

RHYMES APPROPRIATE TO CHILDREN'S
AMUSEMENTS.

SAID by boys, when enjoying the amusement of riding upon each other's backs—

Cripple Dick upon a stick,
Sandy on a sow,
Ride away to Galloway,
To buy a pund o' woo.

Sung to their hobby-horses, or to walking-canes exalted to an equestrian capacity—

I had a little hobby-horse,
His mane was dapple-gray,
His head was made o' pease-strac,
His tail was made o' hay.

A boy standing upon a hillock or other eminence, from which he defies the efforts of his companions to dislodge him, exclaims, by way of challenge—

I, Willie Wastle,
Stand on my castle ;
And a' the dogs o' your toon
Will no drive Willie Wastle doon.

When Oliver Cromwell lay at Haddington, he sent to require the governor of Home Castle in Berwickshire to surrender. There is an unvarying tradition that the governor replied in the above quatrain of juvenile celebrity, but was soon compelled to change his tune by the victor of Dunbar. '1651, Feb. 13. One Jhone Cockburne, being governor of the castle of Hume, after that a breach was made in the wall, did yield the same to Cromuell and his forces.'—*Lamont's Diary*.

Stottie ba', hinnie ba', tell to me,
How mony bairns am I to hae ?
Ane to live, and ane to dee,
And ane to sit on the nurse's knee !

—Addressed to a hand-ball by girls, who suppose that they will have as many children as the times they succeed in catching it.

A party of boys take a few straws, and endeavour to hold one between the chin and the turned down under lip, pronouncing the following rhyme:—

I bought a beard at Lammas fair ;
It's a' awa' but ae hair—
Wag, beardie, wag !

He who repeats this oftenest without dropping the straw, is held to have won the game.

In the days of villeinage, when a freeman gave up his liberty, put himself under the protection of a master, and became *his man*, he took hold of his own fore-top, and so handed himself over to his future lord. This very significant formula is still preserved among children, one of whom takes hold of the fore-top of another, and says—

Tappie, tappie tousie, will ye be my man ?

If the answer is 'no,' the first speaker pushes back the recusant against the hair, saying contemptuously—

Gae fae me, gae fae me, gae fae me !

If he says 'ay,' he pulls the slave towards him, and says—

Come to me, come to me, come to me !

A boy folds in the fingers of one hand, so as to leave a space, which is denominated the *corbie's hole*. He disposes one or two of the sharpest-nailed fingers of the other in such a way as to close hard in upon anything which might come into the hole, and invites the fingers of his companions into the trap prepared for them, in the following words:—

Put your finger in the corbie's hole,
The corbie's no at hame ;
The corbie's at the back-door,
Pykin at a bane.

A most treacherous instance, however, of the sinful lie of '*Not at Home!*'—for the instant that a single finger enters the hole, the nails which lie in wait for its reception spring upon it, and give it a hearty pinching.

A game on the fingers, chiefly for girls—

This is my lady's knife and fork,
This is my lady's table,
This is my lady's looking-glass,
And this is the baby's cradle.

At the first line, the hands are clasped with their backs downwards, and the fingers projecting upwards. At the second, the backs are turned upwards, with the knuckles close together, thus forming a flat surface. At the third, the last arrangement is only changed by the two fore-fingers being set up against each other. At the fourth, the little ones are also set up, opposite to the two others.

KATHARINE NIPSY.

A PLAY PERFORMED ON THE FINGERS.

The nurse says, 'Now come, bairns, and I'll tell ye the bonny story o' Katharine Nipsy.' [All flock about her, and she begins by holding up her right hand before them, the back of it downwards, and the fingers turned up. The first and third fingers are brought together as close as possible, to represent the door of the house; while the second remains behind, to represent a robber in the disguise of a friar, wanting admittance. The thumb is the lady of the house, and the little finger is Katharine Nipsy, her servant. All being thus arranged, the second finger is made to tap twice at the supposed door.]

THE LADY (*in a grave slow voice*).

Who's that knocking at my door, Katharine Nipsy?

KATHARINE (*in a sharp quick voice*).

Wha's that knocking at my lady's door?

[*Little finger wagged peremptorily.*]

THE DISGUISED ROBBER (*in a low intreating tone*).

A poor friar—a poor friar.

KATHARINE.

It's a poor friar, my lady.

LADY (*inclining her head kindly*).

Bid him come in; bid him come in.

[*The first and third fingers are then parted, and the second comes forward between, bowing twice as he enters.*]

DISGUISED ROBBER.

Your servant, madam; your servant, madam.

NURSE (*in a hurried voice*).

And he worried them a'!

NIEVIE-NICK-NACK.

Some small article, as a marble, a comfit, or other trifle, is put into one hand secretly. The boy then comes up to

a companion with both hands closed, and cries, as he revolves the two fists (*nieves*) before his friend's eyes—

Nievie-nievie nick-nack,
Which hand will ye tak' ?
Tak' the right, tak' the wrang,
I'll beguile ye if I can.

The fun is in the challenged person choosing the hand in which there is nothing.

“Na, na,” answered the boy ; “he is a queer auld cull ; he disna frequent wi' other folk, but lives up by at the Cleikum. He gave me half-a-crown yince, and forbade me to play it awa' at pitch and toss.”

