

Robert W. Buchanan (1841-1901)

7 *The Green Gnome*

A Melody.

Ring, sing! ring, sing! pleasant Sabbath bells!
Chime, rhyme! chime, rhyme! through the dales and dells!
Rhyme, ring! chime, sing! pleasant Sabbath bells!
Chime, sing! rhyme, ring! over fields and fells!

And I gallop'd and I gallop'd on my palfrey white as milk, 5
My robe was of the sea-green woof, my serk was of the silk,
My hair was golden yellow, and it floated to my shoe,
My eyes were like two harebells bathed in shining drops of dew:
My palfrey, never stopping, made a music sweetly blent
With the leaves of autumn dropping all around me as I went; 10
And I heard the bells, grown fainter, far behind me peal and play,
Fainter, fainter, fainter, fainter, till they seem'd to die away;
And beside a silver runnel, on a lonely heap of sand,
I saw the green Gnome sitting, with his cheek upon his hand;
Then he started up to see me, and he ran with cry and bound, 15
And drew me from my palfrey white, and set me on the ground:
O crimson, crimson, were his locks, his face was green to see,
But he cried, 'O light-hair'd lassie, you are bound to marry me!'
He claspt me round the middle small, he kissed me on the cheek,
He kissed me once, he kissed me twice—I could not stir or speak; 20
He kissed me twice, he kissed me thrice—but when he kissed again,
I called aloud upon the name of Him who died for men!

Ring, sing! ring, sing; pleasant Sabbath bells!
Chime, rhyme! chime, rhyme! through the dales and dells!
Rhyme, ring! chime, sing! pleasant Sabbath bells! 25
Chime, sing! rhyme, ring! over fields and fells!

O faintly, faintly, faintly, calling men and maids to pray,

So faintly, faintly, faintly, rang the bells afar away;
And as I named the Blessed Name, as in our need we can,
The ugly green green Gnome became a tall and comely man! 30
His hands were white, his beard was gold, his eyes were black as sloes,
His tunic was of scarlet woof, and silken were his hose;
A pensive light from Faëryland still linger'd on his cheek,
His voice was like the running brook, when he began to speak:
'O you have cast away the charm my stepdame put on me, 35
Seven years I dwelt in Faëryland, and you have set me free!
O I will mount thy palfrey white, and ride to kirk with thee,
And by those sweetly shining eyes, we twain will wedded be!

Back we gallop'd, never stopping, he before and I behind,
And the autumn leaves were dropping, red and yellow, in the wind, 40
And the sun was shining clearer, and my heart was high and proud,
As nearer, nearer, nearer, rang the kirkbells sweet and loud,
And we saw the kirk before us, as we trotted down the fells,
And nearer, clearer, o'er us, rang the welcome of the bells!

Ring, sing! ring, sing! pleasant Sabbath bells! 45
Chime, rhyme! chime, rhyme! through the dales and dells!
Rhyme, ring! chime, sing! pleasant Sabbath bells!
Chime, sing! rhyme, ring! over fields and fells!

1865

(From *The Complete Poetical Works of Robert Buchanan*. 2 vols. 1901; New York, 1976)