

William Motherwell (1797-1835)

12 *The Rose and the Fair Lilye*

The Earlsburn Glen is hay and green,
The Earlsburn water cleir,
And blythely blume on Earlsburn bank
The broom and eke the brier!

Twa Sisters gaed up Earlsburn glen — 5
Twa maidens bricht o' blee —
The tane she was te Rose sae red,
The tither the Fair Lilye!

"Ye mauna droop and dwyne, Sister" —
Said Rose to fair Lilye — 10
"Yer heart ye mauna brek, Sister —
For ane that's ower the sea:

"The vows we sillie maidens hear
Frae wild and eilfu' man,
Are as the words the waves wash out 15
When traced upon the san'!"

"I mauna think yer speech is sooth,"
Saft answered te Lilye —
"I winna dout mine ain gude Knicht
Tho' he's ayont the sea!" 20

Then scornfully the Rose sae red
Spake to the puir Lilye —
"The vows he feigned at thy bouir door,
He plicht in mine to me!"

"I'll hame and spread the sheets, Sister, 25
And deck my bed sae hie —
The bed sae wide made for a bride,
For I think I sune sal die!

“Your wierd I sal na be, Sister,
As mine I fear ye’ve bin — 30
Your luve I wil na cross, Sister,
It were a mortal sin!”

Earlsburn Glen is green to see,
Earlsburn water cleir —
Of the siller birk in Earlsburn Wood 35
They framit te Maiden’s bier!

There’s a lonely dame in a gudely bouir,
She nevir lifts an ee —
That dame was ance te Rose sae red,
She is now a pale Lilye. 40

A Knicht aft looks frae his turret tall,
Wherethe kirk-yaird grass grows green;
He wonne the weed and lost the flouir,
And grief aye dims his een:

At noon of nicht, in the moonshine bricht, 45
The warrior kneels in prayer —
He prays wi’ his face to the auld kirk-yaird,
And wishes he were there!

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