When I Was a Wee Thing (2)

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1.
When I was a wee thing,
  'Bout six or seven year auld,
I had no worth a petticoat,
  To keep me frae the cauld.

Then I went to Edinburgh,
  To bonnie burrows town,
And there I coft a petticoat,
  A kirtle, and a gown.

As I cam hame again,
  I thought I wad build a kirk,
And a' the fowls o' the air
  Wad help me to work.

The heron, wi' her lang neb,
  She moupit me the stanes;
The doo, wi' her rough legs,
  She led me them hame.

The gled he was a wily thief,
  He rackled up the wa';
The pyat was a curst thief,
  She dang down a'.

The hare came hirpling owre the knowe,
  To ring the morning bell;
The hurcheon she came after,
  And said she wad do't hersel.

The herring was the high priest,
  The salmon was the clerk,
The howlet read the order--
  They held a bonnie wark.

2.
As I was walking through the wud
I begood a-biggin' a kirk;
An' a' the beasties in the wud
Helpit me to work.
The beastie wi' the ae horn

Howkit a' the stanes;
The beast wi the rough fit
Trailed them a' hame.
Hairie hippit thro' the kirk,
An' rang the mornin' bell;
Hymen was the high priest,
An' Choral was the clerk;
An' bonnie sang the mavis;
An' that's a merry wark.

3.
When I was a little laddie
Of nine or ten years auld,
I hadna a petticoat
To keep me frae the cauld.
I went away to Edinburgh,
That bonnie burgh toun,
And there I got a petticoat,
A mantle, and a goun.
I gaed awa to Holyrood Ha',
And there I built a kirk,
And a' the birds o' the air
They helpit me to work:
The whaup wi' her lang legs
She dug up the stane,
The dove wi' her reid legs
She brocht them hame;
The pyet was a wiley bird,
And she bug up the wa';
But the craw was a dirty beast,
And she pu'd down a'.

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(1) Chambers PRS (1847), 184; (1870), 27; Montgomerie
SNR (1946), 117 (no. 148). Variant, with music, in Moffat
50 TSNR (1933), 17 [st. 3 And as I hameward wandered/
birdies; 4-6 omitted; 7.3-4 The bullfinch played the
organ/ All in my bonnie kirk!] Air, Lennox Love to
Blantyre.
(2) Greig FSNE xxii.2. Ultimately from Strichen.
(3) Rymour Club Misc. II (1912-19), 42, from Hawick.
[Bug = biggit, "built".]
ODNR 189 (no. 187), English version from Halliwell, 1853.

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