

CHILD MAURICE

- A. ‘Childe Maurice,’ Percy MS., p. 346; Hales and Furnivall, II, 502.

B. ‘Child Noryce,’ Motherwell’s MS., p. 255; Motherwell’s Minstrelsy, p. 282.

C. ‘Bob Norice,’ Motherwell’s MS., p. 510.

D. ‘Gill Morice,’ Motherwell’s MS., p. 480.
- E. ‘Chield Morice,’ Motherwell’s MS., p. 165; Motherwell’s Minstrelsy, p. 269.

F. a. ‘Gil Morrice,’ Percy’s Reliques, III, 93, 1765.  
b. Letter of T. Gray, June, 1757 (?).

G. Jamieson’s Popular Ballads, I, 18, three stanzas; Jamieson, in The Scots Magazine, 1803, LXV, 698, two stanzas.

A WAS printed from the Percy manuscript by Jamieson, in his Popular Ballads, I, 8. Of B Motherwell says, 1827 : “ By testimony of a most unexceptionable description, but which it would be tedious here to detail, the editor can distinctly trace this ballad as existing in its present shape at least a century ago.”

In his preface to the copy of the ballad in the Reliques of Ancient Poetry (F), Percy remarks: “ The following piece has lately run through two editions in Scotland, the second printed at Glasgow in 1755, 8vo. Prefixed to them both is an advertisement, setting forth that the preservation of this poem was owing ‘ to a lady, who favored the printers with a copy as it was carefully collected from the mouths of old women and nurses ;’ and ‘ any reader that can render it more correct or complete ’ is desired to oblige the public with such

improvements. In consequence of this advertisement sixteen additional verses have been produced and handed about in manuscript, which are here inserted in their proper places.” The copy printed in 1755 \* and earlier had already “ received very considerable modern improvements,” as Percy goes on to say, the most noticeable of which is a conclusion of eight stanzas, in the taste of the middle of the last century. These, as also the four stanzas which had been handed about in manuscript, are omitted from this reprint.

Home’s tragedy of Douglas, produced in Edinburgh in 1756, was founded upon the story of Gil Morice, and the popularity of the play seems to have given vogue to the ballad.† The sophisticated copy passed into recitation, and may very likely have more or less infected those which were repeated from ear-

\* The edition of 1755 is not known now to exist. Mr David Laing showed Motherwell a copy, without place or date, with the title: Gill Morice, An Ancient Scots Poem. The foundation of the tragedy called Douglas, as it is now acted in the Concert-Hall, Canongate. There was no material difference between this edition and that which was reprinted in the Reliques, except that it lacked the four stanzas which Percy introduced. Motherwell’s Minstrelsy, p. 259, note.

In Herd’s MSS, I, 7, II, 70, there are half a dozen more stanzas, from The Weekly Magazine, August 13, 1772, which continue the story still further. My lady flings herself over a craig, my lord seeks death in battle. But, as Sir Walter Scott notes in the margin, these verses are “ formed on the conclusion of Douglas, which tragedy is founded on the

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original ballad.” These stanzas are printed by Jamieson, I, 21.

Mr Macmath has communicated to me an early copy of ‘ Gil Morice,’ without place or date, in conjunction with a parody, entitled The Seven Champions of the Stage, printed in 1757, which satirizes Parson Home’s efforts to get his Agis and his Douglas acted by Garrick. This copy of ‘ Gil Morice ’ might be another edition of that which Mr Laing possessed. Its variations, which are of slight consequence, will be given in the notes to F.

† The name of the heroine in the tragedy of Douglas was originally Lady Barnard, as in the ballad ; it was altered to Lady Randolph when the play was produced in London. Motherwell, p. 257, note.

lier tradition. An old woman (Mrs Thomson, the reciter of E), who was born about the time when the ballad was printed, told Motherwell that she had learned ‘Chield Morice’ in her infancy from her grandmother, but at a later period of her life committed to memory ‘Gil Morice,’ “which began, with young lasses like her, to be a greater favorite and more fashionable than the set which her grandmother and old folks used to sing.”\*

Gray writes to Mason, June, 1757 (?): “I have got the old Scotch ballad on which Douglas was founded; it is divine, and as long as from hence [Cambridge] to Aston.”† He cites the first fifteen lines.