“And you disobeyed him, of course ?”

“Na, I didna disobeyed him—I played it awa' at *nievie-nievie nick-nack*.”—*St Ronan's Well*.

Half-a-dozen urchins, collected by the fireside of a winter's evening, would amuse themselves by such rhymes as the following :—

Braw news is come to town,
Braw news is carried ;
Braw news is come to town,
[Mary Foster's]* married.

First she gat the frying-pan,
Syne she gat the ladle,
Syne she gat the young man
Dancing on the table.

Or else—

Here is a lass with a golden ring,
Golden ring, golden ring ;
Here is a lass with a golden ring,
So early in the morning.

Gentle Johnie kissed her,
Three times blessed her,
Sent her a slice o' bread and butter,
In a silver saucer.

Who shall we send it to,
Send it to, send it to ;
Who shall we send it to ?
To [Mrs Ritchie's] daughter.

* Naming some girl of the party.

Or the following :—

Braw news is come to town,
 Braw news is carried ;
 Braw news is come to town,
 [Sandy Dickson's]* married.

First he gat the kail-pat,
 Syne he gat the ladle ;
 Syne he gat [a dainty wean,]
 And syne he gat [a] cradle.

Thus to anticipate what is incidental to mature life, is of course sure to cover the young with blushes, and hence the wit of the entertainment. There is another rhyme adapted for similar occasions, and intended to convey an insinuation against the presumedly prettiest young maiden of the party, usually called 'the Flower' of her place of residence :—

I ken something that I'll no tell,
 A' the lasses o' our town are cruppen in a shell,
 Except the Flower o' [Hamilton], and she's cruppen out,
 [And she has a wee bairn, wi' a dish-clout.]
 Some ca't the kittlin, and some ca't the cat,
 And some ca't the little boy wi' the straw-hat.
 The boy gaed to her daddie, to seek a wee piece,
 But he took up the airn tangs, and hit it i' the teeth ;
 It roared and it grat—gang down to the corse,
 And see the Flower o' [Hamilton] riding on a horse.

The above is a Lanarkshire, and the following a Berwickshire version :—

I've found something that I'll no tell,
 A' the lads o' our town clockin' in a shell,
 A' but [Willie Johnston], and he's cruppen out,
 And he will have [Susie Kerr] without ony doubt ;
 He kissed and clappit her, he's pared a' her nails,
 He made her a gown o' peacock tails :
 Baith coal and candle ready to burn,
 And they're to be married the morn's afternoon.

CHALLENGE TO REDCAP.

Redcapie-dossie, come out an ye daur,
 Lift the sneck, and draw the bar !

This is cried by boys in at the door or windows of deserted

* Naming some boy of the party.

buildings, particularly old castles and churches of terrible character. It is considered a feat of some daring, though the individual who performs it usually runs away as fast as he can, immediately on having uttered the invocation. The rhyme is founded upon a very ancient superstition, which peoples every such building with a presiding spirit called *Redcap*. In Leyden's ballad of 'Lord Soulis' (*Minst. Scot. Bord.* iii.), Redcap is represented as the familiar of that feudal tyrant; but this must have arisen from the accredited circumstance of the ruins of Hermitage Castle being believed to be still under the protection of such a spirit.

CHAPPING OUT GAMES.

In most of the Scottish puerile games, there is one person upon whom the chief part of the duty devolves, while the rest have little else to do than look after their amusement. In some games this individual has some power, or acts as a master over the rest; but in general, the distinguished part which he bears in the sport is not the most agreeable, and he is chosen by lot, or, as the boys express it, by *chapping* out; that is, ranging the whole assemblage into a row, and going over them one by one with the finger, repeating to each individual a syllable of some unmeaning rhyme; and upon whomsoever the last falls, he is what is called *it*. The following may serve as specimens of a very numerous class of rhymes for chapping out:—

My grandfather's man and me coost out,
 How will we bring the matter about?
 We'll bring it about as weel as we can,
 And a' for the sake o' my grandfather's man.

Lemons and oranges, two for a penny,
 I'm a good scholar that counts so many;
 The rose is red, the leaves are green,
 The days are past that I have seen!
 Jenny, good spinner,
 Come down to your dinner,
 And taste the leg of a roasted frog!
 I pray ye, good people,
 Look owre the kirk-steeple,
 And see the cat play wi' the dog!
 I doot, I doot,
 My fire is out,

And my little dog's not at home ;
 I'll saddle my cat, and I'll bridle my dog,
 And send my little boy home,
 Home, home again, home !

The last 'home' determines the wight upon whom the lot falls ; and a postscript is added—

A ha'penny puddin', a ha'penny pie ;
 Stand ye—there—out—by !

Master Foster, very good man,
 Sweeps his college now and than ;
 After that he takes a dance,
 Up from London, down to France ;
 With a black bonnet, and a white snout,
 Stand ye there, for ye are out !

My Lord Provo', my Lord Provo',*
 Where shall this poor fellow go ?
 Some goes east, and some goes west,
 And some goes to the craw's nest.

“ But all this while, Caleb, you have never told me what became of the arms and powder,” said Ravenswood.

“ Why, as for the arms,” said Caleb, “ it was just like the bairns' rhyme—

Some gaed east, and some gaed west,
 And some gaed to the craw's nest.”

