

The
WANTON WIFE
of
BATH.

A Curious old Ballad,

From an ancient Copy in Black-print.



Peterhead: Printed by P. Buchan.

THE WIFE OF BATH.

In Bath a wanton wife did dwell,
as Chaucer he doth write,
Who did in pleasure spend her days,
and many a fond delight.

Upon a time fore sick she was,
and at the length did die;
And then her soul at heavens gate
did knock most mightily.

First Adam came unto the gate;
who knocketh there quoth he,
I am the wife of Bath he said;
and fain would come to thee.

Thou art a finner Adam said,
and here no place thou shalt have.
And so art thou I trow quoth she
now gif you doting knave.

I will come in in spight the said
of all such churls as thee;
Thou art the causer of our woe,
our pain and misery.

And first broke Gods commandments,
 in pleasure of thy wife —
 When Adam heard her tell this tale,
 he ran away for life.

Then down came Jacob at the gate,
 and bid her peck to hell;
 Thouf' he deceiving knave quoth she,
 thou mayst be there as well,

For thou deceivest thy Father dear,
 and thine own brother, too.
 Away flunk Jacob presently,
 and made no more ado.

She knocks again with might and main,
 and Lot he chides her straight,
 How now quoth she, thou drunken ass,
 who bade thee here to prate?

With thy two daughters thou didst lye,
 on them two bastards got;
 And thus most tauntingly she chaff
 against poor silly Lot.

Who calleth there quoth Judith then,
 with such shrill sounding notes?
 This fine minckes surely came not here,
 Quoth she, for cutting throats.

Good Lord, how Judith blush'd for shame,
 when she heard her say so!
 King David hearing of the same,
 he to the the gate would go.

Quoth David who knocks there so loud,
 and maketh all this strife?
 You were more kind good Sir, she said,
 unto Uriahs wife.

And when thy servant thou didst cause
 In battle to be slain;
 Thou causedst far more strife than I,
 who would come here so fain.

The woman's mad quoth Solomon,
 that thus doth taunt a king.
 Not half so mad as you, she said,
 I trow in many a thing.

Thou had seven hundred wives at once,
 for whom thou didst provide:
 And yet god wot three hundred whores
 thou didst maintain beside:

And they made thee forsake thy God,
 and worship stocks and stones;
 Besides the charge they put you to
 In breeding of young bones.

Hadst thou not been beside thy wits,
 Thou wouldst not thus have ventured;
 And therefore I do marvel much,
 how thou this place hast entered.

I never heard quoth Jonas then,
 so vile a scold as this.
 Thou whore-son tun away quoth she,
 thou didest more amiss.

They say quoth Thomas, womens tongues
 of aspen-leavss are made.
 Thou unbelieving wretch quoth she,
 all is not true that's said.

When Mary Magdalene heard her then
 she came unto the gate; *she was not*
 Quoth she good woman you must think
 upon your former state, *as she used*

No sinner enters in this place; *quoth she*
 quoth Mary Magdalene. *Then*
 'Twere ill for you, fair mistress mind,
 she answered her again: *you should*

You for your honesty quoth she, *to have*
 had once been stoned to death; *and*
 Had not our Saviour Christ come by, *but*
 and written on the earth: *was*

It was not by your occupation,
 you are become divine: *and*
 I hope my soul in Christ his passion,
 shall be as safe as thine. *and*

Uprose the good apostle Paul, *and*
 and to this wife he cried, *and*
 Except thou shake thy sins away *and*
 thou here shalt be denied. *and*

Remember Paul what thou hast done,
 all through a lewd desire:
 How thou didst persecute Gods church,
 with wrath as hot as fire.

Then up starts Peter at the last,
 and to the gate he hies:
 Fond fool quoth he knock not so fast,
 thou weariest Christ with cries.

Peter said the content thyself,
 for mercy may be won;
 I never did deny my Christ,
 as thou thyself hast done.

When as our Saviour Christ heard this,
 with heavenly angels bright;
 He comes unto this sinful soul;
 who trembled at his sight.

Of him for mercy the Lord saith,
 quoth he thou hast repented;
 My proffered grace, and mercy both,
 and much my name shall be praised.

Sore have I sinn'd Lord she said,
 and spent my time in vain;
 But bring me like a wandering sheep
 into thy fold again.

O Lord my God, I will amend
 my former wicked vice:
 The thief for one poor silly word
 past into paradise.

My laws and my commandments,
 saith Christ were known to thee,
 But of the same in any wise,
 Not yet one word did ye.

I grant the same, O Lord quoth she;
 most lewedly did I live;
 But yet the loving father did
 his prodigal son forgive.

So I forgive thy soul, he said,
 through thy repenting cry;
 Come enter then into my rest,
 I will not thee deny.

E. I. N. I. S.