The copy in Smith’s Scottish Minstrel, III, 106, is Herd’s (Percy’s), with omissions and changes. ‘Child Nourice,’ a fragment, in Buchan’s MSS, I, 143, is of recent make.

The name of Barnard, a name, says Aytoun, quite foreign to Scotland, may have been adopted from ‘Little Musgrave.’ There is a marked similarity in the conclusion of the two ballads.

Aytoun, in his compilation, I, 147, 149, rejects the two stanzas, F 13, 14, beginning, “And when he came to broken brigue,” as taken from ‘Lady Maisry.’ These stanzas are the most favorite of all commonplaces,

and belong as much to one ballad as another. They occur in one version or another of ‘Lord Ingram,’ ‘Little Musgrave,’ ‘The Clerk’s Twa Sons,’ etc., and wearisomely often in the ballads in Buchan’s collection.

The popularity of ‘Gil Morice’ since the middle of the last century has caused the story to be localized. The green wood, says Motherwell, was believed to be “the ancient forest of Dundaff, in Stirlingshire, and Lord Barnard’s castle to have occupied a precipitous cliff overhanging the Water of Carron, on the lands of Halbertshire.” Gil Morice, “according to the unvarying traditions of the country, was remarkable for the extreme length and loveliness of his yellow hair.” Motherwell considers that the embellishments of the ballad may have been suggested by these traditions. But why should not these traditions have been derived from the embellished ballad? There had already been nearly four-score years for them to grow up at the date of the publication of his Minstrelsy.

B is translated by Wolff, Halle der Völker, I, 11, Hausschatz, p. 222; F by Loève-Veimars, p. 316, with some retrenchment; Alingham’s copy by Knortz, Lieder u. Romanzen Alt-Englands, No 31.

A

Percy MS., p. 346; Hales and Furnivall, II, 502.

1 CHILDE MAURICE hunted ithe siluer wood,  
He hunted itt round about,  
And noebodye *that* he ffound therin,  
Nor none there was with-out.

2 . . . . .  
And he tooke his siluer combe in his hand,  
To kembe his yellow lockes.

3 He sayes, Come hither, thou little ffoot-page,  
That runneth lowlye by my knee,  
Ffor thou shalt goe to Iohn Stewards wiffe  
And pray her speake with mee.

4 ‘. . . . .  
I, and greete thou doe *that* ladye well,  
Euer soe well ffroe mee.

5 ‘And, as itt ffalls, as many times  
As knotts beene knitt on a kell,

\* Minstrelsy, p. 269, note. Mr Aytoun considers that E is only the copy printed in the middle of the last century purged, in the process of oral transmission, of what was not to the popular taste, “and altered more.” There is no doubt that a copy learned from print may be transformed in this way, but it is certain that old tradition does not come to a stop when a ballad gets into print. Mrs Thomson’s account

of the matter Aytoun does not heed. It is difficult to understand why Aytoun printed the stanzas from Percy’s Reliques, at I, 149 f, 2d ed., except as a simple courtesy to his correspondent.  
† Already cited in The Ballad Minstrelsy of Scotland, Glasgow, 1871, p. 316.

- Or marchant men gone to leeue London,  
Either to buy ware or sell.

6 ‘And, as itt ffalles, as many times  
As any hart can thinke,  
Or schoole-masters are in any schoole-house,  
Writting with pen and inke :  
Ffor if I might, as well as shee may,  
This night I wold with her speake.

7 ‘And heere I send her a mantle of greene,  
As greene as any grasse,  
And bidd her come to the siluer wood,  
To hunt with Child Maurice.

8 ‘And there I send her a ring of gold,  
A ring of precyous stone,  
And bidd her come to the siluer wood,  
Let ffor no kind of man.’

9 One while this litle boy he yode,  
Another while he ran,  
Vntill he came to Iohn Stewards hall,  
I-wis he neuer blan.

10 And of nurture the child had good,  
Hee ran vp hall and bower ffree,  
And when he came to this lady ffaire,  
Sayes, God you saue and see !