Bride of Lammermoor.

In the games *Tig*, *Hide-and-Seek*, *Hide-ye*, and others of a similar character, all the boys go to some distance and hide themselves, except *the tig*, who waits with his face turned to a wall, and covers his eyes, till his companions give notice that they are concealed, when he goes forth in quest of them. One by one, as they see opportunity, they leave their places of concealment, and run towards *the den*, which, if they reach without being touched by the *tig*, they are exempted from all further danger. The *tig* usually catches and touches some one upon the crown, before all are *in*—otherwise he has to be *it* for another game. While he goes about searching for whom he may catch, many voices from different quarters are heard exclaiming—

* Could this originate in a similar question propounded by one of the officers of the provost-marshal, to that dread dignitary, before whom many a 'poor fellow' has been brought, for the determination of life or death ?

Keep in, keep in, wherever ye be,
The greedy gled is seeking ye !

Bloody Tom is a common game among boys all over Scotland. All except two sit upon the ground in a circle, in the centre of which stands one who acts as protector to the rest, while another parades round the outside. A dialogue then takes place between the two standing persons—

Middle. Who goes round my house this night ?

Outside. Who but bloody Tom !

Middle. Don't steal any of my chickens away.

Outside. None but this poor one !

Bloody Tom then carries off one of the hapless wights from the circle, notwithstanding the efforts of his protector, while the rest cower more closely around him. The circle, as the rhyme is repeated, gradually grows smaller and smaller, till the whole are taken away.

HICKETY, BICKETY.

One of the simplest of boys' out-of-door evening amusements is as follows:—One stands with his eyes bandaged and his hands against a wall. Another stands beside him repeating a rhyme, whilst the others come one by one and lay their hands upon his back—

Hickety, bickety, pease scone,
Where shall this poor Scotchman gang ?
Will he gang east, or will he gang west ;
Or will he gang to the craw's nest ?

When he has sent them all to different places, he turns round and calls, 'Hickety, bickety!' till they have all rushed back to the place, the last in returning being obliged to take his place, when the game goes on as before.

THE GIRLS' PROMENADE.

Jenny Mac, Jenny Mac, Jenny Macghie,
Turn your back about to me,
And if you find an ill bawbee,
Lift it up, and gie't to me !

Two girls cross their arms behind their backs, and thus taking hold of each other's hands, parade along together, by daylight or moonlight, occasionally turning upon their

arms, as indicated in the rhyme. Another rhyme for this amusement is—

A basket, a basket, a bonny penny basket,
A penny to you, and a penny to me,
Turn about the basket.

HOW MANY MILES TO BABYLON ?

Two boys, holding each other's hands, make their arms represent a gate. A number of the others approach.

Boys. How many miles to Babylon ?

Gatekeepers. Threescore and ten.

Boys. Will we be there by candlelight ?

Gatekeepers. Yes, and back again.

Boys. Open your gates and let us go through.

Gatekeepers. Not without a beck and a boo.

Boys. There's a beck, and there's a bow [*beck and bow*],

Open your gates and let us go through.

All then pass under the uplifted arms of the two gatekeepers.

This is the simplest kind of game in which the inquiry as to the distance of Babylon occurs. In another of a more complicated kind, two boys, remarkable as *good runners*, and personating the king and queen of Cantelon, are placed between two *doons* or places of safety, at one of which a flock of other boys pitch themselves. The runners then come forward, and the following dialogue takes place between them and some member of the company, all of whom are considered as knights. The romantic nature of the language is very remarkable:—

Knight. King and queen of Cantelon,
How many miles to Babylon ?

King. Eight and eight, and other eight.

Knight. Will I get there by candlelight ?

King. If your horse be good and your spurs be bright.

Knight. How many men have ye ?

King. Mac nor ye daur come and see.

The company then break forth and make for the opposite *doon* with all their might, and avoiding the two runners, who pursue and endeavour to catch as many as possible. On catching any, the runner places his hand upon their heads, when they are said to be *taned*, and are set aside. The game is repeated and continued till all are *taned*.

THE WADDS.*

The wadds was played by a group seated round the hearth fire, the lasses being on one side and the lads on the other. A lad first chants—

Oh, it's hame, and it's hame, and it's hame, hame, hame,†
I think this night I maun gae hame.

One of the opposite party then says—

Ye had better light, and bide a' night,
And I'll choose you a bonny ane.

The first party again speaks—

Oh, wha will ye choose, an I wi' you bide ?

Answer—

The fairest and rarest in a' the country side.

At the same time presenting an unmarried female by name. If the choice give satisfaction—

I'll set her up on the bonny pear-tree,
It's straught and tall, and sae is she ;
I wad wauk a' night her love to be.

If the choice do not give satisfaction, from the age of the party—

I'll set her up i' the bank dike,
She'll be rotten ere I be ripe ;
The corbies her auld banes wadna pike.

If from supposed want of temper—

I'll set her up on the high crab-tree,
It's sour and dour, and sae is she ;
She may gang to the mools unknissed by me.

A civil mode of declining is to say—

She's for another, and no for me ;
I thank you for your courtesie.

