

James Hogg (1770-1835)

4 *Gilmanscleuch*

Founded upon an Ancient Family Tradition

“Whair hae ye laid the goud, Peggye,
Ye gat on New-yeir’s-day?
I lookit ilka day to see
Ye drest in fine array;

“But nouthur kirtle, cap, nor gowne, 5
To Peggye has come hame:
Whair hae ye stowed the goud, dochter?
I fear ye hae been to blame.”

“My goud it was my ain, father;
A gift is ever free; 10
An’ when I need my goud agene,
It winna be tint to me.”

“O hae ye sent it to a friend,
Or lent it to a fae?
Or gien it to some fause leman, 15
To breed ye mickle wae?”

“I hae na sent it to a friend,
Nor lent it to a fae;
An’ never man without your ken,
Sal cause me joy or wae. 20

“I gae it to a poor auld man,
Came shivering to the door;
An’ when I heard his waesome tale,
I wust my treasure more.”

“What was the beggar’s tale, Peggye? 25
I fain wald hear it o’er;
I fain wald hear that wylie tale
That drained thy little store.”

“His hair was like the thistle doune,
His cheeks were furred wi’ tyme, 30
His beard was like a bush o’ lyng,
When silvered o’er wi’ ryme.

“He lifted up his languid eye,
Whilk better days had seen;
An’ aye he heaved the mournfu’ sigh, 35
An’ the saut teirs fell atween.

“He took me by the hands, and saide,
While pleasantly he smiled,
‘O weel to you, my little flower,
That blumes in desart wilde; 40

“An’ may ye never feel the waes
That lang hae followit me,
Bereavit of a’ my gudes and gear,
My friends and familye!

“In Gilmanscleuch, beneath the heuch, 45
My fathers lang did dwell;
Aye foremost, under bauld Buccleuch,
A foreign fae to quell.

“Ilk petty robber through the lands
They taucht to stand in awe, 50
An’ aften checked the plundering bands
O’ their kinsman Tushilaw.

“But when the bush was in the flush,
An’ fairer there was nane,
Ae blast did all its honours crush, 55
An’ Gilmanscleuch is gane!

“I had ane brother lithe an’ stronge,
But froward, fierce, an’ keen;
Ane only sister, sweet an’ young,
Her name was luvly Jean. 60

“Her hair was like the threads of goud,
Her cheeks of rosy hue,
Her eyne were like the huntin’ hawks,
That owre the cassel flew.

“Of fairest fashion was her form, 65
Her skin the driven snaw
That’s drifted by the wintery storm
On lofty Gilman’s-law:

“Her browe nae blink of scorninge wore, 70
Her teeth were ivorie,
Her lips the little purple floure
That blumes on Bailley-lee.

“O true, true was the reade that said 75
That beauty’s but a snare;
Young Jock o’ Harden her betrayed,
Whilk grievit us wonder sair.

“My brother Adam stormed in wrathe, 80
An’ swore in angry mood,
Either to rychte his dear sister,
Or shed the traitor’s blood.

“I kend his honour fair an’ firm,
An’ didna doubt his faithe;
But being the youngest o’ seven brethren,
To marry he was laithe.

“When June had decked the braes in grene, 85
An’ flushed the forest tree;
When young deers ranne on ilka hill,
An’ lambs on ilka lee;

“A shepherd frae our mountains hied, 90
Ane ill death mot he dee!
‘O master, master, haste!’ he cried,
‘O haste alang wi’ me!

“Our ewes are banished frae the glen,

Their lambs are dri'en away,
The fairest raes on Eldin braes
Are Jock o' Harden's prey. 95

“His hounds are ringing through your woods,
An' manye deere are slaine:
Ane herd is fled to Douglas-craig,
An' ne'er will turn againe. 100

“Your brother Adam, stalworth still,
I warned on yon hill-side;
An' he's awa to Yarrow's banks
As fast as he can ride.'

“O ill betide thy haste, young man! 105
Thou nicht hae tald it me:
Thou kend to hunt on all my lande
The Harden lads were free.

“Gae saddel me my milk-white steed,
Gae saddel him suddenlye; 110
To Yarrow banks I'll hie wi' speed,
This bauld hunter to see.'

“But low, low down, on Sundhope broom
My brother Harden spyde,
An' with a stern an' furious look 115
He up to him did ride.

‘Was't not enough, thou traytor strong,
My sister to betray?
That thou shouldst scare my feebil ewes,
An' chase their lambs away? 120

‘Thy hounds are ringing through our woods,
Our choizest deers are slaine,
An' hundreds fledd to Stuart's hills
Will ne'er returne againe.'

‘It sets thee weel, thou haughtye youth, 125
To bend such taunts on me:

Oft hae you hunted Harden's hills,
An' nae man hindered thee.'

'But wilt thou wedd my deare sister?
Now tell me — ay or nay.' 130
'Nae question will I answer thee,
That's speerit in sic a way.

'Tak this for truth, I ne'er meant ill
To nouthier thee nor thine.'
Then spurrit his steed against the hill, 135
Was fleeter than the hynde.

“He sett a buglet to his mouth,
An' blew baith loude and clear;
A sign to all his merry men
Their huntin' to forbeir. 140

“O turn thee, turn thee, traytor stronge!
Cried Adam bitterlie;
'Nae haughty Scott, of Harden's kin,
Sal proudlye scool on me.

'Now draw thy sword, or gie thy word, 145
For one of them I'll have,
Or to thy face I'll thee disgrace,
An' ca' thee coward knave.'

“He sprang frae aff his coal-black steed,
An' tied him to a wande; 150
Then threw his bonnet aff his head,
An' drew his deadly brande.