11 ‘I am come ffrom Ch[i]ld Maurice,  
A message vnto thee ;  
And Child Maurice, he greetes you well,  
And euer soe well ffrom mee.

12 ‘And, as itt ffalls, as oftentimes  
As knotts beene knitt on a kell,  
Or marchant-men gone to leeue London,  
Either ffor to buy ware or sell.

13 ‘And as oftentimes he greetes you well  
As any hart can thinke,  
Or schoolemasters [are] in any schoole,  
Wryting with pen and inke.

14 ‘And heere he sends a mantle of greene,  
As greene as any grasse,  
And he bidds you come to the siluer wood,  
To hunt with Child Maurice.

15 ‘And heere he sends you a ring of gold,  
A ring of the precyous stone ;
- He prayes you to come to the siluer wood,  
Let ffor no kind of man.’

16 ‘Now peace, now peace, thou litle ffoot-page,  
Ffor Christes sake, I pray thee !  
Ffor if my lord heare one of these words,  
Thou must be hanged hye !’

17 Iohn Steward stood vnder the castle-wall,  
And he wrote the words euerye one,  
. . . . .  
. . . . .

18 And he called vnto his hors-keeper,  
‘Make readye you my steede !’  
I, and soe hee did to his chamberlaine,  
‘Make readye thou my weede !’

19 And he cast a lease vpon his backe,  
And he rode to the siluer wood,  
And there he sought all about,  
About the siluer wood.

20 And there he ffound him Child Maurice  
Sitting vpon a blocke,  
With a siluer combe in his hand,  
Kembing his yellow locke[s.]  
  
\* \* \* \* \*

21 But then stood vp him Child Maurice,  
And sayd these words trulye :  
‘I doe not know your ladye,’ he said,  
‘If *that* I doe her see.’

22 He sayes, How now, how now, Child Mau-  
rice ?  
Alacke, how may this bee ?  
Ffor thou hast sent her loue-tokens,  
More now then two or three.

23 ‘Ffor thou hast sent her a mantle of greene,  
As greene as any grasse,  
And bade her come to the siluer woode,  
To hunt with Child Maurice.

24 ‘And thou [hast] sent her a ring of gold,  
A ring of precyous stone,  
And bade her come to the siluer wood,  
Let ffor noe kind of man.

25 ‘And by my ffaith, now, Child Maurice,  
The tone of vs shall dye !’

- ‘Now be my troth,’ sayd Child Maurice,  
‘And *that* shall not be I.’

26 But hee pulled forth a bright browne sword,  
And dryed itt on the grasse,  
And soe ffast he smote att Iohn Steward,  
I-wisse he neuer [did] rest.

27 Then hee pulled fforth his bright browne  
sword,  
And dryed itt on his sleeue,  
And the ffirst good stroke Iohn Stewart  
stroke,  
Child Maurice head he did cleuee.

28 And he pricked itt on his swords poynt,  
Went singing there beside,  
And he rode till he came to *that* ladye  
ffaire,  
Wheras this ladye lyed.
- 29 And sayes, Dost thou know Child Maurice  
head,  
If *that* thou dost itt see?  
And lapp itt soft, and kisse itt off,  
Ffor thou louedst him better than mee.’

30 But when shee looked on Child Maurice head,  
Shee neuer spake words but three:  
‘I neuer beare no child but one,  
And you haue slaine him trulye.’

31 Sayes, Wicked be my merrymen all,  
I gaue meate, drinke, and clothe!  
But cold they not haue holden me  
When I was in all *that* wrath!

32 ‘Ffor I haue slaine one of the curteousest  
*knights*  
*That* euer bestrode a steed,  
Soe haue I done one [of] the fairest ladyes  
*That* euer ware womans weede!’

B

Motherwell’s MS., p. 255; Motherwell’s Minstrelsy, p. 282. From the singing of Widow McCormick, Paisley, January 19, 1825. Learned by her of an old woman in Dumbarton: Motherwell’s Note Book, fol. 4.

- 1 CHILD NORRYCE is a clever young man,  
He wavers wi the wind;  
His horse was silver-shod before,  
With the beaten gold behind.

