

Hector MacNeill (1746-1818)

6 *O Tell Me How for to Woo*

Air — *Bonnie Dundee.*

Oh! tell me, bonnie young lassie!
Oh tell me how for to woo!
Oh! tell me, bonnie sweet lassie!
Oh tell me how for to woo!
Say, maun I roose your cheeks like the morning? 5
Lips like the roses fresh moistened wi' dew?
Say, maun I roose your een's pawkie scorning? —
Oh! tell me how for to woo!

Far hae I wandered to see thee dear lassie!
Far hae I ventured across the saut sea! 10
Far hae I travelled owre moorland and mountain,
Houseless, and weary, sleep'd cauld on the lea!
Ne'er hae I tried yet to mak luve to onie;
For ne'er loo'd I onie till ance I loo'd you;
Now we're alane in the green-wood sae bonnie, — 15
Oh! tell me how for to woo!

'What care I for your wand'ring, young laddie;
What care I for your crossing the sea;
It was na for naithing ye left poor young Peggy:
It was for my tocher ye cam to court me. 20
Say, hae ye gowd to busk me aye gawdie?
Ribbons, and perlins, and breast-knots enew?
A house that is canty, wi' walth in't, my laddie?
Without this ye never need try for to woo.'

'I hae nae gowd to busk ye aye gawdie; 25
I canna buy ribbons and perlins enew;
I've naithing to brag o' house or o' plenty;
I've little to gie but a heart that is true.
I cam na for tocher — I ne'er heard o' onie;
I never loo'd Peggy, nor e'er brak my vow. 30
I've wandered, poor fool! for a face fause as bonnie!
— I little thought this was the way for to woo!"

'Our laird has fine *houses* and *guineas* in gowpins;
He's youthfu', he's blooming, and comely to see!
The leddies are a' ga'en wood for the wooer, 35
And yet, ilka e'ening, he leaves them for me!
O! saft in the gloaming his love he discloses!
And saftly yestreen, as I milked my cow,
He swore that my breath it was sweeter than roses,
And a' the gate hame he did naithing but woo.' 40

'Ah, Jenny! the young laird may brag o' his siller,
His houses, his lands, and his lordly degree;
His speeches for *true love* may drap sweet as honey,
But trust me, dear Jenny! he ne'er loo'd like *me*.
The wooing o' gentry are fine words o' fashion; 45
The faster they fa' as the heart is least true! —
The dumb look o' luve's aft the best proof o' passion:
The heart that feels maist is the least fit to woo!'

'Hae nae ye roosed my cheeks like the morning?
Hae nae ye roosed my cherry red mou? 50
Hae nae ye come owre sea, moor, and mountain,
What mair Johnie, need ye to woo?
Far hae ye wandered, I ken, my dear laddie!
Now, that ye've found me there's nae cause to rue;
Wi' health we'll hae plenty — I'll never gang gawdie, 55
I ne'er wished for mair than a heart that is true.'

She hid her fair face in her true lover's bosom;
The saft tear o' transport filled ilk lover's ee;
The burnie ran sweet by their side as they sabbit,
And sweet sang the mavis aboon on the tree. 60
He clasped her, he pressed her, and ca'd her his hinny,
And aften he tasted her hinny sweet mou;
And aye 'tween ilk kiss she sighed to her Johnie —
'Oh! laddie! *weel* can ye woo!'

1801

(From *The Poetical Works of Hector MacNeill*. A New
Edition. Edinburgh, 1856)