

James Hogg (1770-1835)

10 *Lyttil Pynkie*

Lyttil Pynkie came to Kilbogye yett,
It wals on ane hallow-day;
And the ladye babyis with her mette,
To heirre quhat sho wolde say.

For Pynkie wals the lyttilest bairne, 5
That ever dancit on the greinne;
And Pynkie wals the bonnyest thyng
That evir on yirthe wals seinne.

Hir faice wals caste in beautye's molde,
And ower hir browe abone 10
Hir hayre wals lyke the streemys of golde
That tinssillis from the mone.

The smyle that playit upon hir faice
Wals comely to be seene,
And the bonnye blue that dyit the hevin 15
Wals nevir lyke Pynkie's eeyne.

Thre spannis from heelle to heidde sho stode,
But all so meitte to se,
No mayden in hir myldest mode
Ane lovelier forme colde bee. 20

Quhatever lookit at hir ane spaice,
Colde nevir calle to mynde
That she possessit not fraime and graice
Of stateliest womankynde.

The baronne caime forth to the greene, 25
And hee toke hir be the hande;
"Lyttil Pynkie, you are welcome heirre,
The flower of fayre Scotlande.

“You are welcome to myne bowris, Pynkie,
And to myne hallis so gaye, 30
And you shalle be myne lammie deirre,
And I’ll fondle you nychte and daye.”

“Och, no! Och, no! myne owne gode lorde,
For that wolde bee ane synne;
For if you toye or melle with me, 35
To hevin you’ll nevir wynne.”

“But I will taikie myne chaunce, Pynkie,
For lofe is sore to thole;
The joie of maydenis leifu’ charmis
Can nevir stayne the soule.” 40

“Better to thole than wynne the goale,
Quhare pryze is nonne before;
The man quha wynnys myne lofe and mee,
Will nevir knowe mayden more.

“But I will syng ane sang to you, 45
And daunce ane fairye quheille,
Till you and all youre bonny may bairnis
Can daunce it wonder weille.”

Were I to telle Lyttil Pynkie’s sang,
It mighte doo muckle ill; 50
For it wals not fraimit of yirthly wordis,
Though it soundit sweitte and shrill.

But aye the owerworde of the sang
Which ladyis lernit to syng,
Wals, “Rounde and rounde, and sevin tymis rounde 55
The elfynis fairye ryng!”

The firste moove that Lyttil Pynkie maide,
Wals gentil, softe, and sweitte;
But the seconde rounde Lyttil Pynkie maide,
Theye colde not kenne hir feitte. 60

The thrydde rounde that Lyttil Pynkie maide,

Sho shymmerit als lycht and gaye
Als dauncyng of the wiry lychtis
On warme and sonnye daye.

And aye sho sang, with twyrle and spang, 65
Arounde them on the playne,
Quhille hir feitte theye shymmerit abone theyre heddis,
Then kyssit the swairde agayne.

Then the baronne hee begoude to bobbe,
No longer colde hee stande, 70
And his lyttil maydenis in ane ryng
They joynit him hande to hande.

And rounde and rounde, and faster rounde,
The fairye ryng theye flewe;
And aye the langer that theye daunsit, 75
The madder on fonne theye grewe.

And Lyttil Pynkie in the middis
Bobbyt lyke ane flee in Maye,
And everilk spryng Lyttil Pynkie gaif,
The baronne he cryit "Hurraye!" 80

And rounde and rounde the fairye ryng
They lytit and they sang,
And rounde and rounde the fairye ryng
They caiperit and they flang;

Quhille the baronne hee begoude to gaspe, 85
And his eeyne sette in his heidde;
Hee colde not dragg ane oder lymbe,
So neirlye hee wals deidde,
And downe he felle upon the playne,
Prone lyke ane forme of leidde. 90

But aye quhan Pynkie made ane spryng
Betweinne him and the daye,
Hee maide a paille with handis and feitte,
And gaif ane faynte "Hurraye!"

Hee streikit out his lymbis in dethe, 95
Unpytied and unbleste;
But “Hurraye!” it wals the ae laste sounde
That gurglit in his breste.

The maydis theye daunsit and caiperit on
In madnesse and in blaime; 100
For lofe or stryffe, or dethe or lyffe,
To them wals all the saime.

But rounde and rounde the ryng theye flewe,
Swyfte als sevin burdis on wyng;
Regairdyng the deidde man no more 105
Than any yirthly thyng.