The same ritual is of course gone through with respect to one of the other sex ; in which case such rhymes as the following are used :—

I'll put him on a riddle, and blaw him owre the sea,
Wha'll buy [Johnie Paterson] for me ?

* *Anglicé*, the Game of Forfeits.

† *Var.*—I'm ringing, I'm singing, I'm bound for home.

I'll put him on my big lum head,
And blaw him up wi' powther and lead.

Or, when the proposed party is agreeable—

I'll set him on my table head,
And feed him up wi' milk and bread.

A refusal must be atoned for by a wadd or forfeit. A piece of money, a knife, or any little thing which the owner prizes, will serve. When a sufficient number of persons have made forfeits, the business of redeeming them is commenced, and generally it is then that the amusement is greatest. The duty of kissing some person, or some part of the room, is usually assigned as a means of redeeming one's wadds. Often for this purpose a lad has to kiss the very lips he formerly rejected. Such jocundities amused many a winter night in the days of langsyne.*

Another form of this game, practised in Dumfriesshire fifty years ago, and perhaps still, was more common. The party are first fitted each with some ridiculous name, not very easy to be remembered, such as *Swatter-in-the-Sweet-Milk*, *Butter-Milk-and-Brose*, *the Gray Gled o' Glenwhar-gan Craig*, &c. Then all being seated, one comes up, repeating the following rhymes:—

I never stealt Rob's dog, nor never intend to do,
But weel I ken wha stealt him, and dern'd him in a cleugh,
And pykit his banes bare, bare, bare enough!
Wha but——wha but——

The object is to burst out suddenly with one of the fictitious names, and thus take the party bearing it by surprise. If the individual mentioned, not immediately recollecting the name he bore, failed, on the instant, to say 'No me,' by way of denying the accusation respecting the dog, he was subjected to a forfeit; and this equally happened if he cried 'No me,' when it was the name of another person which was mentioned. The forfeits were disposed of as in the former case.

THE THREE FLOWERS.

A group of lads and lasses, as in the above game, being assembled round the fire, two leave the party, and consult

* The substance of the above is from a note in Cromek's *Remains of Nithsdale and Galloway Song*, p. 114.

apart as to the names of three others, young men or girls, whom they designate as the Red Rose, the Pink, and the Jelliflower. We shall suppose that lads are to be pitched upon. The two return to the fireside circle, and having selected (we shall suppose) a member of the fairer portion of the group, they say to her—

My mistress sent me unto thine,
 Wi' three young flowers baith fair and fine—
 The Pink, the Rose, and the Jelliflour ;
 And as they here do stand,
 Whilk will ye sink, whilk will ye swim,
 And whilk bring hame to land ?

The maiden must choose one of the flowers named, on which she passes some approving epithet, adding, at the same time, a disapproving rejection of the other two—for instance, in the following terms: 'I will sink the Pink, swim the Rose, and bring hame the Jelliflower to land.' The two young men then disclose the names of the parties upon whom they had fixed those appellations respectively, when, of course, it may chance that she has slighted the person she is understood to be most attached to, or chosen him whom she is believed to regard with aversion; either of which events is sure to throw the company into a state of outrageous merriment.

SCOTS AND ENGLISH.

This well-known game very much resembles *Barley Break*, the pastime of high-born lords and ladies in the time of Sir Philip Sidney, who describes it in his *Arcadia*. The boys first choose sides. The two chosen leaders join both hands, and raising them high enough to let the others pass through below, cry thus—

Brother Jack, if ye'll be mine,
 I'll gi'e you claret wine ;
 Claret wine is good and fine,
 Through the needle e'e, boys.

Letting their arms fall, they enclose a boy, and ask him to which side he will belong, and he is disposed according to his own decision. The parties, being at length formed, are separated by a real or imaginary line, and place at some distance behind them, in a heap, their coats, hats, &c. They stand opposite to each other, the object being to make

a successful incursion over the line into the enemy's country, and bring off part of the heap of clothes. It requires both address and swiftness of foot to do so without being taken by the foe. The winning of the game is decided by which party first loses all its men or its property. At Hawick, where this legendary mimicry of old Border warfare peculiarly flourishes, the boys are accustomed to use the following rhyme of defiance:—

King Covenanter, come out if ye daur venture !
Set your feet on Scots grund, English, if ye daur !

THE PRIEST-CAT.

This is a very simple cottage fireside amusement, likewise of the nature of forfeits. A peat-clod is put into the shell of the crook by one who then shuts his eyes. Some one steals it. The other then goes round the circle, trying to discover the thief, and addressing particular individuals in a rhyme—

Ye're fair and leal,
Ye canna steal.
Ye're black and fat,
Ye're the thief o' my priest-cat !

If he guesses wrong, he is in a wadd ; if right, the thief is.

THE CRAW.

The *Craw* is a game admitting of a good deal of lively exercise, and involving no more than a reasonable portion of violence. One boy is selected to be *craw*. He sits down upon the ground ; and he and another boy then lay hold of the two ends of a long strap or twisted handkerchief. The latter also takes into his right hand another hard-twisted handkerchief, called the *cout*, and runs round the *craw*, and with the *cout* defends him against the attacks of the other boys, who, with similar *couts*, use all their agility to get a slap at the *craw*. But, before beginning, the guard of the *craw* must cry out—

Ane, twa, three—my *craw*'s free.

