

KINMONT WILLIE

1. O have ye na heard o' the fause Sakelde?
O have ye na heard o' the keen Lord Scroop?
How they hae ta'en bauld Kinmont Willie,
On Hairibee to hang him up?
2. Had Willie had but twenty men,
But twenty men as stout as he,
Fause Sakelde had never the Kinmont ta'en,
Wi' eight score in his companie.
3. They band his legs beneath the steed,
They tied his hands behind his back,
They guarded him fivesome on each side,
And they brought him ower the Liddel-rack.
4. They led him thro' the Liddel-rack,
And also thro' the Carlisle sands,
They brought him to Carlisle castell,
To be at my Lord Scroope's commands.
5. —“My hands are tied, but my tongue is free!
And whae will dare this deed avow?
Or answer by the border law,
Or answer to the bauld Buccleuch?”—
6. —“Now haud thy tongue, thou rank reiver!
There's never a Scot shall set ye free:
Before ye cross my castle yate,
I trow ye shall take farewell o' me.”—
7. —“Fear na ye that, my Lord,” quo' Willie:
“By the faith o' my bodie, Lord Scroop,” he said,
“I never yet lodged in a hostelrie,
But I paid my lawing before I gaed.”—
8. Now word is gane to the bauld Keeper,
In Branksome Ha' where that he lay,
That Lord Scroope has ta'en the Kinmont Willie,
Between the hours of night and day.
9. He has ta'en the table wi' his hand,
He garr'd the red wine spring on hie—
—“Now Christ's curse on my head,” he said,
“But avenged of Lord Scroop I'll be!

10. “O is my basnet a widow’s curch?
Or my lance a wand of the willow tree?
Or my arm a ladyes lilye hand,
That an English Lord should lightly me!
11. “And have they ta’en him, Kinmont Willie,
Against the truce of border tide?
And forgotten that the bauld Bacleuch
Is Keeper here on the Scottish side?
12. “And have they e’en ta’en him, Kinmont Willie,
Withouten either dread or fear?
And forgotten that the bauld Bacleuch
Can back a steed, or shake a spear?
13. “O were there war between the lands,
As well I wot that there is none,
I would slight Carlisle Castell high,
Tho’ it were builded of marble stone.
14. “I would set that castell in a low,
And sloken it with English blood!
There’s nevir a man in Cumberland,
Should ken where Carlisle Castell stood.
15. “But since nae war’s between the lands,
And there is peace, and peace should be;
I’ll neither harm English lad or lass,
And yet the Kinmont freed shall be!”—
16. He has call’d him forty Marchmen bauld,
I trow they were of his ain name,
Except Sir Gilbert Elliot call’d,
The Laird of Stobs, I mean the same.
17. He has call’d him forty Marchmen bauld,
Were kinsmen to the bauld Buccleuch,
With spur on heel and splent on spauld,
And gleuves of green, and feathers blue.
18. There were five and five, before them a’,
Wi’ hunting horns and bugles bright;
And five and five came wi’ Buccleuch,
Like Warden’s men arrayed for fight;

19. And five and five, like a mason gang,
 That carried the ladders lang and hie;
 And five and five, like broken men;
 And so they reached the Woodhouselee.
20. And as we cross'd the bateable land,
 When to the English side we held,
 The first o' men that we met wi',
 Whae sould it be but fause Sakelde?
21. —“Where be ye gaun, ye hunters keen?”
 Quo' fause Sakelde, “Come tell to me!”—
 —“We go to hunt an English stag
 Has trespassed on the Scots countrie.”—
22. —“Where be ye gaun, ye marshal men?”
 Quo' fause Sakelde, “Come tell me true!”—
 —“We go to catch a rank reiver,
 Has broken faith wi' the bauld Buccleuch.”—
23. —“Where are ye gaun, ye mason lads,
 Wi' a' your ladders lang and hie?”—
 —“We gang to herry a corbie's nest,
 That wons not far frae Woodhouselee.”—
24. —“Where be ye gaun, ye broken men?”
 Quo' fause Sakelde, “Come tell to me!”—
 —Now Dickie of Dryhope led that band,
 And the never a word o' lear had he.
25. —“Why trespass ye on the English side?
 Row-footed outlaws, stand!” quo' he,—
 The ne'er a word had Dickie to say,
 Sae he thrust the lance thro' his fause bodie.
26. Then on we held for Carlisle toun,
 And at Staneshaw-bank the Eden we cross'd;
 The water was great and meikle of spait,
 But the nevir a horse nor man we lost.
27. And when we reach'd the Staneshaw-bank,
 The wind was rising loud and hie;
 And there the Laird garr'd leave our steeds,
 For fear that they should stamp and nie.