2 He called to his little man John,  
Saying, You don’t see what I see;  
For O yonder I see the very first woman  
That ever loved me.

3 ‘Here is a glove, a glove,’ he said,  
‘Lined with the silver grey;  
You may tell her to come to the merry green-  
wood,  
To speak to Child Nory.

4 ‘Here is a ring, a ring,’ he says,  
‘It’s all gold but the stane;  
You may tell her to come to the merry green-  
wood,  
And ask the leave o nane.’
- 5 ‘So well do I love your errand, my master,  
But far better do I love my life;  
O would ye have me go to Lord Barnard’s cas-  
tle,  
To betray away his wife?’

6 ‘O don’t I give you meat,’ he says,  
‘And don’t I pay you fee?  
How dare you stop my errand?’ he says;  
‘My orders you must obey.’

7 O when he came to Lord Bernard’s castle,  
He tinkled at the ring;  
Who was as ready as Lord Barnard himself  
To let this little boy in?

8 ‘Here is a glove, a glove,’ he says,  
‘Lined with the silver grey;  
You are bidden to come to the merry green-  
wood,  
To speak to Child Nory.

9 ‘Here is a ring, a ring,’ he says,  
‘It’s all gold but the stane;  
You are bidden to come to the merry green-  
wood,  
And ask the leave o nane.’

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- 10 Lord Barnard he was standing by,  
And an angry man was he :  
‘ O little did I think there was a lord in the  
world  
My lady loved but me ! ’

11 O he dressed himself in the holland smock,  
And garments that was gay,  
And he is away to the merry green-wood,  
To speak to Child Noryce.

12 Child Noryce sits on yonder tree,  
He whistles and he sings :  
‘ O wae be to me,’ says Child Noryce,  
‘ Yonder my mother comes ! ’

13 Child Noryce he came off the tree,  
His mother to take off the horse :  
‘ Och alace, alace,’ says Child Noryce,  
‘ My mother was neer so gross ! ’

14 Lord Barnard he had a little small sword,  
That hung low down by his knee ;
- He cut the head off Child Noryce,  
And put the body on a tree.

15 And when he came home to his castell,  
And to his ladie’s hall,  
He threw the head into her lap,  
Saying, Lady, there ’s a ball !

16 She turned up the bloody head,  
She kissed it frae cheek to chin :  
‘ Far better do I love this bloody head  
Than all my royal kin.

17 ‘ When I was in my father’s castel,  
In my virginity,  
There came a lord into the North,  
Gat Child Noryce with me.’

18 ‘ O wae be to thee, Lady Margaret,’ he sayd,  
‘ And an ill death may you die ;  
For if you had told me he was your son,  
He had neer been slain by me.’

C

Motherwell’s MS., p. 510, from the singing of Mrs Storie, wife of William Storie, laborer, Lochwinnoch. A song of Mrs Storie’s grandmother.

- 1 BOB NORICE is to the grein-wud gane,  
He is awa wi the wind ;  
His horse is siller-shod afore,  
In the shynand gowd ahind.

2 He said unto his wee boy John,  
I sie what ye dinna sie ;  
I see the [first] woman that I eer luvit,  
Or ever luvit me.

3 ‘ Gae tak to hir this pair o gluvis,  
They ’re o the siller-gray,  
And tell her to cum to the merrie grein-wud  
An speik to Bob Norice.

4 ‘ Gae tak to her this gay gowd ring,  
And it ’s aw gowd but the stane,  
And tell her to cum to the merrie grein-wud,  
And ask the leive o nane.

5 ‘ Gae tak to her this braw manteil,  
It ’s a’ silk but the sleive,
- And tell her to cum to the merrie green-wud,  
And ax nae bauld Barnet’s leive.’

6 ‘ I daurna gang to Lord Barnet’s castel,  
I daurna gang for my lyfe;  
I daurna gang to Lord Barnet’s castell,  
To twyne him o his wife.’

7 ‘ Do I nae pay you gowd ? ’ he said,  
‘ Do I nae pay you fee ?  
How daur you stand my bidding, Sir,  
Whan I bid you to flee ? ’

8 ‘ Gif I maun gang to Lord Barnet’s castel,  
Sae sair agane my will,  
I vow a vow, and I do protest,  
It sall be dune for ill.’