And the first whom he strikes becomes *craw*, the former *craw* then taking the place of guard. When the guard wants a respite, he must cry—

Ane, twa, three—my *craw*'s no free.

PEASE AND GROATS.

This is a game precisely similar to one known in England by the name of *Cat and Mouse*, or *Kiss in the Ring*. It was played in Dumfriesshire fifty years ago by grown lads and lasses as well as children. For instance, the whole of the young people assembled at a rustic wedding—perhaps a hundred in number—would be ready to fall a-playing it on the green. They first joined hands in a ring, standing at the utmost possible distance from each other. One person, appointed to the office by acclamation, then came lounging up, and walked with apparent carelessness along the outside of the ring, with his right hand in his pocket, saying half to himself—

There's pease and groats in my coat pouch,
 They'll no come out this hour yet,
 No this half,
 No this half,
 No this hale half hour yet.

And this he would repeat with the same air of affected carelessness, till he saw a proper opportunity, when he would suddenly cry, 'But now they're out,' and at the same instant touch some particular person, immediately starting off at his utmost speed, threading the circle round and round under the extended hands. It was the duty of the touched person to pursue as quickly as possible, and to follow him through precisely the same threadings, however wide or close these might be. If the pursued party was overtaken, he had to deposit a wadd, and begin the game anew in the same style. If the pursuer failed in catching the other, or went through a wrong threading, or missed one, he in like manner forfeited a wadd, and had to take the place of the former party. The loosing of the wadds followed in the usual manner, to the excitement of an infinite deal of mirth. One, to recover his wadd, would be allowed to choose between obeying three commands, or answering three questions—such commands as, 'Go and kiss auld Auntie Grizzy;' and such questions as—'If you were placed between Sally Gibson and Mary Morison [two noted belles of the district], to which hand would you turn?' In England, the game is occasionally played, even yet, by an

equal number of both sexes; it being necessary that a boy should touch a girl, and a girl a boy. When either is brought to a forfeit, it is paid by their going into the middle of the ring, and there kissing each other; but such games, and the correct habits which admitted of their unrestrained exercise, are fast disappearing. Blest days of innocence and simplicity, when will ye return!

GLED WYLIE.

This is a game much played at country schools in the south-west province of Scotland.

One of the biggest of the boys steals away from his comrades, in an angry-like mood, to some dike or sequestered nook, and there begins to work as if putting a pot upon a fire. The others seem alarmed at his manner, and gather round him, when the following dialogue takes place:—

They say first to him—

‘What are ye for wi’ the pot, goodman?
 Say what are ye for wi’ the pot?
 We dinna like to see ye, goodman,
 Sae thrang about this spot.
 We dinna like ye ava, goodman,
 We dinna like ye ava;
 Are ye gaun to grow a gled,* goodman,
 And our necks draw and thraw?’

He answers—

‘Your minnie, burdies, ye maun lea’,
 Ten to my nocket† I maun ha’e,
 Ten to my e’enshanks,‡ and or I gae lie,
 I’ll lay twa dizzen o’ ye by.’

The mother then rejoins—

‘Try’t then, try’t then, do what ye can,
 Maybe ye maun toomer sleep the night, goodman.
 Try’t then, try’t then, Gled-Wylie frae the heuch,
 I’m no sae saft, Gled-Wylie, ye’ll find me bauld and teuch.’

After these rhymes are said, the chickens cling to the mother all in a string. She fronts the flock, and does all she can to keep the kite from her brood; but often he

* A kite.

† Lunch.

‡ An evening meal.

breaks the row, and catches his prey. Such is the sport of *Gled-Wylie*.*

THE MERRY-MA-TANZIE.

The games of female children in Scotland are very pretty, and have often given delight to adult witnesses. They are in general of a dramatic, or perhaps rather operatic, character. In some instances the girls form themselves into two, three, or four parties, representing characters, such as a mother, father, daughter, and her suitors; and it does not seem to be regarded as any breach of propriety or of the unities that five or six individuals should come forward in one character. This admits the more into the pleasures of the game, and as they sing in chorus, and in the singular number, the *persona* is not observable to be mismanaged by its numerous representatives. There is a strain of something like romance both in the incidents and language of some of these games, which it is difficult to reconcile with the idea of their being direct productions of the childish intellect. A somewhat more fanciful antiquary than the present editor, might suppose them to be, at the least, degenerate descendants of some masque-like plays which in former times regaled grown children. Usually, the versified parts are sung to airs of considerable beauty.

The *Merry-ma-tanzie* is one of the most universally prevalent of these pretty games. It may be remarked, in the first place, that this apparently unmeaning term is probably a corruption of Merry-May-dance, having been perhaps a sport practised in the festivities of the 1st of May in former times. According to the practice of the Upper Ward of Lanarkshire, a number of girls join hands in a circle, round one of their number, who acts as a kind of mistress of the ceremonies. The circle moves slowly round the central lady, observing time with their feet, and singing to a pleasing air—

Here we go the jingo-ring,
The jingo-ring, the jingo-ring,
Here we go the jingo-ring,
About the merry-ma-tanzie.

* Mactaggart's Gallovidian Encyclopædia.

