



GRIERSON OF LAG

SIR Robert has risen at break o' day
In the spring time o' the year,
He has belted his sword upon his thigh,
An' mounted his guid grey mear.

An' he's gathered his men in the mornin' licht,
To the hunt he has a mind,
Yet never the tod or the fallow deer
Is the game he thinks to find.

The merle has piped to the risin' sun,
As oot at the yett he gaes ;
An' the heather-bleat has called his mate
By Maxwellton's bonny braes.

An' they ride ower hill an' they ride through dale,
An' down by the dark Wolf's slock ;
An' aye Sir Robert rides at their heid,
Wi' een for the puir hill-folk.

An' they've catchit a laddie wi' een like the sky,
His hair's like the gowden sheen ;
An' Sir Robert has speired if aucht he kens,
Or auld Tam Glen has seen.

They've questioned him baith lang and sair ;
 But he daurna tell the truth :
 For weel kens he o' auld Tam Glen—
 An' his hert is in his mouth.

An' the laddie lookit as through a mist,
 For his een the saut tears gem :
 'I'se tell ye noucht o' my faither's friend,
 He says to him an' them.

Deep breethit the Red Wud Laird o' Lag ;
 An' he sweers he'll gar him say,
 Or he'll drap him down in the linn's red flood
 Whaur the rocks mak nicht o' day.

An' the laddie's tongue is thick wi' tears,
 An' he prayeth them on his knee :
 'Hae nane o' ye weans o' your ain at hame,
 That ye lat a bairnie dee ?'

But he speaketh to ane that hath nae ruth,
 Nae qualms ever stirred his hert.
 'Gin ye'll no' tell me o' auld Tam Glen,
 Your soul an' you maun pairt.'

He's grippit him sair by the red gowd hair—
 The laddie hears the red linn pourin'—
 An' he's speired him ower an' ower again—
 The laddie hears the kelpie roarin'.

Wild swirls the red linn's angry flood :
 There's bluid upon the stane—
 Sir Robert, he has an empty hand,
 His soul, a murdered wean.

He's turned an' leuch to his troopers syne,
 But never a lauch gied they,
 But grippit their swords wi' a fearsome look,
 But daurna mak them play.

Sir Robert has tryit anither lauch,
 Like a lost soul lauchs he now;
 'Sweet are the pickins aff that whalp's banes
 The corbies sall hae, I trow.'

A mither has fand a murdered wean
 In the pool at the red linn's fit,
 An' the wound that straikit his bonny broo
 Wi' her tears she has washit it.

She's rowed him in her airmis twa
 An' borne him till her hame;
 She has straikit his limbs and kaimit his hair,
 An' ower him greets her lane.

When the win's are still an' the linn's red flood
 Is fed wi' the beltane rain;
 There rises a soun' in the howe o' the nicht
 Like a bairn that greets his lane.

W. CUTHBERTSON.