

Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832)

6 *Christie's Will*

Traquair has ridden up Chapelhope,  
And sae has he down by the Gray Mare's Tail;  
He never stinted the light gallop,  
Until he speer'd for Christie's Will.

Now Christie's Will peep'd frae the tower, 5  
And out at the shot-hole keeked he;  
"And ever unlucky," quo' he, "is the hour,  
That the Warden comes to speer for me!"

"Good Christie's Will, now, have na fear!  
Nae harm, good Will, shall hap to thee: 10  
I saved thy life at the Jeddart air,  
At the Jeddart air frae the justice tree.

"Bethink how ye sware, by the salt and the bread,  
By the lightning, the wind, and the rain,  
That if ever of Christie's Will I had need, 15  
He would pay me my service again."

"Gramercy, my lord," quo' Christie's Will,  
"Gramercy, my lord, for your grace to me!  
When I turn my cheek, and claw my neck,  
I think of Traquair, and the Jeddart tree." 20

And he has opened the fair tower yate,  
To Traquair and a' his companie;  
The spule o' the deer on the board he has set,  
The fattest that ran on the Hutton Lee.

"Now, wherefore sit ye sad, my lord? 25  
And wherefore sit ye mournfullie?"

And why eat ye not of the venison I shot,  
At the dead of night on Hutton Lee?"

"O weel may I stint of feast and sport,  
And in my mind be vexed sair! 30  
A vote of the canker'd Session Court,  
Of land and living will make me bare.

"But if auld Durie to heaven were flown,  
Or if auld Durie to hell were gane,  
Or . . . if he could be but ten days stown . . . 35  
My bonny braid lands would still be my ain."

"O mony a time, my lord," he said,  
"I've stown the horse frae the sleeping loun;  
But for you I'll steal a beast as braid,  
For I'll steal Lord Durie frae Edinburgh town. 40

"O mony a time, my lord," he said  
"I've stown a kiss frae a sleeping wench;  
But for you I'll do as kittle a deed,  
For I'll steal an auld lurdane aff the bench."

And Christie's Will is to Edinburgh gane; 45  
At the Borough Muir then entered he;  
And as he pass'd the gallow-stane,  
He cross'd his brow, and he bent his knee.

He lighted at Lord Durie's door,  
And there he knocked most manfullie; 50  
And up and spake Lord Durie sae stoor,  
"What tidings, thou stalward groom, to me?"

"The fairest lady in Teviotdale,  
Has sent, maist reverent Sir, for thee;  
She pleas at the session for her land, a' hail, 55  
And fain she wad plead her cause to thee."

“But how can I to that lady ride,  
With saving of my dignitie?”  
“O a curch and mantle ye may wear, 60  
And in my cloak ye sall muffled be.”

Wi’ curch on head, and cloak ower face,  
He mounted the judge on a palfrey fyne;  
He rode away, a right round pace,  
And Christie’s Will held the bridle reyn. 65

The Lothian Edge they were not o’er,  
When they heard bugles bauldly ring,  
And, hunting over Middleton Moor,  
They met, I ween, our noble king.

When Willie look’d upon our king, 70  
I wot a frightened man was he!  
But ever auld Durie was startled more,  
For tyning of his dignitie.

The king he cross’d himself, I wis,  
When as the pair came riding by — 75  
“An uglier crone, and a sturdier loon,  
I think, were never seen with eye!”

Willie has hied to the tower of Græme,  
He took auld Durie on his back,  
He shot him down to the dungeon deep, 80  
Which garr’d his auld banes gie mony a crack.

For nineteen days, and nineteen nights,  
Of sun, or moon, or midnight stern,  
Auld Durie never saw a blink,  
The lodging was sae dark and dern. 85

He thought the warlocks o’ the rosy cross  
Had fang’d him in their nets sae fast;  
Or that the gypsies’ glamour’d gang,

Had lair'd his learning at the last.

“Hey! Batty, lad! far yaud! far yaud!” 90

These were the morning sounds heard he;  
And “ever alack!” auld Durie cried,  
“The deil is hounding his tykes on me!”

And whiles a voice on *Baudrons* cried,  
With sound uncouth, and sharp, and hie; 95  
“I have tar-barrell'd mony a witch,  
But now, I think, they'll clear scores wi' me!”

The king has caused a bill be wrote,  
And he has set it on the Tron, —  
“He that will bring Lord Durie back, 100  
Shall have five hundered merks and one.

Traquair has written a privie letter,  
And he has seal'd it wi' his seal, —  
“Ye may let the auld brock out o' the poke;  
The land's my ain, and a's gane weel.” 105

O Will has mounted his bonny black,  
And to the tower of Græme did trudge,  
And once again, on his sturdy back,  
Has he hente up the weary judge.

He brought him to the council stairs, 110  
And there full loudly shouted he,  
“Gie me my guerdon, my sovereign liege,  
And take ye back your auld Durie!”

*1802-03*

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