At the end of the first line of the next verse, they curtsey to the girl in the inside, who returns the compliment—

Twice about, and then we fa',
 Then we fa', then we fa' ;
 Twice about, and then we fa',
 About the merry-ma-tanzie.

The lady of the ring then selects a girl from the circle, of whom she asks her sweetheart's name, which is imparted in a whisper ; upon which she sings to those in the circle (they dancing round as before)—

Guess ye wha's the young goodman,
 The young goodman, the young goodman ;
 Guess ye wha's the young goodman,
 About the merry-ma-tanzie ?

Those in the circle reply by some approving or depreciatory words, as may be prompted by the whim of the moment—such as—

Honey is sweet, and so is he,
 So is he, so is he ;
 Honey is sweet, and so is he,
 About the merry-ma-tanzie.

Or—

Apples are sour, and so is he,
 So is he, so is he ;
 Apples are sour, and so is he,
 About the merry-ma-tanzie.

The marriage, however, is finally concluded upon and effected, as indicated by the next stanza—

He's married wi' a gay gold ring,
 A gay gold ring, a gay gold ring ;
 He's married wi' a gay gold ring,
 About the merry-ma-tanzie.

A gay gold ring's a cankerous thing,
 A cankerous thing, a cankerous thing ;
 A gay gold ring's a cankerous thing,
 About the merry-ma-tanzie.

At the end of the first line of the next verse, all go for a moment separate, and each performs a *pirouette*, clapping her hands above her head—

Now they're married, I wish them joy,
 I wish them joy, I wish them joy ;
 Now they're married, I wish them joy,
 About the merry-ma-tanzie.

Father and mother they must obey,
 Must obey, must obey ;
 Father and mother they must obey,
 About the merry-ma-tanzie.

Loving each other like sister and brother,
 Sister and brother, sister and brother ;
 Loving each other like sister and brother,
 About the merry-ma-tanzie.

We pray this couple may kiss together,
 Kiss together, kiss together ;
 We pray this couple may kiss together,
 About the merry-ma-tanzie.*

Another form of this game is only a kind of dance, in which the girls first join hands in a circle, and sing while moving round, to the tune of *Nancy Dawson*—

Here we go round the mulberry bush,
 The mulberry bush, the mulberry bush ;
 Here we go round the mulberry bush,
 And round the merry-ma-tanzie.

* Mr Carleton, in his *Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry*, causes one of his characters to describe the amusements at a wake, amongst which is the following :—There's another game they call the *Silly Ould Man*, that's played this way : A ring of the boys and girls is made on the flure, boy and girl about, holding one another by the hands ; well and good. A young fellow gets into the middle of the ring as 'the silly ould man.' There he stands, looking at all the girls to choose a wife ; and in the manetime the youngsters of the ring sing out—

' Here's a silly ould man that lies all alone,
 That lies all alone,
 That lies all alone ;
 Here's a silly ould man that lies all alone,
 He wants a wife, and he can get none.'

When the boys and girls sing this, the silly ould man must choose a wife from some of the colleens belonging to the ring. Having made choice of her, she goes into the ring along with him, and they all sing out—

' Now, young couple, you're married together,
 You're married together,
 You're married together ;
 You must obey your father and mother,
 And love one another like sister and brother—
 I pray, young couple, you'll kiss together !'

Stopping short, with a curtsey at the conclusion, and dis-joining hands, they then begin, with skirts held daintily up behind, to walk singly along, singing—

This is the way the ladies walk,
The ladies walk, the ladies walk ;
This is the way the ladies walk,
And round the merry-ma-tanzie.

At the last line they reunite, and again wheel round in a ring, singing, as before—

Here we go round the mulberry bush, &c.

After which, they perhaps simulate the walk of gentlemen, the chief feature of which is length of stride, concluding with the ring dance as before. Probably the next movement may be—

This is the way they wash the clothes,
Wash the clothes, wash the clothes ;
This is the way they wash the clothes,
And round the merry-ma-tanzie.

After which there is, as usual, the ring dance. They then represent ironing clothes, baking bread, washing the house, and a number of other familiar proceedings.

The following is a fragment of this little ballet, as practised at Kilbarchan, in Renfrewshire :—

She synes the dishes three times a-day,
Three times a-day, three times a-day ;
She synes the dishes three times a-day,
Come alang wi' the merry-ma-tanzie.

She bakes the scones three times a-day,
Three times a-day, three times a-day ;
She bakes the scones three times a-day,
Come alang wi' the merry-ma-tanzie.

She ranges the stules three times a-day,
Three times a-day, three times a-day ;
She ranges the stules three times a-day,
Come alang wi' the merry-ma-tanzie.

LADY QUEEN ANN.

This is a game in which a ball is used. The following rhyme accompanies it :—

Lady Queen Ann she sits in her stand,
And a pair of green gloves upon her hand,

As white as a lily, as fair as a swan,
 The fairest lady in a' the land ;
 Come smell my lily, come smell my rose,
 Which of my maidens do you choose ?
 I choose you one, and I choose you all,
 And I pray, Miss [Jane], yield up the ball.
 The ball is mine, and none of yours,
 Go to the wood and gather flowers.
 Cats and kittlins bide within,
 But we young ladies walk out and in.