9 But whan he came to Lord Barnet’s castel  
He tinklet at the ring ;  
Tha war nane sae ready as Lord Barnet himsell  
To let the wee calland in.

10 ‘ What news, what news, my bonnie wee boy ?  
What news hae ye to me ? ’  
‘ Nae news, nae news, Lord Barnet,’ he said,  
‘ But your ladie I fain would see.



- 11 ‘Here is a pair o gloves to her,  
Thay’r o the silver gray ;  
And tell her to cum to the merrie green-wud,  
And speik to Bob Norice.

12 ‘Here is a gay gowd ring to her,  
It’s aw gowd but the stane ;  
And she maun cum to the merrie green-wud,  
And speir the leive o nane.

13 ‘Here is a gay manteil to her,  
It’s aw silk but the sleive ;  
And she maun cum to the merrie grein-wud,  
And ask not bauld Barnet’s leive.’

14 Then out bespack the yellow nurse,  
Wi the babie on her knee,  
Sayand, Gif thay be cum frae Bob Norice,  
They are welcum to me.

15 ‘O haud your tung, ye yellow nurse,  
Aloud an I heir ye lie ;  
For they’re to Lord Barnet’s lady,  
I trew that this be she.’

16 Lord Barnet’s to a dressing-room,  
And buskt him in woman’s array,  
And he’s awa to the merrie green-wud,  
To speik to Bob Norrice.

17 Bob Norrice he sits on a tree,  
He is whissland and singand ;
- Says, Merrie, merrie may my hert be,  
I see my mither cumand.

18 Bob Norice he cam down frae the trie,  
To help his mother to licht fra her horss ;  
‘Och alace, alace,’ says Bob Norice,  
‘My mither was neer sae gross !’

19 Lord Barnet had a not-brown sword,  
That hung down by his knee,  
And he has cut Bob Norice heid  
Aff frae his fair bodie.

20 He tuke the bluidy head in his hand,  
And he brocht it to the ha,  
And flang it into his lady’s lap,  
Sayand, Lady, there is a ba !

21 She took the bluidy heid in her hand,  
And kisst it frae cheik to chin,  
Sayand, Better I lyke that weil faurit face  
Nor aw my royal kin.

22 ‘Whan I was in my father’s bour,  
A’ in my dignity,  
An Englis lord a visit came,  
Gat Bob Norice wi me.’

23 Then out bespak Lord Barnet syne,  
And a wae, wae man was he,  
Sayand, Gif I had kent he was your son,  
He wuld neer been killit be me.

D

Motherwell’s MS., p. 480, from the recitation of Widow Michael, a very old woman, as learned by her in Banffshire seventy years before. August, 1826.

- 1 GILL MORICE stood in stable-door,  
With red gold shined his weed ;  
A bonnie boy him behind,  
Dressing a milk-white steed.

2 ‘Woe’s me for you, maister,  
Your name it waxes wide ;  
It is not for your rich, rich robes,  
Nor for your meikle pride,  
But all is for yon lord’s ladie,  
She lives on Ithan side.’
- 3 ‘Here’s to thee, my bonnie wee boy,  
That I pay meat and fee ;  
You will run on to Ithan side  
An errand unto me.’

4 ‘If ye gar me that errand run,  
Sae sair against my will,  
I’ll make a vow, and keep it true,  
I’ll do your errand ill.’

5 ‘I fear nae ill of thee, boy,  
I fear nae ill of thee ;  
I fearna ill of my bonnie boy,  
My sister’s son are ye.

6 ‘Ye’ll tak here this green manteel,  
It’s lined with the frieze ;

- Ye 'll bid her come to gude green-wood,  
To talk with Gill Morice.

7 'Ye 'll tak here this sark o silk,  
Her ain hand sewed the sleeve ;  
Ye 'll bid her come to gude green-wood,  
And ask not Burnard's leave.'

8 When he gade to Ithan side  
They were hailing at the ba,  
And four and twenty gay ladies  
They lookd ower castle wa.

