

**The Ballads and Songs of Yorkshire,
Transcribed from Private Manuscripts, rare
and scarce publications**

By

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**A REMARKABLE CIRCUMSTANCE CONNECTED
WITH BRETTON HALL.**

AT Bretton Hall, near Wakefield, known so well,
Sir William Wentworth Blackett once did dwell;
That mansion was his own; there with his bride,
In pomp and splendour, he did once reside.
Yet, in the midst of all that he possest,
A rambling mind disturb'd Sir William's breast;
His lady and his home he left behind;
Says he, "The end of this wide world I'll find;
The earth's extensive, but, you may depend on't,
Before e'er I return, I'll find the end on't."

So he embark'd on board a ship, we find,
And, sailing, left her ladyship behind,
Who oft in sorrow did his absence mourn,
And sighing said, "Oh, that he would return!
For, be his voyage rough or smooth at sea,
It is a cruel bitter blast to me."

Sir William, he rolls on through winds and waves;
Undaunted, he all kinds of weather braves;
Nor his strange project e'er relinquish'd he,
Till one-and-twenty years he'd been at sea;
Then, p'rhaps, he thought, "Good lack! the
 world is round;
The end is nowhere—so it can't be found;
And, as I'm weary of this wild-goose chase,
At home again, e'er long I'll show my face."

Then off he set, but little was aware,
What would transpire on his arrival there:
For while Sir William rov'd as here express'd,
Another "Sir", his lady thus address'd:—
"Sir William's gone, (ne'er to return again)
Past this world's end, which long he sought in vain,
There's not a doubt he's found the end of life;
But don't be troubled; you shall be my wife."
She listen'd, till at length she gave consent,
And straightway to church then this couple went.

Sir William does about this wedding hear,
As he unto his journey's end draws near;
And thus he does within his mind reflect:—
"This sly usurper I shall now detect;
Soon shall he know, though much against his will,
At Bretton hall I have dominium still;
Those woods and fertile fields my own I call,
With this magnificent, this splendid hall:
And now I come to claim them as my own,
Though, by my dress, not from a beggar known;
My clothes are turn'd to rags, and, by the weather,
My skin is tann'd till it resembles leather;
So now I'll act the beggar bold and rude,
And at this wedding boldly I'll intrude,
And, though admittance I may be denied,
I'll rob the merry bridegroom of his bride."

Then at his own hall door one rap he gave,
Resolv'd the inmates' charity to crave.
So he presented his request, 'tis said,
And they presented him—a crust of bread!
The bread he took, and then, to their surprise,
He ask'd the servants for some beer likewise.
“No, no,” said they, “beer we shall give you none;
You saucy drunken vagabond, begone!”
At length (with much ado) some beer he got,
And quickly he return'd the empty pot;
And straightway then into the hall went he,
And said, he wish'd her ladyship to see.
“You can by no means see her,” answer'd they,
“She's newly married! 'tis her wedding day!”
“Married!” the feigned beggarman replied,
“Then I'll not go till I have seen the bride.”

Then tow'rds the dining-room his course he bent,
The servants quick pursued with one consent,
And seized him, with intent to turn him out.
“Come back, you villain; what are you about?”
“About my bus'ness, to be sure,” quoth he,
“The room I'll enter, and the bride I'll see.”
“We'll see you out of doors,” the servants said;
And now of course, a clam'rous din they made,
Just then, the bride, on hearing such a clatter,
Open'd the door, to see what was the matter.

This noble beggar thus obtain'd a sight
Of her who erstwhile was his heart's delight,
He viewed her in her nuptial garments dress'd,
And did of her a glass of wine request,
Which she denied—who little did suppose
The ragged stranger was her wealthy spouse:
Then straight into the dining-room he went,
And down he sat among the guests content.
Says he, "You'll grant me my request I know;
A glass of wine I'll have before I go."

The bride at length, complied with his request,
Thus thinking to despatch the ragged guest,
But when he did this glass of wine obtain,
He drank and fill'd, and drank and fill'd again.
The guests astonish'd and disgusted, view'd,
Whilst he proceeded to be far more rude;
Around the bride's fair neck he threw his arm,
And gave a kiss, which did her much alarm,
On him she frown'd, and threaten'd him with law,
Says he, "Your threats I value not a straw:
My conduct to reprove is all in vain,
For what I've done I mean to do again.

Madam, your bridegroom's in an awkward case;
This night I do intend to take his place."
And while upon her countenance he pores,
The guests agree to kick him out of doors.
"The deuce is in the beggarman," they cried;
"He means to either beg or steal the bride."
"No, no," says he, "I claim her as my own."

He smil'd and then he did himself make known,
Saying, "William Wentworth Blackett is my name;
For my long absence I'm much to blame;
But safe and sound I have return'd at last,
So let's forgive each other all that's past."
The bride did her first bridegroom recognise;
With joy transported, to his arms she flies;
And, whilst they tenderly each other kiss,
The disappointed bridegroom they dismiss;
Who inwardly did his hard case lament,
Hung down his head, and out of door he went.
"I'm robb'd of this fair jewel, now," thinks he;
"How cruel is this tender spouse to me!"

Awhile he scratched his head, then heaved a sigh,
Then eyed the hall again, and wip'd his eye.
Sir William freely did forgive his wife;
They liv'd together till the end of life.
My honest story I must now conclude,
Which may by some be as a fiction view'd;
But, sirs, the boots in which sir William went,
Are kept in memory of that event;
The very hat he wore preserv'd has been,
At Bretton hall—where they may yet be seen.