“An' lang they foucht, an' sair they foucht,
Wi' swords of mettyl kene,
Till clotted blude, in mony a spot, 155
Was sprynkelit on the grene.

“An' lang they foucht, an' sair they foucht;
For braiver there were nane:
Braive Adam's thigh was bathit i' blude,

An' Harden's coller-bane. 160

“Though Adam was baith stark an' gude,
 Nae langer could he stande;
 His hand claive to his hivvye sword,
 His knees plett lyke the wande.

“He leanit himsel agenst ane aek, 165
 Nae mair could act his parte.
 A wudman then sprang frae the broom,
 An' pierced young Harden's hearte.

“But word or groane he wheelit him round,
 An' kluve his heide in twaine; 170
 Then calmlye laid him on the grene,
 Never to rise againe.

“I raide owre heicht, I raide through howe,
 An' ferr outstrippit the wynde,
 An' sent my voice the forest through, 175
 But naething could I fynde.

“Whan I cam there, the dysmal sychte
 Mochte melt ane hearte of stane;
 My brother fent an' bleiden lay,
 Young Harden neirlye gane. 180

‘An' art thou there, O Gilmanscleuch?’
 Wi' faltren tongue he cried;
 ‘Hadst thou arrivit tyme aneuch,
 Thy kinsman hadna died.

‘Be kind unto thy sister Jean, 185
 Whatever may betide:
 This nycht, I meant, at Gilmanscleuch,
 To maik of her my bryde.

‘But this sad fray, this fatal daye,
 May breid baith dule an payne; 190
 My freckle brethren ne'er will staye,
 Till they're avengit or slayne.’

“The wudman sleips in Sundhope broom,
 Into a lowlye grave:
 Young Jock they bure to Harden’s tombe, 195
 An’ laide him wi’ the laive.

“Thus fell that braive an’ comelye youth,
 Whose arm was like the steel,
 Whose very look was open truth,
 Whose heart was true an’ leel. 200

“It’s now full three-an’-thirty zeirs
 Syn that unhappy daye,
 An’ late I saw his comelye corpse,
 Without the least decaye.

“The garland cross his breist aboon 205
 Still held its varied hue;
 The roses bloomit upon his shoon,
 As faire as if they grew.

“I raised our vassals ane an’ a’,
 Wi’ mickle care an’ payne, 210
 Expecting Harden’s furious sons,
 Wi’ a’ their father’s trayne.

“But Harden was a weirdly man,
 A cunning tod was he:
 He lockit his sons in prison strang, 215
 An’ wi’ him bure the key.

“An’ he’s awa to Holyrood,
 Amang our nobles a’,
 With bonnet lyke a girdel braid,
 An’ hayre like Craighope snaw. 220

“His coat was of the forest grene,
 Wi’ buttons lyke the moon;
 His breiks were o’ the guid buckskyne,
 Wi’ a’ the hayre aboon;

“His twa-hand sword hang round his neck, 225
 An’ rattled at his heel;
 The rowels of his silver spurs
 Were of the Rippon steel;

“His hose were braced wi’ chains o’ airn, 230
 An’ round wi’ tassels hung:
 At ilka tramp o’ Harden’s heel,
 The royal arches rung.

“Sae braid an’ buirdlye was his bouke,
 His glance sae gruff to bide,
 Whene’er his braid bonnetie appearit, 235
 The menialis stepped asyde.

“The courtlye nobles of the north
 The chief with favour eyed,
 For Harden’s form an’ Harden’s look
 Were hard to be denied. 240

“He made his plaint unto our king,
 An’ magnified the deed;
 An’ high Buccleuch, with scarce fayre playe,
 Made Harden better speed.

“Ane grant of all our lands sae fayre, 245
 The king to him has gien;
 An’ a’ the Scotts of Gilmanscleuch
 Were outlawed ilka ane.

“The time I missit, an’ never wissit
 Of siccan a weird for me, 250
 Till I got word frae kind Traquair,
 The country soon to flee;

“Else me an’ mine nae friend wad fynd,
 But fa’ ane easy prey,
 While yet my brother weaklye was, 255
 An’ scarce could bruik the way.

“Now I hae foucht in foreign fields,

In mony a bluidy fray,
But langed to see my native hills,
Afore my dying day. 260

“My brother fell in Hungarye,
When fighting by my side;
My luckless sister bore ane son,
But broke hir hearte an’ died.

“That son, now a’ my earthly care 265
Of port an’ stature fine:
He has thine eye, an’ is thy blude,
As weel as he is mine.

“For me, I’m but a puir auld man,
Whom nane regards ava; 270
The peaceful grave will end my care,
Where I maun shortly fa’ —

“I ga’e him a’ my goud, father,
I gat on New-yeir’s-day,
An’ welcomed him to Harden-ha’, 275
With us a while to stay.”

“My sweet Peggys, my kind Peggys,
Ye aye were dear to me:
For ilka bonnet-piece ye ga’e,
My love, ye sal hae three. 280

“Auld Gilmanscleuch shall share wi’ me
The table an’ the ha’;
We’ll tell of a’ our doughty deeds,
At hame an’ far awa.

“That youth my hapless brother’s son, 285
Who bears our eye an’ name,
Shalle farm the lands of Gilmanscleuch,
While Harden holds the same.

“Nae rent, nor kane, nor service mean,
I’ll ask of him at a’; 290

Only to stand at my ryght hand,
When Branxholm gies the ca'.

“A Scott must aye support ane Scott,
When as he synketh low;
But he that proudlye lifts his heide 295
Must learne his place to knowe.”

1807

(From *The Works of the Ettrick Shepherd*. With Memoir of
the Author by the Rev. Thomas Thomson. London: Blackie
& Son, 1876)