THE WIDOW OF BABYLON.

The ritual of this game is nearly the same as that of the Merry-ma-tanzie; but the words are varied. The girls in the ring sing as follows:—

Here's a poor widow from Babylon,
 With six poor children all alone ;
 One can bake, and one can brew,
 One can shape, and one can sew,
 One can sit at the fire and spin,
 One can bake a cake for the king ;
 Come choose you east, come choose you west,
 Come choose the one that you love best.

The girl in the middle chooses a girl from the ring, naming her, and singing—

I choose the fairest that I do see,
 [Jeanie Hamilton], ye'll come to me.

The girl chosen enters the ring, and imparts her sweetheart's name, when those in the ring sing—

Now they're married, I wish them joy,
 Every year a girl or boy ;
 Loving each other like sister and brother,
 I pray this couple may kiss together.

Here the two girls within the ring kiss each other. The girl who first occupied the circle then joins the ring, while the girl who came in last enacts the part of mistress; and so on, till all have had their turn.

A COURTSHIP DANCE.

Another of these dances is accompanied by verses bearing a resemblance to some which have been set down as connected with a fireside amusement—

Early and fairly the moon shines above,
 A' the lads in our town are dying for love,
 Especially [Jamie Anderson], for he's the youngest man,
 He courts [Helen Simpson] as fast as he can.
 He kisses her, he claps her, he ca's her his dear ;
 And they're to be married before the next year.
 Oh ! oh ! [Helen], don't you be cross,
 For you're to be married on a white horse.
 [Helen Simpson] lies sick,
 Guess ye what'll mend her ?
 Twenty kisses in a clout,
 Which [Jamie Anderson] sends her.
 Half an ounce o' green tea,
 A penny worth of pepper,
 Take ye that, my bonny dear,
 And I hope you'll soon be better.

HINKUMBOOBY.

The party form a circle, taking hold of each other's hands.
 One sings, and the rest join, to the tune of *Lullibullero*—

Fal de ral la, fal de ral la :

while doing so, they move a little sideways, and back again,
 beating the time (which is slow) with their feet. As soon
 as the line is concluded, each claps his hand and wheels
 grotesquely round, singing at the same moment the second
 line of the verse—

Hinkumbooby, round about.

Then they sing, with the appropriate gesture—that is,
 throwing their right hand into the circle and the left out—

Right hands in, and left hands out,

still beating the time ; then add as before, while wheeling
 round, with a clap of the hands—

Hinkumbooby, round about ;

Fal de ral la, fal de ral la,

[*Moving sideways as before, hand in hand.*

Hinkumbooby, round about.

[*Wheeling round as before, with a clap of the
 hand.*

Left hands in, and right hands out,

Hinkumbooby, round about ;

Fal de ral la, fal de ral la,

Hinkumbooby, round about.

Right foot in, and left foot out,
 [*Right foot set into the circle.*]
 Hinkumbooby, round about ;
 Fal de ral la, fal de ral la,
 Hinkumbooby, round about.

Left foot in, and right foot out,
 Hinkumbooby, round about ;
 Fal de ral la, &c.

Heads in, and backs out,
 [*Heads thrust into the circle.*]
 Hinkumbooby, round about ;
 Fal de ral la, &c.

Backs in, and heads out,
 [*Here an inclination of the person, somewhat grotesque.*]
 Hinkumbooby, round about ;
 Fal de ral la, &c.

A' feet in, and nae feet out,
 [*On this occasion all sit down, with their feet stretched into the centre of the ring.**]
 Hinkumbooby, round about ;
 Fal de ral la, &c.

Shake hands a', shake hands a',
 [*This explains itself.*]
 Hinkumbooby, round about ;
 Fal de ral la, &c.

Good night a', good night a',
 [*The boys bowing and the misses curtseying in an affected formal manner.*]
 Hinkumbooby, round about ;
 Fal de ral la, &c.

CURCUDDIE.

This is a grotesque kind of dance, performed in a shortened posture, sitting on one's hams, with arms a-kimbo, the dancers forming a circle of independent figures. It always excites a hearty laugh among the senior bystanders ; but, ridiculous as it is, it gives occasion for the display of some spirit and agility, as well as skill, there being always an

* It is a great point to sit down and rise up promptly enough to be ready for the wheel round.

inclination to topple over. Each performer sings the following verse:—

Will ye gang to the lea, Curcuddie,
 And join your plack wi' me, Curcuddie?
 I lookit about and I saw naebody,
 And linkit awa' my lane, Curcuddie.

The game is called *Harry Hurcheon* in the north of Scotland.

A DIS, A DIS, A GREEN GRASS.

A number of young girls stand in a row, from which two retire, and again approach hand in hand, singing—

A dis, a dis, a green grass,
 A dis, a dis, a dis;
 Come all ye pretty fair maids,
 And dance along with us.

For we are going a-roving,
 A-roving in this land;
 We'll take this pretty fair maid,
 We'll take her by the hand.

They select a girl from the group, and take her by the hand, singing to her—

Ye shall get a duke, my dear,
 And ye shall get a drake;*
 And ye shall get a young prince—
 A young prince for your sake.

And if this young prince chance to die,
 Ye shall get another;
 The bells will ring, and the birds will sing,
 And we'll all clap hands together.