9 'God mak you safe, you ladies all,  
God mak you safe and sure ;  
But Burnard's lady amang you all,  
My errand is to her.

10 'Ye 'll tak here this green manteel,  
It 's a' lined wi the frieze ;  
Ye 're bidden come to gude green-wood  
And speak to Gill Morice.

11 'Ye 'll tak here this sark of silk,  
Your ain hand sewed the sleeve ;  
Ye 're bidden come to gude green-wood,  
And ask not Burnard's leave.'

12 Up it stood the little nurice,  
She winked with her ee :  
'Welcome, welcome, bonnie boy,  
With luv-tidings to me.

13 'Ye lie, ye lie, ye false nurice,  
Sae loud 's I hear ye lie ;  
It 's to the lady of the house,  
I 'm sure ye are not shee.'

14 Then out and spoke him bold Burnard,  
Behind the door stood he :  
'I 'll go unto gude green-wood,  
And see what he may be.

15 'Come, bring to me the gowns of silk,  
Your petticoats so small,  
And I 'll go on to gude green-wood,  
I 'll try with him a fall.'

16 Gill Morice stood in gude green-wood,  
He whistled and he sang :  
'I think I see the woman come  
That I have loved lang.'
- 17 'What now, what now, ye Gill Morice,  
What now, and how do ye ?  
How lang hae ye my lady luv'd ?  
This day come tell to me.'

18 'First when I your lady loved,  
In green-wood amang the thyme,  
I wot she was my first fair love  
Or ever she was thine.

19 'First when I your lady loved,  
In green-wood amang the flouirs,  
I wot she was my first fair love  
Or ever she was yours.'

20 He 's taen out a lang, lang brand  
That he was used to wear,  
And he 's taen aff Gill Morice head,  
And put it on a spear :  
The soberest boy in a' the court  
Gill Morice head did bear.

21 He 's put it in a braid basin,  
And brocht it in the ha,  
And laid it in his lady's lap ;  
Said, Lady, tak a ba !

22 'Play ye, play ye, my lady,' he said,  
'Play ye frae ha to bower ;  
Play ye wi Gill Morice head,  
He was your paramour.'

23 'He was not my paramour,  
He was my son indeed ;  
I got him in my mother's bower,  
And in my maiden-weed.

24 'I got him in my mother's bower,  
Wi meikle sin and shame ;  
I brocht him up in good green-wood,  
Got mony a shower o rain.

25 'But I will kiss his bluidy head,  
And I will clap his chin ;  
I 'll make a vow, and keep it true,  
I 'll never kiss man again.

26 'Oftimes I by his cradle sat,  
And fond to see him sleep ;  
But I may walk about his grave,  
The saut tears for to weep.'

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- 27 ‘Bring cods, bring cods to my ladye,  
Her heart is full of wae ;’  
‘None of your cods, Burnet,’ she says,  
‘But lay me on the strae.’

28 ‘Pox on you, my lady fair,  
That wudna telled it me ;  
If I had known he was your son,  
He had not been slain by me ;  
And for ae penny ye wud hae gien  
I wud hae gien him three.’
- 29 ‘Keep weel your land, Burnet,’ she said,  
‘Your land and white monie ;  
There’s land eneuch in Norroway  
Lies heirless I wot the day.’

30 The one was killed in the mornin air,  
His mother died at een,  
And or the mornin bells was rung  
The threesome were a’ gane.

E

Motherwell’s MS., p. 165; Motherwell’s Minstrelsy, p. 269.  
From the recitation of Mrs Thomson, Kilbarchan, seventy  
years of age, as learned from her mother at the Water of  
Leven, Dumbarton, when she was ten years old. March, 1825.

- 1 CHIELD MORRICE was an earl’s son,  
His name it waxed wide ;  
It was nae for his parentage,  
Nor yet his meikle pride,  
But it was for a lady gay,  
That lived on Carron side.

2 ‘O Willie, my man, my errand gang,  
And you maun rin wi speed ;  
When other boys run on their feet,  
On horseback ye shall ride.

3 ‘O master dear, I love you weel,  
And I love you as my life,  
But I will not go to Lord Barnard’s ha,  
For to tryst forth his wife.

