Richard Jago, â??The Blackbirdsâ?•

Description

RICHARD JAGO

â??The Blackbirdsâ?•

The sun had chasâ??d the mountain snow,
And kindly loosâ??d the frozen soil,
The melting streams began to flow,
And ploughmen urgâ??d their annual toil.

â??Twas then, amid the vocal throng
Whom nature wakes to mirth and love,
A blackbird raisâ??d his amâ??rous song,
And thus it echoâ??d through the grove.

O fairest of the featherâ??d train!
For whom I sing, for whom I burn,
Attend with pity to my strain,
And grant my love a kind return.

For see the wintry storms are flown,
And gently Zephyrs fan the air;
Let us the genial influence own,
Let us the vernal pastime share.

The raven plumes his jetty wing
To please his croaking paramour;
The larks responsive ditties sing,
And tell their passion as they soar.

But trust me, love, the ravenâ??s wing
Is not to be comparâ??d with mine;
Nor can the lark so sweetly sing
As I, who strength with sweetness join.

O! let me all thy steps attend!
Iâ??ll point new treasures to thy sight;
Whether the grove thy wish befriend,
Or hedge-rows green, or meadows bright.

Iâ??ll shew my love the clearest rill
Whose streams among the pebbles stray:

These will we sip, and sip our fill,
Or on the flowâ??ry margin play.

Iâ??ll lead her to the thickest brake,
Impervious to the school-boyâ??s eye;
For her the plaisterâ??d nest Iâ??ll make,
And on her downy pinions lie.

When, prompted by a motherâ??s care,
Her warmth shall form thâ?? imprisonâ??d young;
The pleasing task Iâ??ll gladly share,
Or cheer her labors with my song.

To bring her food Iâ??ll range the fields,
And cull the best of every kind;
Whatever natureâ??s bounty yields,
And loveâ??s assiduous care can find.

And when my lovely mate would stray
To taste the summer sweets at large,
Iâ??ll wait at home the live-long day,
And tend with care our little charge.

Then prove with me the sweets of love,
With me divide the cares of life;
No bush shall boast in all the grove
So fond a mate, so blest a wife.

He ceasâ??d his song. The melting dame
With soft indulgence heard the strain;
She felt, she ownâ??d a mutual flame,
And hasted to relieve his pain.

He led her to the nuptial bower,
And nestled closely to her side;
The fondest bridegroom of that hour,
And she, the most delighted bride.

Next morn he wakâ??d her with a song,
â??Behold, he said, the new-born day!
The lark his matin peal has rung,
Arise, my love, and come away.â?•

Together through the fields they strayâ??d,
And to the murmâ??ring rivâ??letâ??s side;
Renewâ??d their vows, and hoppâ??d and playâ??d,
With honest joy and decent pride.

When oh! with grief the Muse relates
The mournful sequel of my tale;
Sent by an order from the fates,
A gunner met them in the vale.

Alarmâ??d the lover cryâ??d, My dear,
Haste, haste away, from danger fly;
Here, gunner, point thy thunder here;
O spare my love, and let me die.

At him the gunner took his aim;
His aim, alas! was all too true:
O! had he chose some other game!
Or shotâ??as he was wont to do!

Divided pair! forgive the wrong,
While I with tears your fate rehearse;
Iâ??ll join the widowâ??s plaintive song,
And save the lover in my verse.

NOTES:

7 *blackbird* Common Eurasian thrush, noted for its melodious song (*OED*).

14 *Zephyr* The west wind.

29 *shews* Period spelling of â??show.â?• A *rill* is a small stream.

33 *brake* A thick stand of bushes or briars.

35 *plaistrâ??d* Period spelling of plastered.

36 *pinions* The terminal segment of a birdâ??s wing, bearing the primary flight feathers (*OED*).

57 *bower* A term for abode or cottage.

63 *matin peal* â??Matinâ?• is French for spring; â??pealâ?• is the ringing of a bell.

66 *rivâ??let* Rivulet, a small river or stream.

Source: ***Bellâ??s classical arrangement of fugitive poetry*** **(London, 1789), vol. VIII, pp. 103-106. [ECCO]**

Edited by Phillip Barron