

Sir James the Rose;

AN OLD SCOTTISH,

TRAGIC SONG.



GLASGOW :

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20 Sir James the Rose. 112

Of all the Scottish northern chiefs
of high and warlike name,
The bravest was Sir James the Rose,
a knight of meikle fame.

His growth was like a youthful oak,
that crowns the mountain's brow,
And waving o'er his shoulders broad,
his locks of yellow flew.

Wide were his fields his herds were large,
and large his flocks of sheep,
And numerous were his goats
upon the mountain steep.

The chieftain of the good clan Rose,
a firm and warlike band,
Five hundred warriors drew the sword
beneath his high command.

In bloody fight thrice he stood,
against the English keen,
Ere two and twenty opening springs
the blooming youth had seen.

The fair Matilda dear he lov'd
a maid of beauty rare ;

Even Margaret on the Scottish throne
was never half so fair.

Long had he woo'd long she refused
with seeming scorn and pride ;
Yet oft her eyes confess'd the love
her fearful words denied.

At length she blessed his well-tried love,
 allow'd his tender claim;
 She vow'd to him her tender heart,
 and own'd an equal flame.
 Her father Buchan's cruel lord,
 their passion disapprov'd;
 He bade her wed Sir John the Graeme,
 and leave the youth she lov'd.
 One night they met as they were wont,
 deep in a shady wood;
 Where on the bank beside the burn,
 a blooming saugh tree
 Conceal'd among the underwood
 the crafty Donald lay,
 The brother of Sir John the Graeme,
 to watch what they might say.
 When thus the maid began: My sire
 our passion disapproves;
 He bids me wed Sir John the Graeme,
 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,
 shall bless thee with her hand.
 Soon will Matilda 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 Rose replied,
 And wilt Matilda wed the Graeme?

though sworn to be my bride?
 His sword shall sooner pierce my heart,
 than 'reave me of thy charms;
 And clasp'd her to his throbbing breast,
 fast lock'd in within his arms.
 I spoke to try thy love she said,
 I'll ne'er wed man but thee;
 The grave shall be my bridal bed,
 if Graeme 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 turned about the fearless Chief,
 and soon his sword he drew;
 For Donald's blade before his breast,
 had pierced his tartans through.
 This for my brother's slighted love,
 his wrongs sit on my arm—
 Three paces back the youth retir'd,
 and sav'd himself from harm.
 Returning swift his sword he rear'd,
 fierce Donald's head above,
 and through the brain and crashing bone,
 the furious weapon drove.
 Life issued at the wound—he fell
 a lump of lifeless clay;

So fall my foes quoth valliant Rose
 and stately strode away.
 Through the green wood in haste he pass'd
 unto Lord Buchan's hall—
 Beneath Matilda's window stood,
 and this on her did call
 Art thou asleep Matilda dear,
 awake my love ! awake;
 Beho'd thy lover waits without
 a long farewell to take.
 For I have slain fierce Donald Grame,
 his blood is on my sword;
 And far far distant are my men
 nor can defend their lord
 To Sky I will direct my flight,
 where my brave brothers bide;
 And raise the mighty of the Isles,
 to combat on my side
 O do not so, the maid replied,
 with me ti l morning stay,
 For dark and dreary is the night
 and dangrous is the way,
 All night I'll watch you in the park,
 my faithful page I'll send,
 In haste to raise the brave Clan Rose,
 their master to defend.
 He laid him down beneath a bush,
 and wrapp'd him in his plaid—
 While trembling for her lover's fate
 at distance stood the maid,

Swift ran the page o'er hill and dale,
 till in a lonely glen
 He met the furious Sir John the Graeme,
 with twenty off his men
 Where goest thou little page he said,
 so late? who did thee send?—
 I go to raise the brave clan Rose,
 their master to defend.
 For he has slain fierce Donald Graeme,
 his blood is on his sword;
 And far far distant are his men,
 nor can assist their lord
 And has he slain my brother dear
 the furious chief replies
 Dishonour blast my name but he
 by me ere morning dies
 Say page where is Sir James the Rose,
 I will thee well reward—
 He sleeps into lord Buchan's park,
 Matilda is his guard.
 They spurred their steeds and furious flew,
 like lightning o'er the lee;
 They reach'd Lord Buchan's lofty towers,
 by dawning of the day
 Matilda stood without the gate,
 upon a rising ground—
 And watch'd each object in the dawn
 all ear to every sound.
 Where sleeps the Rose? beg in the Graeme,
 or has the felon fled?
 This hand shall lay the wretch on earth

by whom my brother bled.
 And now the valiant knight awoke,
 the virgin shrieking heard;
 Straight up he rose and drew his sword,
 when the fierce band appeared
 Your sword last night my brother slew,
 his blood yet dims its shine :
 And e'er the sun shall gild the morn,
 your blood shall reek on mine.
 Your words are brave the chief returns,
 but deeds approve the man ;
 Set by your men and hand to hand,
 we'll try what valour can.
 With dauntless step he forward strode,
 and dared him to the fight ;
 The Græme gave back : he feared his arm,
 for well he knew his might.
 Four of his men the bravest four,
 sunk down beneath his sword,
 But still he scorned the poor revenge
 and sought their haughty lord.
 Behind him basely came the Græme,
 and pierced him in the side ;
 Out spouting came the purple stream,
 and all his tartans dyed.
 But yet his hand dropped not the sword,
 nor sunk he to the ground —
 Till through his enemy's heart the steel
 had forced a mortal wound.
 Græme like a tree by wind o'erthrown,
 fell breathless on the clay !

And down beside him sank the Rose,
and faint and dying lay.

Matilda saw and fast she ran—
o spare his life she cried—

Lord Buchan's daughter begs his life,
let her not be denied.

Her well known voice the hero heard,
he rais'd his death-clos'd eyes;

He fix'd them on the weeping maid,
and weakly thus replies.

In vain Matilda begs a life,
by death's arrest denied;

My race is run—adieu my love,
then clos'd his eyes and died.

The sword yet warm from his left side,
with frantic hand she drew;

I come Sir James the Rose she cried,
I come to follow you.

The hit she lean'd against the ground,
and bar'd her snowy breast;

Then fell upon her lover face,
and sunk to end'less rest.