4 ‘For the baron he’s a man of might,  
He neer could bide a taunt,  
And ye shall see or it be late  
How meikle ye’ll hae to vaunt.’

5 ‘O you must rin my errand, Willie,  
And you must rin wi speed,  
And if you don’t obey my high command  
I’ll gar your body bleed.

6 ‘And here it is a gay manteel,  
It’s a’ gowd but the hem ;  
Bid her come speak to Chield Morice,  
Bring naebody but her lane.

7 ‘And here it is a holland smock,  
Her own hand sewed the sleeve ;
- Bid her come speak to Chield Morice,  
Ask not the baron’s leave.’

8 ‘Since I must run this errand for you,  
So sore against my will,  
I’ve made a vow, and I’ll keep it true,  
It shall be done for ill.’

9 For he did not ask the porter’s leave,  
Tho he stood at the gate,  
But straight he ran to the big hall,  
Where great folk sat at meat.

10 ‘Good hallow, gentle sir and dame,  
My errand canna wait ;  
Dame, ye must go speak to Chield Morice,  
Before it be too late.

11 ‘And here it is a gay manteel,  
It’s a’ goud but the hem ;  
Ye must come speak to Child Morice,  
Bring nae body but your lane.

12 ‘And here it is a holland smock,  
Your ain hand sewed the sleeve ;  
You must come speak to Chield Morice,  
Ask not the baron’s leave.’

13 O aye she stamped wi her foot,  
And winked wi her ee,  
But a’ that she could say or do,  
Forbidden he wad na be.

14 ‘It’s surely to my bouir-woman,  
It canna be to me :’  
‘I brocht it to Lord Barnard’s lady,  
And I trow that thou art she.’

15 Out then spak the wylie nurse,  
Wi the bairn just on her knee :



- ‘If this be come fra Chield Morice,  
It’s dear welcome to me.’

16 ‘Thou lies, thou lies, thou wylie nurse,  
Sae loud’s I hear thee lie;  
I brought it to Lord Barnard’s lady,  
And I trow thou binna she.’

17 Then up and rose him the bold baron,  
And an angry man was he;  
He took the table wi his foot,  
And keppt it wi his knee,  
Till silver cup and ezar dish  
In flinders they did flee.

18 ‘Go bring me one of thy cleeding,  
That hinges upon the pin,  
And I’ll awa to the good green-wood,  
And crack wi your leman.’

19 ‘I would have you stay at home, Lord Bar-  
nard,  
I would have you stay at home;  
Never wyte a man for violence douce  
That never thought you wrong.’

20 And when he to the green-wood went,  
No body saw he there  
But Chield Morice, on a milk-white steed,  
Combing down his yellow hair.

21 Chield Morice sat in the gay green-wood,  
He whistled and he sang:  
‘O what means a’ thir folks coming?  
My mother tarries lang.’

22 ‘No wonder, no wonder, Chield Morice,’ he  
said,  
‘My lady loved thee weel;  
For the whitest bit of my body  
Is blacker than thy heel.

23 ‘But nevertheless now, Chield Morice,  
For a’ thy gay beautie,  
O nevertheless, Chield Morice,  
Thy head shall go with me.’

24 He had a rapier by his side,  
Hung low down by his knee;  
He struck Chield Morrice on the neck,  
Till aff his head did flee.
- 25 Then he’s taen up that bloody head,  
And stuck it on a spear,  
And the meanest man in a’ his train  
Gat Chield Morice head to bear.

26 The lady looked owre the castle-wa,  
Wi meikle dool and down,  
And there she saw Chield Morice head,  
Coming trailing to the town.

27 But he’s taen up this bluidy head,  
And dashed it gaist the wa:  
‘Come down, come down, you ladies fair,  
And play at this foot-ba.’

28 Then she’s taen up this bluidy head,  
And she kissed it both cheek and chin:  
‘I would rather hae a kiss o that bluidy  
head  
Than a’ thy earldom.

29 ‘I got him in my father’s bouir,  
Wi meikle sin and shame,  
And I brought him up in gay green-wood,  
Beneath the heavy rain.

