

MY JO JANET.

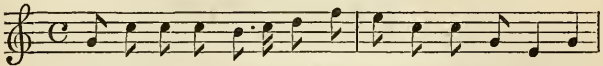
This clever song appears in the *Tea-table Miscellany* (1724), but is probably somewhat older. From the allusion to the Bass, which we must presume to be the Bass of Inverury—a noted hillock near that little burgh—and to Aberdeen, one might justifiably suppose it to have sprung up in that province, even were there not the pronunciation of 'sheen' for 'shoon' to substantiate the conjecture. As an expression of Scottish economic and moral philosophy—the saving of all avoidable expenses, and the taking down of youthful vanity and

¹ That is, oblige them, on account of their debts, to take advantage of the sanctuary at Holyrood.

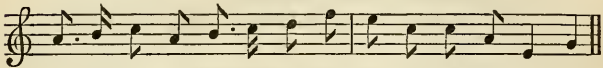
² The version here given of *The Cock-Laird* is partly from the *Orpheus Caledonius* (1733) and partly from a more recent copy.

extravagance—the piece is beyond all praise. It is also to be remarked, that the language is choice and the versification perfect—implying an educated mind in the unknown author.

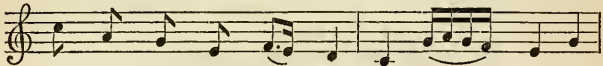
The air is of considerably greater age than the modern song, being identical with one called *Long or ony Old Man*, which appears in the Skene Manuscript, circa 1630.



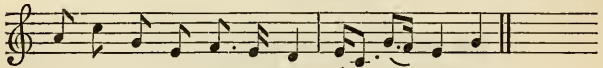
Sweet sir, for your courtesie, When ye come by the Bass, then,



For the love ye bear to me, Buy me a keek-in' glass, then.



Keek in - to the draw well, Jan - et, Jan - et,



There ye'll see your bon - nie sel, My jo Jan - et.

Sweet sir, for your courtesie,
 When ye come by the Bass, then,
 For the love ye bear to me,
 Buy me a keekin'-glass, then.¹
 Keek into the draw-well,
 Janet, Janet,
 There ye'll see your bonnie sel,
 My jo Janet.

¹ A mirror was formerly a rare luxury in rural Scotland. 'In the but-the-house or kitchen there was no allowed looking-glass; but the servant-lasses had a substitute for it, in a full pail of water brought to the light in a clear day, in which the reflection was as distinct as in any mirror. They sometimes had a small Dutch *keeking-glass*, about the size of a playing-card, concealed in their chests, at which they took a stolen glance before going to church.'—Robertson's *Rural Recollections*, 1829.

Keekin' in the draw-well clear,
 What if I fa' in, sir,
 Then a' my kin will say and swear,
 I drowned mysel for sin, sir.
 Haud the better by the brae,
 Janet, Janet,
 Haud the better by the brae,
 My jo Janet.

Guid sir, for your courtesie,
 Comin' through Aberdeen, then,
 For the love ye bear to me,
 Buy me a pair o' sheen, then.
 Clout the auld, the new are dear,
 Janet, Janet ;
 Ae pair may gain ye half a year,
 My jo Janet.

But, if, dancin' on the green,
 And skippin' like a maukin,
 They should see my clouted sheen,
 Of me they will be talkin'.
 Dance aye laigh and late at e'en,
 Janet, Janet.
 Syne their fauts will no be seen,
 My jo Janet.

Kind sir, for your courtesie,
 When ye gae to the Cross, then,
 For the love ye bear to me,
 Buy me a pacin' horse, then.
 Pace upon your spinnin'-wheel,
 Janet, Janet,
 Pace upon your spinnin'-wheel,
 My jo Janet.

My spinnin'-wheel is auld and stiff,
 The rock o't winna stand, sir ;
 To keep the temper-pin in tiff,
 Employs richt aft my hand, sir.
 Mak the best o't that ye can,
 Janet, Janet,
 Mak the best o't that ye can,
 My jo Janet.

In the Oxford Collection (British Museum) there is a broadside of apparently the time of William III., entitled *Jenny, Jenny, or the False-hearted Knight*, which recites an affair of rustic gallantry, in the usual style, and then represents the lady as putting a series of requests to her lover, all of which are churlishly refused. The dialogue proceeds in the following strain :

* * * * *

May 't please your kind courtesie,
 To gang under yonders town,
 May 't please your kind courtesie,
 To buy me a silken gown.
 Mend the old one for a new, quoth he,
 Jenny, Jenny,
 Mend the old for a new, quoth he,
 Jenny, Jenny.

May 't please you of kind courtesie,
 To gang into yonder fare [fair],
 May 't please your kind courtesie,
 To buy me an ambling mare.
 Ride upon thy spinning-wheel, quoth he,
 Jenny, Jenny, &c.

I pray you will not angry be
 Whilst I beg one small boon,
 May 't please your kind courtesie
 To buy me a pair o' shoon.
 Let [thy next lover] shoe thee, quoth he,
 Jenny, Jenny,
 For thou shalt ne'er be shod by me,
 Jenny, Jenny.

Once more I beg your kind courtesie,
To gang to yonders teek,
And there do so much for me,
As buy me a seeing kit.
Kit even in the well, quoth he,
Jenny, Jenny,
For there thy beauty thou may'st see,
Jenny, Jenny.

Either this is an English original of *My Jo Janet*, or a corrupt English version of an original Scottish *My Jo Janet*. From the evident misunderstanding of the keeking-glass in the last verse quoted, one might be justified in believing the latter to be the case. If so, the Scottish original was probably a rude ballad of the seventeenth century, from which some poet of comparatively cultivated taste had drawn the clever dialogue as we now find it.