

## THE BLACK BIRD.

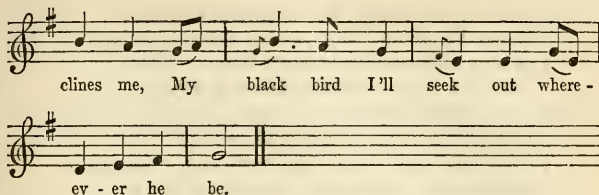
This song, which first appeared in the *Tea-table Miscellany*, is a favourable example of the allegorical poetry under which the Jacobites used to veil their treasonable sentiments. The allegory in this case is curious enough. The *Black Bird* was one of the nicknames of the Chevalier de St George, being suggested by his complexion, which was so excessively dark as to form a striking contrast with the light fair countenance of his unfortunate son Charles. Ramsay, though said to have been a Jacobite, was so extremely cautious, that his admission of such a song into his collection is somewhat surprising; for, though its ostensible meaning be the most innocent in the world, the

allegory is by no means so well managed as to conceal altogether the real meaning, while the decussation of the word blackbird into two words almost entirely neutralises it. It would appear that the black complexion of the personage in question was a matter of notoriety, and was much harped upon by his party; as in a ring, now in the possession of a Jacobite family in Forfarshire, there is a small parcel of his raven locks, with this flattering proverbial inscription: 'The black man's the brauest.'

Up - on a fair morn - ing, for soft re - cre -  
a - tion, I heard a fair la - dy was mak - ing her  
moan, With sigh - ing and sob - bing, and sad la - men -  
ta - tion, Aye say - ing, My black bird most roy - al is  
flown. My thoughts they de - ceive me, re - flec - tions do  
grieve me, And I am o'er - burden'd wi' sad mis - e -  
rie; Yet if death should blind me, as true love in -

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Upon a fair morning, for soft recreation,  
 I heard a fair lady was making her moan,  
 With sighing and sobbing, and sad lamentation,  
 Aye saying, My black bird most royal is flown.  
 My thoughts they deceive me, reflections do grieve me,  
 And I am o'erburden'd wi' sad miserie ;  
 Yet if death should blind me, as true love inclines me,  
 My black bird I'll seek out wherever he be.

Once into fair England my black bird did flourish ;  
 He was the flower that in it did spring ;  
 Prime ladies of honour his person did nourish,  
 Because he was the true son of a king :  
 But since that false fortune, which still is uncertain,  
 Has caused this parting between him and me,  
 His name I'll advance in Spain and in France,  
 And seek out my black bird wherever he be.

The birds of the forest are all met together ;  
 The turtle has chosen to dwell with the dove ;  
 And I am resolved, in foul or fair weather,  
 Once in the spring to seek out my love.  
 He's all my heart's treasure, my joy and my pleasure ;  
 And justly, my love, my heart follows thee,  
 Who art constant and kind, and courageous of mind ;—  
 All bliss on my black bird, wherever he be !.

In England my black bird and I were together,  
Where he was still noble and generous of heart.  
Ah! woe to the time that first he went thither!  
Alas! he was forced from thence to depart!  
In Scotland he's deem'd, and highly esteem'd;  
In England he seemeth a stranger to be;  
Yet his fame shall remain in France and in Spain;—  
All bliss to my black bird, wherever he be!

What if the fowler my black bird has taken!  
Then sighing and sobbing will be all my tune;  
But if he is safe I'll not be forsaken,  
And hope yet to see him in May or in June.  
For him, through the fire, through mud and through mire,  
I'll go; for I love him to such a degree,  
Who is constant and kind, and noble of mind,  
Deserving all blessings, wherever he be!

It is not the ocean can fright me with danger,  
Nor that like a pilgrim I wander forlorn;  
I may meet with friendship from one is a stranger,  
More than of one that in Britain is born.  
I pray Heaven, so spacious, to Britain be gracious,  
Though some there be odious to both him and me.  
Yet joy and renown, and laurels shall crown  
My black bird with honour, wherever he be.

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