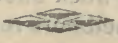


WATTY AND MEG

WATTY AND MEG:

OR, THE

WIFE REFORMED!



FALKIRK:

PRINTED FOR THE BOOKSELLERS.

But it's not redemption now;

WATTY AND MEG.

KEEN the frosty winds were blawing,
Deep the snaw had wreath'd the ploughs,
Watty, wearied a' day sawing,
Daunert down to Mungo Blue's.

Dryster Jock was sitting 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,
And sae mony neibours roun',
Kicked frae his shoon the snaw ba's.
Syn'e ayont the fire sat down.

Owre a board wi' bannocks heapet,
Cheese, and stoups, and glasses stood;
Some were roaring, ithers sleepit,
Ithers quietly chew'd their cude.

Jock was selling Pate some tallow,
A' the rest a racket hell,
A' but Watty, wha, poor fallow!
Sat and smoket by himsel'.

Mungo fill'd him up a toothfu',
Drank his health and Meg's in ane,
Watty, puffing up a mouthfu',
Pledg'd him wi' a weary grane.

What's the matter, Watty, wi' you?
Trowth, your chafts are fa'ing in!
Something's wrang—I'm vex'd to see you—
Gudesake! but your desp'rate thim!

"Ay," quo' Watty, "things are alter'd,
But it's past redemption now;

Oh! I wish I had been halter'd —
 When I married Maggy Howe!
 I've been poor, and vex'd and raggy,
 Try'd wi' troubles no that sma';
 Them I bore—but marrying Maggy
 Laid the cape-stane o' them a'.
 Night and day she's ever yelping,
 Wi' the weans she ne'er can gree:
 When she's tir'd wi' perfect skelping,
 Then she flees like fire on me.
 See ye, Mungo! when she'll clash on;
 Wi' her everlasting eleek,
 Whiles I've had my nieve, in passion,
 Lifted up to break her back!"
 "O for gudesake keep frae cuffs!"
 Mungo shook his head and said;
 "Weel, I ken what sort o' life it's;
 Ken ye, Watty, how I did?
 After Bess and I were kippled;
 Soon she grew like ony bear,
 Brak my shins, and when I tippled,
 Haur'l't out my very hair!
 For a wee I quietly knuckled;
 But when naething could prevail,
 Up my claes and casl I buckled,
 "Bess, for ever fare ye weel."
 Then her din grew less and less aye,
 Haith I gart her change her tune;
 Now a better wife than Bessy
 Never stept in leather shoon.

Try this, Watty—When ye see her
 Raging like a roaring flood,
 Swear that moment that ye'll lea' her;
 That's the way to keep her good."

Laughing, sangs, and lasses' skirls,
 Echoes now out through the roof:
 "Done!" quo' Pate, and syne his erls,
 Nail'd the Dryster's wauket loof.

In the thrang o' stories telling,
 Shaking hauns, and ither cheer,
 Swith! a chap comes on the hallan,
 "Mungo, is our Watty here?"

Maggy's weel kent tongue and hurry
 Darted through him like a knife;
 Up the door flog—like a fury
 In came Watty's scalding wife.

"Nasty, gude-for-naething being!
 O ye snuffy drucken sow!
 Bringing wife and weans to ruin,
 Drinking here wi' sic a crew!"

Deevil nor your legs were broken!
 Sic a life nae flesh endures;
 Toiling like a slave to slocken
 You, ye dyvour, and your whores!

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'd,
 Pay'd his groat wi' little din,

Left the house, while Maggy fallow'd,
Flyting a' the road behin'.

Fowk frae every door cam lamping,
Maggy curst them ane an a',
Clappet wi' her hands, and stamping
Lost her bauchles i' the snaw.

Hame, at length, she turn'd the gavel,
Wi' a face as white's a clout,

Raging like a very deevil,
Kicking stools and chairs about.

"Ye'll sit wi' yours limmers round you!
Hang you, Sir! I'll be your death!

Little hauds my hands, confound you!
But I'll cleave you to the teeth."

Watty, wha, amidst this oration,
E'd her whiles, but durstna speak,

Sat like patient Resignation,
Trem'ling by the ingle cheek.

Sad his wee drap brose he sippet,
Maggy's tongue gaed like a bell,

Quietly to his bed he slippet,
Sighing aften to himsel'.

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

But through a' the hale creation
Is a mortal vex'd like me!"

A' night lang he row't and gaunted,
Sleep or rest he cou'dna tak;

Maggy, aft wi' horror haunted,
Mum'ling, started at his back.

Soon as e'er the morning peepet,
 Up raise Watty, waefu' chiel;
 Kist his weanies, while they sleepet,
 Wauken'd Meg and sought fareweel.

“ Fareweel Meg!— And oh! may Heaven
 Keep you aye witiin his care:
 Watty's heart ye've lang been greiving,
 Now he'll never fash you mair:

Happy cou'd I been beside you,
 Happy, baith at morn and e'en:
 A' the ills that did e'er betide you,
 Watty aye turn'd out your frien'.

But you ever like to see me
 Vext and sighing, late and air;
 Fareweel, Meg! I've sworn to lea' thee,
 So thou'lt never see me mair.”

Meg, a' sabbing sae to lose him,
 Sic a change had never wist,
 Held his hand close to her bosom,
 While her heart was like to burst:

“ O, my Watty, will you lea' me,
 Frien'less, helpless, to despair!
 O! for this ae time forgie me;
 Never shall I vex you mair.”

“ Ay! ye've aft said that, and broken
 A' your vows ten times a week;
 No, no! Meg! see there's a token
 Glittering on my bonnet cheek:

Owre the seas I march this morning,
 Listed, tested, sworn, and a',

Forc'd by your confounded ginning—
Farewell, Meg! for I'm awa."

Then poor Maggy's tears and clamour
Gush'd afresh, and louder grew;
While the weans wi' mournfu' yamour,
Round their sabbing mother flew.

"Thro' the yirth I'll waunner wi' you—
Stay, O Watty! stay at hame:
Here upo' my knees I'll gie you
Ony vow you like to name.

See your pair young lammies pleading,
Will you gang and break our heart?
No a house to put our head in!
No a friend to take our part!"

Ilka word came like a bullet;
Watty's heart began to shake;
On a kist he laid his wallet,
Dighted baith his een and spake.

"If anee mair I cou'd, by writing,
Lea' the sodgers and stay still,
Wad ye swear to drap your fliting!"
"Yes, O Watty! yes I will."

"Then," quo' Watty, "mind be honest;
Aye to keep your temper strive:
Gin you break this dreadfu' promise,
Never mair expect to thrive.

Marget Howe? this I our ye solemn
Swear, by ever thing that's gude,
Ne'er again your spouse to scal' him,
While life warms your heart and 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 Bessie Miller,
 Kick my shins, or rug my hair—
 Lastly, I'm to keep the siller,
 'This upo' your saul you swear?"

"O—h!" quo' Meg;—"Aweel, quo' Watty,
 "Fareweel! faith, I'll try the seas."
 "O stand still," quo' Meg, and grat aye;
 "Ony, ony way ye please."

Maggy syne, because he prest her,
 Swore to a' things owre again:
 Watty lap, and dane'd, and kist her,
 Wow! but he was won'rous fain.

Down he threw his staff victorious,
 Aff gaed bannet, elaes, and shoon;
 Syne below the blankets gl'orious,
 Held anither hinny moon.

FINIS.