30 ‘Many a day have I rockd thy cradle,  
And fondly seen thee sleep,  
But now I’ll go about thy grave,  
And sore, sore will I weep.’

31 ‘O woe be to thee, thou wild woman,  
And an ill deid may thou die!  
For if ye had tauld me he was your son,  
He should hae ridden and gane wi me.’

32 ‘O hold your tongue, you bold baron,  
And an ill death may ye die!  
He had lands and rents enew of his ain,  
He needed nane fra thee.’

33 ‘Then I’ll curse the hand that did the  
deed,  
The heart that thought him ill,  
The feet that carried me speedilie  
This comely youth to kill.’

34 This lady she died gin ten o’clock,  
Lord Barnard died gin twall,  
And bonnie boy now, Sweet Willie,  
What’s come o him I canna tell.

F

a. Percy's Reliques, III, 93, 1765. b. Letter of T. Gray to Mason, June, 1757 (?): Gray's Works, ed. Gosse, II, 316.

- 1 GIL MORRICE was an erles son,  
His name it waxed wide ;  
It was nae for his great riches,  
Nor yet his mickle pride,  
Bot it was for a lady gay,  
That livd on Carron side.
- 2 'Whair sall I get a bonny boy,  
That will win hose and shoen,  
That will gae to Lord Barnard's ha,  
And bid his lady cum ?
- 3 'And ye maun rin errand, Willie,  
And ye may rin wi pride ;  
When other boys gae on their foot,  
On horseback ye sall ride.'
- 4 'O no ! Oh no ! my master dear,  
I dare nae for my life ;  
I'll no gae to the bauld baron's,  
For to triest furth his wife.'
- 5 'My bird Willie, my boy Willie,  
My dear Willie,' he sayd,  
'How can ye strive against the stream ?  
For I sall be obeyd.'
- 6 'Bot, O my master dear,' he cry'd,  
'In grene-wod ye're your lain ;  
Gi owre sic thochts, I walde ye rede,  
For fear ye should be tain.'
- 7 'Haste, haste, I say, gae to the ha,  
Bid hir cum here wi speid ;  
If ye refuse my heigh command,  
I'll gar your body bleid.
- 8 'Gae bid hir take this gay mantel,  
'T is a' gowd but the hem ;  
Bid hir cum to the gude grene-wode,  
And bring nane bot hir lain.
- 9 'And there it is, a silken sarke,  
Hir ain hand sewd the sleive ;  
And bid hir cum to Gill Morice,  
Speir nae bauld baron's leave.'
- 10 'Yes, I will gae your black errand,  
Though it be to your cost ;

Sen ye by me will nae be warnd,  
In it ye sall find frost.

- 11 'The baron he's a man of might,  
He neir could bide to taunt ;  
As ye will see, before it's nicht,  
How sma ye hae to vaunt.
- 12 'And sen I maun your errand rin,  
Sae sair against my will,  
I'se mak a vow, and keip it trow,  
It sall be done for ill.'
- 13 And when he came to broken brigue,  
He bent his bow and swam ;  
And when [he] came to grass growing,  
Set down his feet and ran.
- 14 And when he came to Barnard's ha,  
Would neither chap nor ca,  
Bot set his bent bow to his breist,  
And lichtly lap the wa.
- 15 He wauld nae tell the man his errand,  
Though he stude at the gait ;  
Bot straiht into the ha he cam,  
Whair they were set at meit.
- 16 'Hail ! hail ! my gentle sire and dame,  
My message winna waite ;  
Dame, ye maun to the gude grene-wod,  
Before that it be late.
- 17 'Ye're bidden tak this gay mantel,  
'T is a' gowd bot the hem ;  
You maun gae to the gude grene-wode,  
Evn by your sel alane.
- 18 'And there it is, a silken sarke,  
Your ain hand sewd the sleive ;  
Ye maun gae speik to Gill Morice,  
Speir nae bauld baron's leave.'
- 19 The lady stamped wi hir foot,  
And winked wi hir ee ;  
But a' that she coud say or do,  
Forbidden he wad nae bee.
- 20 'It's surely to my bowr-woman ;  
It neir could be to me :'  
'I brocht it to Lord Barnard's lady ;  
I trow that ye be she.'