Then there is a chorus and clapping of hands. The same thing is renewed, till the whole of the girls have got dukes, drakes, and princes.

JANET JO.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ—*A Father, Mother, Janet, and a Lover.*

Janet lies on her back behind the scenes. The father and mother stand up to receive the visits of the lover, who comes forward singing, to a very pretty air—

* For rhyme's sake, no doubt.

I'm come to court Janet jo,
 Janet jo, Janet jo ;
 I'm come to court Janet jo—
 How's she the day ?

Mother and Father—

She's up the stair washin',
 Washin', washin' ;
 She's up the stair washin',
 Ye canna see her the day.

The lover retires, and again advances with the same announcement of his object and purposes, to which he receives similar evasive answers from Janet's parents, who successively represent her as bleaching, drying, and ironing clothes. At last they say—

Janet jo's dead and gane,
 Dead and gane, dead and gane ;
 Janet jo's dead and gane,
 She'll never come hame !

She is then carried off to be buried, the lover and the rest weeping. She sometimes revives (to their great joy), and sometimes not, *ad libitum*—that is, as Janet herself chooses.

The above is the Edinburgh version. A south-country one differs a little, representing Janet as at the well instead of up stairs, and afterwards at the mill, &c. A Glasgow edition gives the whole in good west-country prose, and the lover begins—'I'm come to court your dochter, *Kate Mackleister* !'

In the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright, *Janet Jo* is a dramatic entertainment amongst young rustics. Suppose a party has met in a harvest or winter evening round a good peat fire, and it is resolved to have Janet Jo performed. Two undertake to personate a goodman and a goodwife ; the rest a family of marriageable daughters. One of the lads, the best singer of the party, retires, and equips himself in a dress proper for representing an old bachelor in search of a wife. He comes in, bonnet in hand, bowing, and sings—

Guid e'en to ye, maidens a',
 Maidens a', maidens a',
 Guid e'en to ye, maidens a',
 Be ye or no.

I'm come to court Janet jo,
 Janet jo, Janet jo ;
 I'm come to court Janet jo,
 Janet, my jo.

Goodwife sings—

What'll ye gi'e for Janet jo,
 Janet jo, Janet jo ?
 What'll ye gi'e for Janet jo,
 Janet, my jo ?

Wooper—

I'll gi'e ye a peck o' siller,
 A peck o' siller, peck o' siller ;
 I'll gi'e ye a peck o' siller,
 For Janet, my jo.

Goodwife says—

Gae awa, ye auld carle !

Then sings—

Ye'se never get Janet jo,
 Janet jo, Janet jo ;
 Ye'se never get Janet jo,
 Janet, my jo.

The wooer hereupon retires, singing a verse expressive of mortification, but soon re-enters with a reassured air, singing—

I'll gi'e ye a peck o' gowd,
 A peck o' gowd, peck o' gowd ;
 I'll gi'e ye a peck o' gowd,
 For Janet, my jo.

The matron gives him a rebuff as before, and he again retires discomfited, and again enters, singing an offer of 'twa pecks o' gowd,' which, however, is also refused. At his next entry, he offers three pecks o' gowd, at which the goodwife brightens up, and sings—

Come ben beside Janet jo,
 Janet jo, Janet jo ;
 Ye're welcome to Janet jo,
 Janet, my jo.

The suitor then advances gaily to his sweetheart, and the affair ends in a scramble for kisses.

WE ARE THREE BRETHERN COME FROM SPAIN.

The *dramatis personæ* form themselves in two parties, one representing a courtly dame and her daughters, the other the suitors of the daughters. The last party, moving backwards and forwards, with their arms entwined, approach and recede from the mother party, which is stationary, singing to a very sweet air—

We are three brethren come from Spain,
All in French garlands ;
We are come to court your daughter Jean,
And adieu to you, my darlings.

They recede, while the mother replies—

My daughter Jean she is too young,
All in French garlands ;
She cannot bide your flattering tongue,
And adieu to you, my darlings.

The suitors again advance, rejoining—

Be she young, or be she old,
All in French garlands ;
It's for a bride she must be sold,
And adieu to you, my darlings.

The mother still refuses her consent—

A bride, a bride she shall not be,
All in French garlands ;
Till she go through this world with me,
And adieu to you, my darlings.

[There is here a hiatus, the reply of the lovers being wanting.] The mother at length relenting, says—

Come back, come back, you courteous knights,
All in French garlands ;
Clear up your spurs, and make them bright,
And adieu to you, my darlings.

[Another hiatus.] The mother offers a choice of her daughters in the next verse—

Smell my lilies, smell my roses,
All in French garlands ;
Which of my maidens do you choose ?
And adieu to you, my darlings.

The lover now becomes fastidious in proportion to his good fortune, and affects to scruple in his choice—

Are all your daughters safe and sound ?
All in French garlands ;
Are all your daughters safe and sound ?
And adieu to you, my darlings.

But it would appear that he is quite assured by the answer, and marries the ‘ daughter Jean ’ accordingly, as no further demur is made.

In every pocket a thousand pounds,
All in French garlands ;
On every finger a gay gold ring,
And adieu to you, my darlings.

The game, as it is called, then ends by some little childish trick.
