

James Hogg (1770-1835)

14 *Sir David Graeme*

The dow flew east, the dow flew west,
The dow flew far ayont the fell;
An' sair at e'en she seemed distrest,
But what perplex'd her could not tell.

But aye she coo'd wi' mournfu' croon, 5
An' ruffled a' her feathers fair;
An' lookit sad as she war boun'
To leave the land for evermair.

The lady wept, an' some did blame,—
She didna blame the bonnie dow, 10
But sair she blamed Sir David Graeme,
Because the knight had broke his vow.

For he had sworn by the starns sae bright,
An' by their bed on the dewy green,
To meet her there on St. Lambert's night, 15
Whatever dangers lay between;

To risk his fortune an' his life
In bearing her frae her father's towers,
To gie her a' the lands o' Dryfe,
An' the Enzie-holm wi' its bonnie bowers. 20

The day arrived, the evening came,
The lady looked wi' wistful ee;
But, O, alas! her noble Graeme
Frae e'en to morn she didna see.

An' she has sat her down an' grat; 25
The warld to her like a desert seemed;

An' she wyted this an' she wyted that,
But o' the real cause never dreamed.

The sun had drunk frae Keilder fell
His beverage o' the morning dew; 30
The deer had crouched her in the dell,
The heather oped its bells o' blue;

The lambs were skipping on the brae,
The laverock hiche attour them sung,
An' aye she hailed the jocund day, 35
Till the wee, wee tabors o' heaven rung.

The lady to her window hied,
And it opened owre the banks o' Tyne;
"An', O, alak!" she said, an' sighed,
"Sure ilka breast is blythe but mine! 40

"Where hae ye been, my bonnie dow,
That I hae fed wi' the bread an' wine?
As roving a' the country through,
O, saw ye this fause knight o' mine?"

The dow sat down on the window tree, 45
An' she carried a lock o' yellow hair;
Then she perched upon that lady's knee,
An' carefully she placed it there.

"What can this mean? This lock's the same
That aince was mine. Whate'er betide, 50
This lock I gae to Sir David Graeme,
The flower of a' the Border side.

"He might hae sent it by squire or page,
An' no letten the wily dow steal't awa;
'Tis a matter for the lore and the counsels of age, 55
But the thing I canna read at a'."

The dow flew east, the dow flew west,
The dow she flew far ayont the fell,
An' back she came wi' panting breast,
Ere the ringing o' the castle bell. 60

She lighted ahiche on the holly-tap,
An' she cried, "cur-dow," an' fluttered her wing;
Then flew into that lady's lap,
An' there she placed a diamond ring.

"What can this mean? This ring is the same 65
That aince was mine. Whate'er betide,
This ring I gae to Sir David Graeme,
The flower of a' the Border side.

"He sends me back the love-tokens true!
Was ever poor maiden perplexed like me? 70
"Twould seem he's reclaimed his faith an' his vow,
But all is fauldit in mystery."

An' she has sat her down an' grat,
The world to her a desert seemed;
An' she wyted this an' she wyted that, 75
But o' the real cause never dreamed.

When, lo! Sir David's trusty hound,
Wi' humpling back, an' a waefu' ee,
Came cringing in an' lookit around,
But his look was hopeless as could be. 80

He laid his head on that lady's knee,
An' he lookit as somebody he would name,
An' there was a language in his howe ee,
That was stronger than a tongue could frame.

She fed him wi' the milk an' the bread, 85

An' ilka good thing that he wad hae;
He lickit her hand, he coured his head,
Then slowly, slowly he slunkered away.

But she has eyed her fause knight's hound,
An' a' to see where he wad gae: 90
He whined, an' he howled, an' lookit around,
Then slowly, slowly he trudged away.

Then she's casten aff her coal black shoon,
An' her bonnie silken hose, sae glancin' an' sheen;
She kiltit her wilye coat an' broidered gown, 95
An' away she has linkit over the green.

She followed the hound owre muirs an' rocks,
Through mony a dell an' dowie glen,
Till frae her brow an' bonnie goud locks,
The dewe dreepit down like the drops o' rain. 100

An' aye she said, "My love may be hid,
An' darena come to the castle to me;
But him I will find and dearly I'll chide,
For lack o' stout heart an' courtesye.

"But ae kind press to his manly breast, 105
An' ae kind kiss in the moorland glen,
Will weel atone for a' that is past;—
O wae to the paukie snares o' men!"

An' aye she eyed the gray sloth hound,
As he windit owre Deadwater fell, 110
Till he came to the den wi' the moss inbound,
An' O, but it kythed a lonesome dell!

An' he waggit his tail, an' he fawned about,
Then he coured him down sae wearilye;
"Ah! yon's my love, I hae found him out, 115

He's lying waiting in the dell for me.

“To meet a knight near the fall of night
Alone in this untrodden wild,
It scarcely becomes a lady bright,
But I'll vow that the hound my steps beguiled.” 120

Alack! whatever a maiden may say,
True has't been said, an' aften been sung,
The ee her heart's love will betray,
An' the secret will sirple frae her tongue.

“What ails my love, that he looks nae roun', 125
A lady's stately step to view?
Ah me! I hae neither stockings nor shoon,
An' my feet are sae white wi' the moorland dew.

“Sae sound as he sleeps in his hunting gear,
To waken him great pity would be; 130
Deaf is the man that caresna to hear,
And blind is he wha wantsna to see.”

Sae softly she treads the wee green swaird,
Wi' the lichens an' the ling a' fringed around
“My een are darkened wi' some wul-weird, 135
What ails my love, he sleeps sae sound?”

She gae ae look, she needit but ane,
For it left nae sweet uncertaintye;
She saw a wound through his shoulder bane,
An' in his brave breast two or three. 140

There wasna sic een on the Border green,
As the piercing een o' Sir David Graeme;
She gliskid wi' her ee where these een should be,
But the raven had been there afore she came.

There's a cloud that fa's darker than the night, 145
An' darkly on that lady it came:
There's a sleep as deep as the sleep outright,—
'Tis without a feeling or a name;

'Tis a dull an' a dreamless lethargye,
For the spirit strays owre vale an' hill, 150
An' the bosom is left a vacancy,
An' when it comes back it is darker still.

O shepherd lift that comely corpse,
Well may you see no wound is there;
There's a faint rose 'mid the bright dew drops, 155
An' they have not wet her glossy hair.

There's a lady has lived in Hoswood tower,
'Tis seven years past on St. Lambert's day,
An' aye when comes the vesper hour
These words an' no more can she say: 160

"They slew my love on the wild Swaird green,
As he was on his way to me;
An' the ravens picked his bonnie blue een,
An' the tongue that was formed for courtesye.

"My brothers they slew my comely knight, 165
An' his grave is red blood to the brim:
I thought to have slept out the lang, lang night,
But they've wakened me, and wakened not him!"

1807

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