28. And when we left the Staneshaw-bank,
The wind began full loud to blaw;
But 'twas wind and weet, and fire and sleet,
When we came beneath the castel wa'.
29. We crept on knees and held our breath,
Till we placed the ladders against the wa';
And sae ready was Buccleuch himsell
To mount the first, before us a'.
30. He has ta'en the watchman by the throat,
He flung him down upon the lead—
—“Had there not been peace between our lands,
Upon the other side thou hadst gaed!”
31. “Now sound out, trumpets!” quo' Buccleuch;
“Lets waken Lord Scroope, right merrilie!”—
Then loud the Warden's trumpets blew—
“*O whae dare meddle wi' me?*”—
32. Then speedilie to work we gaed,
And raised the slogan ane and a',
And cut a hole thro' a sheet of lead,
And so we wan to the castel ha'.
33. They thought King James and a' his men
Had won the house wi' bow and speir;
It was but twenty Scots and ten,
That put a thousand in sic a stear!
34. Wi' coulters, and wi' fore-hammers,
We garr'd the bars bang merrilie,
Untill we cam to the inner prison,
Where Willie o' Kinmont he did lie.
35. And when we cam to the lower prison,
Where Willie o' Kinmont he did lie—
—“O sleep ye, wake ye, Kinmont Willie,
Upon the morn that thou's to die?”—
36. —“O I sleep saft and I wake aft,
It's lang since sleeping was fleyed frae me!
Gie my service back to my wyfe and bairns,
And a' gude fellows that speer for me.”—

37. Then Red Rowan has hente him up,
The starkest man in Teviotdale—
—“Abide, abide now, Red Rowan,
Till of my Lord Scroope I take farewell.
38. “Farewell, farewell, my gude Lord Scroope!
My gude Lord Scroope, farewell!” he cried—
—“I’ll pay you for my lodging maill,
When first we meet on the border side.”—
39. Then shoulder high, with shout and cry,
We bore him down the ladder lang;
At every stride Red Rowan made,
I wot the Kinmont’s airns play’d clang!
40. —“O mony a time,” quo’ Kinmont Willie,
“I have ridden horse baith wild and wood,
But a rougher beast than Red Rowan
I ween my legs have ne’er bestrode.
41. “And mony a time,” quo’ Kinmont Willie,
“I’ve pricked a horse out oure the furs,
But since the day I backed a steed,
I nevir wore sic cumbrous spurs!”—
42. We scarce had won the Staneshaw-bank,
When a’ the Carlisle bells were rung,
And a thousand men, in horse and foot,
Cam wi’ the keen Lord Scroope along.
43. Buccleuch has turned to Eden water,
Even where it flow’d frae bank to brim,
And he has plunged in wi’ a’ his band,
And safely swam them thro’ the stream.
44. He turned him on the other side,
And at Lord Scroope his glove flung he—
—“If ye like na my visit in merry England,
In fair Scotland come visit me!”—
45. All sore astonished stood Lord Scroope,
He stood as still as rock of stane;
He scarcely dared to trew his eyes,
When thro’ the water they had gane.

46. —“He is either himsell a devil frae hell,
Or else his mother a witch maun be;
I wad na have ridden that wan water,
For a’ the gowd in Christentie.”—