The menialis gadderit rounde, and sawe
In terrour and dismaye,
Them dauncyng rounde theyre deidde fader,
And Pynkie wals awaye. 110

“Och-on, och-on,” the chaiplyng cryit,
“There’s some enchauntmente heirre;
Haiste, haiste awaye, myne maydinis gaye,
This shaimefulle course forbeirre.”

The maydinis lefte the fairye ryng, 115
And ceissit theyre lychtsome fonne,
But theye colde not comprehende one thyng
Of all that had beinne donne.

The chaiplyng ranne into the ryng
To lifte his maisteris heidde, 120
And callit on six young bordlye wychtis,
To beirre awaye the deidde;

Quhan Lyttil Pynkie in the myddis
Stode lofelye als the sonne;
Sho sang ane staife, and dauncit it rounde, 125
And all theyre grieffe wals donne.

The chaiplyng hee begoude to bobbe,

And wagg his heede amayne,
For the lyttil kymmeris lythlye lymbis
Had veirlye turnit his brayne. 130

And rounde and rounde the deidde baronne,
With caiper and with squealle,
The chaiplyng and his six young menne
Wente lyke ane spynnyng quheille.

And ay they sang Lyttil Pynkie's sang, 135
Als loudde als they colde braye;
But saife the burden of that sang,
The wordis I daurna saye.

But ay quhan Pynkie made ane ryse,
With fitfulle fairye flyng; 140
"Agayne, agayne!" the chaiplyng cryit,
"Weille profen, myne bonnye thyng!

"Agayne, agayne! Agayne, agayne!"
In maddenng screimme cryit hee,
"Och, let mee se that spryng agayne, 145
That I of lofe maye de!"

And rounde and rounde the deidde baronne
Theye flapperit and theye flewe;
And rounde and rounde the deidde baronne
Theye bumpyt and theye blewe; 150

Quhill the chaiplyng hee begoude to gaspe
And quhizle in the throtte,
And downe hee felle upon the greinne
Lyke ane greate mardel stotte.

He streikit out his laithlye lymbis, 155
His eeyne sette in his heidde,
But "Agayne, agayne!" caime with ane ryfte,
Quhill after hee wals deidde.

Then all the lande togedder ranne
To prieste and holy fryer, 160

And there wals prayeris in every kirke,
And hymnis in every quire;

For Lyttil Pynkie helde hir plaice
At lordlye Kilbogye,
And of everilk chamber in the housse 165
Lyttil Pynkie keepit the ke.

So wordis gone eiste and wordis gone weste,
From Solwaye unto the Clyde,
And wordis gone to the greate Mass John
That livit on Cloudan syde. 170

So he is awaye to Kilbogye halle
These lordlys maidis to saive,
And conjure that wylde thyng away
Into the Reidd Sea's wave.

Quhan he caime to Kilbogye yette 175
He tirlit at the pynne,
And quha wals so readdye als Lyttil Pynkie
To ryse and let him in.

“Bairne, I haif wordis to say to you
On matter most sincere; 180
Quhare is the countreye you caime frome,
And quha wals it sente you heirre?”

“I caime from ane countreye farre awaye,
A regioune caulme and sweitte,
For all the sternis of the milky waye 185
Werre farre benethe our feitt.

“But I haif romit this yirthlye sphere
Some vyrgin soulis to wynne,
Since maydis were born the slaives of love,
Of sorrowe, and of synne; 190

“By nychte and daye and glomyng graye,
By grofe and greinwode tree;
Oh, if you kennit quhat I haif donne

To keippe them fayre and free!

“I haif satte upon theyre waifyng lockis 195
Als daunceyng on the greinne,
And watchit the blushes of the cheeke,
And glances of the eeyne.

“I have whysperit dremys into theyre eirris,
Of all the snairis of lofe; 200
And coolit theyre yong and hopyng brestis
With dewis distyllit abofe.”

“But O thou wylde and wycked thyng,
Thynk of this virgyn bande;
Thou’st taiken theyre fader from theyre heid, 205
Theyre pastor from theyre hand.”

“That fader wals ane man so wylde,
Disgrace of human fraime;
Hee keipit sevin lemanis in his halle,
And maide it house of shaime; 210
And his fat chaiplyng — worste of alle,
Theyre dedis I maye not naime.

