

Folk & Traditional Song Lyrics

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Will Stewart and John

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ADLATTS parke is wyde and broad,
And grasse growes greene in our countrye;
Eche man can gett the loue of his ladye,
But alas, I can gett none of mine!

Itt's by two men I sing my song,
Their names is William Stewart and Iohn;
William he is the elder brother,
But Iohn bee is the wiser man.

But William he is in care-bed layd,
And for the lone of a faire ladye;
If he haue not the loue of the Erle of Mar's daughter,
In faith for lone that he must dye.

Then Iohn was sorry for his brother,
To see him lye and languish soe:
What doe you mourne for, brother?' he saies,
I pray you tell to me your woe.

'Doe [you] mourne for gold, brother?' he saies,
Or doe you mourne for fee ?
Or doe you mourne for a likesome ladye,
You neaer saw her with your eye?'

'I doe not mourne for gold,' he saies,
'Nor I doe not mourne for any fee
But I doe mourne for a likesome ladye,
I neere blinke on her with mine eye.'

'But when haruest is gotten, my deere brother -
All this is true that I tell thee -
Gentlemen, they loue hunting well,
And giue wight-men their cloth and fee.

'Then I'll goe a wooing for thy sake,
In all the speed that I can gone,
And for to see this likesome ladye,
And hope to send thee good tydings home.'

Iohn Stewart is gone a wooing for his brother,
Soe farr into faire Scotland,

And left his brother in milde, feare,
Vntill be heard the good tydand.

And when he came to the Erle of Mar's his house,
See well be could his curtesye,
And when he came before the erle,
He kneeled low downe vpon his knee.

'O rise vp, rise vp, Iohn Stewart,
Rise vp, now, I doe bidd thee;
How doth thy father, Iohn Stewart,
And all the lords in his countrye?'

'And itt please you, my lord, my :ffather is dead;
My brother and I cannott agree;
My brother and I am fallen att discord,
And I am come to crane a service of thee.'

'O welcome, welcome, John Stewart,
A welcome man thou art to me;
I'll make thee chamberlaine to my daughter,
And for to tend of that ladye soe free.

'And if thou wilt haue a better office,
Aske, and thou shall haue itt of mee;
And where I giue other men a penny of wage,
Inffaith, Iohn, thou shalt haue three.'

And then bespake him John Stewart,
And these were the words said hee
There is no office in your court
This day that better pleasetb mee.

The fryday is gone, the Sunday is come -
All this is true that I doe say -
And to the church that they be gone,
Iohn Stewart and the lady gay.

And as they did come home againe -
I-wis itt was a meeten mile -
John Stewart and the lady gay,
They thought itt but a [little] while.

'I am a messenger, ladye,' he saies,
'I am a messenger to thee:'
O speake flor thy selfe, Iohn Stewart,' shee saies,
A welcome man that thou shalt bee.'

'Nay, by my faith,' saies Iohn Stewart,

'Which euer, alas, that may not bee!
He bath a higher degree in honour,
Allas, ladye, then euer I!

'He is a lord now borne by birth,
And an erle affter his father doth dye;
His haire is yellow, his eyes beene gray;
All this is true that I tell yee.

'He is fine in the middle, and small in the wast,
And pleasant in a woman's eye;
And more nor this, be dyes for your lone,
Therefore, lady, show some pittye.'

'If this be soe,' then saies the lady,
'If this be true that thou tells mee,
By my faith then, John Stewart,
I can lone him hartilye.

'Bidd him meete me att St Patr[i]cke's Church
On Sunday after St Andrew's day;
The flower of Scotland will be there,
And then begins our summer's play.

'And bidd him bring with him a hundred gunners,
And rawnke ryders lett them bee,
And lett them bee of the rankest ryders
That be to be found in that countrye.

'They best and worst, and all in like,
Bidd him cloth them in one liuerye;
And flor his men, greene is the best,
And greene now lett their liueryes bee.

'And clothe himselfe in scarlett redd,
That is soo seemlye for to see;
for scarlett is a faire coulour,
And pleasant allwayes in a woman's eye.

'He must play sixteene games att ball,
Against the men of this countrye,
And if he winn the greater part,
Then I shall love him more tenderlye.'

What the lady said, Iohn Stewart writt,
And to Argyle Castle sent it hee;
And [when] Willie Steward saw the letter,
forth of care-bed then lope bee.

Hee mustered together his merry men all,
Hee mustered them soe louelilye;
Hee thought hee had had scarson halfe a hundred,
Then bad hee eleuen score and three.

He chose forth a hundred of the best
That were to be found in that countrie,
He cladd them all in one coulour,
And greene i-wis their liueryes bee.

