*, an’ broken

“ A’ your vows ten times a-week.

“ No, no, Meg ! see there’s a token,

“ Glitterin’ on my bonnet cheek.

“ Owre the seas I march this mornin’,

“ Listet, testet, sworn an’ a’,

“ Forc’d by your confounded girnin’ ;

“ Fareweel, Meg ! for I’m awa’.”

Then poor Maggy’s tears and clamour

Gush’t afresh, an’ louder grew,

While the weans, wi’ mournfu’ yaummer,

Round their sabbin’ mother flew.

“ Thro’ the yirth I’ll wauner wi’ you—

“ Stay, O Watty, stay at hame ;

“ Here, upo’ my knees, I’ll gi’e you

“ Ony vow ye like to name.

“ See your poor young lammies pleadin’,

“ Will ye gang and break my heart ?

“ No a *house* to put our head in !

“ No a *frien’* to tak’ our part.”

Ilka word cam’ like a bullet ;

Watty’s heart begude to shak’ ;

On a kist he laid his wallët,

Dightet baith his een, an’ spak’.

“ If, ance mair, I cou’d by writin’,

“ Lea’ the sogers an’ stay still,

“ Wad you swear to drap your flytin’ ?”

“ Yes, O Watty ! yes, I will.”

“ Then,” quo’ Watty, “ mind, be honest :

“ Aye to keep your temper strive ;

“ Gin ye break this dreadfu’ promise,
 “ Never mair expect to thrive.

“ Margate Howe ! this hour ye solemn
 “ Swear by ev’ry thing that’s gude,
 “ Ne’er again your spouse to scal’ him,
 “ While life warms your heart an’ blood.

“ That ye’ll ne’er in Mungo’s seek me—
 “ Ne’er put *drucken* to my name—
 “ Never out at e’ening steek me—
 “ Never gloom when I come hame.

“ That ye’ll ne’er, like Bessy Miller,
 “ Kick my shins, or rug my hair,
 “ Lastly, *I’m to keep the siller*.
 “ This upo’ your saul ye swear?”

“ O—h !” quo’ Meg, “ Aweel,” quo’ Watty,
 “ Fareweel ! faith I’ll try the seas.”

“ O stan’ still,” quo’ Meg, an’ grat aye :
 “ Ony, ony way ye please.”

Maggy syne, because he prest her,
 Swore to a’ thing owre again :
 Watty lap, an’ danc’t, an’ kist her ;
 Wow ! but he was won rous fain.

Down he thrēw his staff victorious ;
 Aff gaed bonnet, claes, an’ shoon ;
 Syne beneath the blankets, glorious,
 Held anither *Hinney Moon*.