

James Hogg (1770-1835)

8 *The Liddel Bower*

A Ballad

“Oh, will ye walk the wood, lady?  
Or will ye walk the lea?  
Or will ye gae to the Liddel Bower,  
An’ rest a while wi’ me?”

“The deer lies in the wood, Douglas, 5  
The wind blaws on the lea;  
An’ when I gae to Liddel Bower  
It shall not be wi’ thee.”

“The stag bells on my hills, lady, 10  
The hart but and the hind;  
My flocks lie in the Border dale,  
My steeds outstrip the wind;

“At ae blast o’ my bugle horn,  
A thousand tend the ca’: — 15  
Oh, gae wi’ me to Liddel Bower —  
What ill can thee befa’?”

“D’ye mind when in that lonely bower  
We met at even tide,  
I kissed your young an’ rosy lips,  
An’ wooed you for my bride? 20

“I saw the blush break on your cheek,  
The tear stand in your e’e;  
Oh, could I ween, fair Lady Jane,  
That then ye lo’ed na me?”

“But sair, sair hae I rued that day, 25  
An’ sairer yet may rue;  
Ye thought na on my maiden love,  
Nor yet my rosy hue.

“Ye thought na on my bridal bed,  
Nor vow nor tear o’ mine; 30  
Ye thought upon the lands o’ Nith,  
An’ how they might be thine.

“Away! away! ye fause leman,  
Nae mair my bosom wring:  
There is a bird within yon bower, 35  
Oh, gin ye heard it sing!”

Red grew the Douglas’ dusky cheek,  
He turned his eye away,  
The gowden hilt fell to his hand;  
“What can the wee bird say?” 40

It hirpled on the bough an’ sang,  
“Oh, wae’s me, dame, for thee,  
An’ wae’s me for the comely knight  
That sleeps aneath the tree!

“His cheek lies on the cauld, cauld clay, 45  
Nae belt nor brand has he;  
His blood is on a kinsman’s spear;  
Oh, wae’s me, dame, for thee!”

“My yeomen line the wood, lady,  
My steed stands at the tree; 50  
An’ ye maun dree a dulefu’ weird,  
Or mount and fly wi’ me.”

What gars Caerlaverock yeomen ride  
Sae fast in belt an’ steel?  
What gars the Jardine mount his steed, 55  
An’ scour owre muir and dale?

Why seek they up by Liddel ford,  
An’ down by Tarras linn?  
The heiress o’ the lands o’ Nith  
Is lost to a’ her kin. 60

Oh, lang, lang may her mother greet,  
Down by the salt sea faem;  
An' lang, lang may the Maxwells look,  
Afore their bride come hame.

An' lang may every Douglas rue,  
An' ban the deed for aye: —  
The deed was done at Liddel Bower  
About the break of day.

65

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