

## JENNY NETTLES.

Every child in rural Scotland has heard nurse-maids singing a ranting and lively song, beginning with the following verses :

Saw ye Jenny Nettles,  
    Jenny Nettles, Jenny Nettles?  
Saw ye Jenny Nettles,  
    Coming frae the market?  
Wi' bag and baggage on her back,  
Her fee and bountith in her lap,  
Wi' bag and baggage on her back,  
    And a baby in her oxtar.

I met ayont the cairnie,  
    Jenny Nettles, Jenny Nettles,  
Singing till her bairnie, &c.<sup>2</sup>

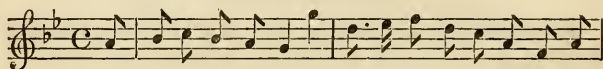
The obscurity of this poor girl has not prevented her tale of hapless love from attaining that celebrity which even the homeliest of rustic verse can sometimes give. Jenny, disowned by an ungrateful lover, and unable to bear the scorn of society, put an end to her life, and was buried between two lairds' lands near the Lomond Hills, where a cairn of stones was afterwards formed to mark the spot, according to ancient usage. It seems strange that so tragic a tale should be connected with so merry a melody

<sup>1</sup> A low stool.

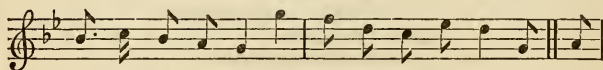
<sup>2</sup> The entire song is in Herd's Collection.

as that here presented. Upwards of thirty years ago, and probably much above a century after the composition of the song, a gentleman paying a visit in Fife, found himself in the neighbourhood of the spot where the cairn of Jenny Nettles had once stood. Causing a digging to be commenced, he found at the depth of eighteen inches a skull and some other bones, with two ear-rings and twenty-four beads—supposed to be relics of this unfortunate maiden.<sup>1</sup>

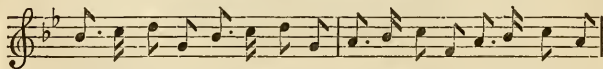
A song of greater elegance and more refined sentiment, but not of a high degree of merit, was composed at a later period in honour of the name of Jenny Nettles.



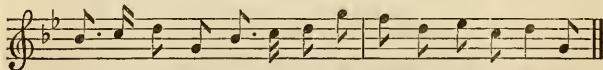
I met ayont the cairnie, Jenny Nettles trig and braw, A-



mang the shaws o' Bar-nie, Skipping light-ly bare-foot: The



spreading ros-es wet with dew Are no sae sweet as Jenny's mou', Her



dimpied cheeks and een so blue, A-mang the heather barefoot.

I met ayont the cairnie,  
 Jenny Nettles trig and braw,  
 Amang the shaws o' Barnie,  
 Skipping lightly barefoot :

<sup>1</sup> Some of these relics were long in the possession of the late Mr Robert Frazer, honorary curator of the museum of the Society of the Antiquaries of Scotland. See Notes to Johnson's *Scots Musical Museum*. The skull is in possession of Mr Joseph Paton, Dunfermline.

The spreading roses wet with dew  
Are no sae sweet as Jenny's mou',  
Her dimpled cheeks and een so blue,  
Amang the heather barefoot.

I took her hand, I pressed it—  
I asked if she could fancy me ;  
My heart ye ha'e distressed it,  
Coming frae the market.  
My bonnie lass both trig and neat,  
Nae fairer trips on London street,  
Your glancing een subdues my heart,  
Amang the heather barefoot.

My haddin' stands on yonder glen,  
I ha'e a but, I ha'e a ben ;  
Gin ye 'll be lady o' my ain,  
Ye 'll gang nae langer barefoot.  
I met ayont the cairnie,  
Jenny Nettles trig and braw,  
Amang the shaws o' Barnie,  
Skipping lightly barefoot.

A silken gown then ye shall hae,  
A cleaden new frae tap to tae,  
A pair o' shoon and stockings tae,  
To keep you frae gaun barefoot.  
I met ayont the cairnie,  
Jenny Nettles trig and braw,  
Amang the shaws o' Barnie,  
Skipping lightly barefoot.