He cladd himselfe in scarlett redd,
That is soe seemelye for to see;
for smlett is a faire coulour,
And seemlye in a woman's eye.

And then towards Patricke Church he went,
With all his men in braue array,
To gett a sight, if he might,
And speake with his lady gay.

When they came to Patricke's churche,
Shee kneeled downe by her mother trulye
'O mother, if itt please you to giue me leaue,
The Stewart's horsse faine wold I see.'

'Ile giue you leaue, my deere daughter,
And I and my maide will goe with yee.
The lady had rather haue gone her selfe
Then haue had her mother's companye.

When they came before Willie Steward,
Soe well bee cold his curtesye:
'I wold kisse your daughter, ladye,' he said,
'And if your will that soe itt bee.'

The ladye's mother was content
To doe a straunger that curtesye
And when Willie had gotten a kisse,
I-wis shee might haue teemed him three.

Sixteen games were plaid that day there -
This is the truth as I doe say -
Willie Stewart and his merry men,
They carryed twelue of them away.

And when they games that they were done,
And all they folkes away were gone
But the Erle of Marr and William Stewart,
The erle wold needs haue William home.

And when they came vnto the erle's howse,
They walked to a garden greene;
for to conferr of their bussines,
Into the garden they be gone.

'I loue your daughter,' saies 'William Stewart,
I But I cannott tell whether she loueth mee : '
'Marry, God defend,' saies the Erle of Mar,
'That euer soe that itt shold bee!

'I had rather a gallowes there was made,
And hange thee for my daughter's sake;
I had rather a ffyer were made att a stake,
And burne thee for my daughter's sake!

'To chamber, to chamber, gay ladye,' be saies~
'In the deuill's name now I bidd thee!
And thou gett thee not to the chamber soone,
I'll beate thee before the Stewart's eye.'

And then bespake William Stewart,
These were the words said hee:
If thou beate thy daughter for my sake,
Thou'st beate a hundred men and mee.'

Then bespake Iohn Stewart -
Lord! an angry man was bee
'O churle, if thou wouldest not haue macht
with my brother,
Thou might baue answerd him curteouslye.'

'O hold thy peace, Iohn Stewart,
And chamber thy words now, I bidd thee;
If thou. chamber not tby words soone,
Thou'st loose a good service; soe shalt thou doe me.'

'Marry! hang them that cares,' saies Iohn Stewart,
Either for thy service or for thee;
Services can I haue enoughe,
But brethren wee must euer bee.'

William Stewart and his brother Iohn,
To Argyle Castle gon they bee;
And when Willye came to Argyle Castle,
Into care-bedd then lope bee.

A parlaiment att Edenborrow was made,
The king and his nobles all mett there;

They sent for William Stewart and Iohn,
To come amongst the other peeres.

Their clothing was of scarlett redd,
That was soe seemelye for to see;
Blacke hatts, white fleathers plewed with gold,
And sett all on their heads trulye.

Their stockings were of twisted silke,
With garters fringed about with gold;
Their shoes were of the cordevine,
And all was comelye to behold.

And when they came to Edenborrowe,
They called for Iohn Stewart and Willie:
'I answer in a lord's roome,' saies Will Stewart,
But an erle I hope to bee.'

'Come downe, come downe,' saies the Lord of Marr,
I knew not what was thy degree:
O churle, if I might not haue macht with thy daughter,
Itt had not beene long of my degree.

'My father, hee is the king his brother,
And then the king is vnckle to me;
O churle, if I might not haue macht with thy daughter,
Itt-had not beene long of my degree.'

'O hold your peace,' then sayd the king,
'Cozen William, I doe bidd thee;
Infaith, cozen William, he loues you the worsse
Because you are a-kinn to mee.

'I'll make thee an erle with a siluer wande,
And adde more honors still to thee;
Thy brother Iohn shall be a lord,
Of the best att home in his countrye.

'Thy brother Kester shalbe a knight,
Lands and linings I will him giue,
And still hee shall line in court with mee,
And I'll maintaine him whilest he doth line.'

And when the parlaiment was done,
And all the folkes away were gone,
Willye Stewart and Iohn his brother,
To Argyle Castle they. be gone.

But when they came to Argyle Castle,

That was soe farr in that countrye,
He thought see much then of his lone
That into care-bedd then lope hee.

John Stewart did see his brother see ill,
Lord, in his heart that hee was woe;
I will goe wooing for thy sake
Againe yonder gay ladye to.

'Ile cloth my selfe in strange array,
In a beggar's habbitt I will goe,
That when I come before the Erle of Marr
My clothing strange he shall not knowe.'