“Before ane of those maydis had blomit
In lofely laidyhode,
Each wold haif loste hir quhite cleethyng, 215
But and her sylken snode.

“Then blaime me not now, good Mass John,
For workyng of this skaithe;
It wals the mennis besettyng synne
That tosted them to dethe. 220

“But now, Mass John, I know you are
A gude man and ane true;
Therefore I yield my vyrgin chairge
With plesure up to you.

“For oh there is moche for me to doo 225
’Mong maydenis mylde and meike;

Men are so wycked heire belowe,
And wemyng are so weake.

“But I will baithe your eeyne, Mass John,
With unguent of the skye; 230
And you shall heirre with oder eirre,
And se with oder eye.

“And you shall se the richte and wrong,
With soule of dredde withynne;
Quhat habitantis you dwelle amang, 235
Quhat worlde you sojourne in.”

Sho touchit his eye, sho touchit his eirre,
With unguent of the skye,
Distillit from flowris of hevinlye boweris,
That nevir nevir die. 240

Mass John hee turnit him rounde aboute,
To se quhat hee colde se;
“Quhat’s this! quhat’s this!” cryit goode Mass John,
“Quhat hath befallen mee!

“For outhir I am sounde asleippe, 245
And in ane feirsome dreime;
Or else I’m deidde, and gane to hevin,
Which raiter wolde beseime.

“For spyritis come and spyritis go,
Of eviry shaibe and shaide, 250
With ghostis and demonis not ane few;
Sothe, I am sore afrayde!

“Quhare is — quhare is Lyttil Pynkie gone?
I cannot brooke this payne; —
Oh! taik this oyntment off myne eeyne, 255
And maike mee blynde agayne.

“How can I live, or moove, or thynk
With spyritis to congree;
I no acquaintance haif of them,

And they haif nonne of mee!" 260

But Lyttil Pynkie she wals gane
Away by daille and glenne,
To guarde the vyrginis of the lande
From wylis of wycked menne;

And goode Mass John is lefte alone 265
'Mang spyritis of everilk hue;
There were spyritis blacke, and spyritis quhyte,
And spyritis greene and blue;

And they were moovyng too and fro
'Mang thyngis of mortal birthe, 270
Als thicke als burdis upon the bough,
Or human thyngis on yirth.

Eache vyrgin had ane guardian fere,
Als fayre als flowir of Maye;
And hee himself ane great blacke dougge 275
That wolde not pass awaye.

And some had devilis to bee theyre maitis,
And some had two or thre,
That playit soche prankis with maydis and sanctis,
As wals ane shaime to se. 280

And then the dougge — the great blacke dougge,
Kept lokyng in his faice,
With many a dark and meanyng scowlle,
And many a sly grimaice.

It wals ane lyffe hee colde not brooke, 285
He wals so hard bestedde;
He colde not preiche, hee colde not praye —
He colde not sleippe in bedde;

For evin within the haly kirke,
By that amaizyng spelle, 290
He saw some scenis before his faice
Als I can hardlye telle.

For manne moste be ane mortyl thyng, 325
With ane immortyl mynde,
Or passe the dore of dethe, and leive
Mortalitye behynde.

So goode Mass John longit ferventlye
That lyffe with him were donne, 330
To mix with spyritis or with menne,
But only with the onne.

And then the dougge, the greate blacke dougge,
Wals ever in his plaice;
Evin at the altar there it stode, 335
And stairit him in the faice.

Mass John wente home and layit him downe,
And soone wals with the deidde,
And the bonnye maydis of Kilbogye
Are lefte withoute ane heidde. 340

Quhan sevin long yeris had come and passit,
With blynke and showir awaye,
Then Lyttil Pynkie sho caime backe
Upon ane Hallow-daye.

But the straynis that Lyttil Pynkie sung 345
At setting of the sonne,
Were nevir forgotte by old or young,
Quhill lyffe with them wals done.

Quhat then wals sayit, or quhat wals donne,
No mynstrelle evir knewe; 350
But the bonnye maydis of Kilbogye
With beauty blomit anewe.

Some demyt that theye wolde pass awaye
To oder lande than this;
But they lyvit the lyvis that wemyng lofe, 355
Of sociale yirthlie blisse.

But many a taille in westlande daille,

Quainte rhyme and fairye laye,
There yet remaynis of Pynkie's straynis,
Upon the Hallow-daye.

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