'John hee gott on a clouted cloake,
See meete and low then by his knee,
With four garters vpon one leg
Two aboue, and towe below trulye

'But if thou be a beggar, brother.
Thou art a beggar that is vnknowne;
for thou art one of the stoutest beggars
That euer I saw since I was borne.

'Here, geeue the lady this gay gold ringe,
A token to her that well is knowne;
And if shee but aduise itt well,
Shee'le know some time itt was her owne.*

'Stay, by my faith, I goe not yet,'
John Stewart he can repleye;
'Ile haue my bottle full of beere,
The best that is in thy butterye.

'Ile haue my sachell filld full of meate,
I am sure, brother, [it] will doe noe harme
for, before I come to the Erle of Marr's his house,
My lipps, I am sure, they wilbe warme.'

And when he came to the Erle of Marr's house.
By chance itt was of the dole-day;
But Iohn cold find no place to stand,
Vntill he came to the ladye gaye.

But many a beggar he threw downe,
And made them all with weeping say,
He is the devill, hee is no beggar,
That is coine fortb of some strange coutrye.

And now the dole that itt is delte,
And all the beggars be gon away,
Sauing Iohn Stewart, that seemed a beggar,
And the ladye that was see gay.

'Lady,' sais Iohn, 'I am no beggar,
As by my clothes you may thinke that I bee;
I am your servant, Iohn Stewart,
And I am sent a messenger to thee.'

But if thou be Iohn Stewart,
As I doe thinke that thou hee,
Avayle thy capp, avayle thy hoode,
And I will stand and speake to thee.

'How doth thy brother, Iohn Stewart,
And all the lords in his countrye?'
'O fye vpon thee, wicked woman!
My brother he doth the worsse for thee.'

With that the teares stood in her eyes
O lord, shee wept soe tenderlye!
Sais, Ligg the blame vnto my father;
I pray you, Iohn Stewart, lay itt not to mee.

Comend me to my owne true-loue,
That liues soe farr in the North countrye,
And bidd him meete me att Martingsdale,
fullye w[i]thin these dayes three.

Hang them, sais the lady gay,
That letts their father witting bee
I'le proue a ladye full of loue,
And be there by the sunn be a quarter highs.

And bidd him bring with him a hundred gunners,
And ranke riders lett them bee;
Lett them be of the rankest ryders
That be to be found in that countrye.

The best and worse, and all in like,
Bidd him clothe them in one liuerye;
And for his men, greene is the best,
And greene now lett their lyueryes bee.

And cloth himselfe in scarlett redd,
That is soe seemelye for to see
For scarlett is a faire conlor,
And pleasant in a woman's eye.

What they lady sayd, Iohn Stewart writt,
To Argyle Castle sent'itt hee;
His bagg and his dish and showing horne,
Unto three beggars be gaue them all three.

And when Willie Stewart saw the letter,
forth of care-bed then lope hee;
He thought himselfe as lustye and sound
As any man in that countrie.

He mustered together his merrymen all,
He mustered them soe louinglye;
He thought he had had scarce halfe a hundred,
Then had bee eleuen score and three.

He chose forth a hundred of the best
That were to be found in that companye,
And presentlye they tooke their horsse,
And to Martingsdale posted hee.

And when he came to Martingsdale,
He found his loue staying there trulye,
For shee was a lady true of loue,
And was there by [the] sunn was a qwarter highe.

Shee kisst William Stewart and his brother Iohn,
Soe did shee part of his merry men:
'If the churle, thy father, hee were here,
He shold not haue thee backe againe.'

They sent for preist, they sent for clarke,
And they were marryed there with speede;
William tooke the lady home with him,
And they liued together long time indeed.

And in twelue monthe soe they wrought,
The lady shee was great with childe;
The sent Iohn Stewart to the Erle off Marre,
To come and christen the barne soe milde.

'And if this be soe,' sayes the Erle of Marre,
'Iohn Stewart, as thou tells mee,
I hope in God you haue marryed my daughter,
And put her bodye to honestye.'

'Nay, by my faith,' then saies Iohn Stewart
'Ffor euer alas that shall not bee;
for now wee haue put her body to shame,

Thou'st haue her againe hame to thee.'

'I had rather make thee Erle of Marre,
And marry my daughter vnto thee;
For by my faith,' sais the Erle of Marr,
'Her marryage is marrd in our countrye.'

'If this be soe,' then sais Iohn Stewart,
'A marryage soone that thou shalt see;
for my brother William, my father's heyre,
Shall marry thy daughter before thine eye.'

They sent for preist, they sent for clarke,
And marryed there they were with speed;
And William Stewart is Erle of Marr,
And his father-in law dwells with him indeed.

Child #107

version A from Child from Percy MS., p. 428; Holes and Furnivall, 111, 216.

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