

The Gay Goshawk (Child 96A)

- 1 'O WELL 's me o my gay goss-hawk,
That he can speak and flee;
He 'll carry a letter to my love,
Bring back another to me.'
- 2 'O how can I your true-love ken, 5
Or how can I her know?
Whan frae her mouth I never heard couth,
Nor wi my eyes her saw.'
- 3 'O well sal ye my true-love ken, 10
As soon as you her see;
For, of a' the flowrs in fair Englan,
The fairest flowr is she.
- 4 'At even at my love's bowr-door 15
There grows a bowing birk,
An sit ye down and sing thereon,
As she gangs to the kirk.
- 5 'An four-an-twenty ladies fair 20
Will wash and go to kirk,
But well shall ye my true-love ken,
For she wears goud on her skirt.
- 6 'An four and twenty gay ladies 25
Will to the mass repair,
But well sal ye my true-love ken,
For she wears goud on her hair.'
- 7 O even at that lady's bowr-door 25
There grows a bowin birk,
An she set down and sang thereon,
As she ged to the kirk.
- 8 'O eet and drink, my marys a', 30
The wine flows you among,
Till I gang to my shot-window,

An hear yon bonny bird's song.

- 9 'Sing on, sing on, my bonny bird,
The song ye sang the streen,
For I ken by your sweet singin
You're frae my true-love sen.' 35
- 10 O first he sang a merry song,
An then he sang a grave,
An then he peckd his feathers gray,
To her the letter gave. 40
- 11 'Ha, there 's a letter frae your love,
He says he sent you three;
He canna wait your love langer,
But for your sake he 'll die.
- 12 'He bids you write a letter to him; 45
He says he 's sent you five;
He canno wait your love langer,
Tho you 're the fairest woman alive.'
- 13 'Ye bid him bake his bridal-bread,
And brew his bridal-ale, 50
An I'll meet him in fair Scotlan
Lang, lang or it be stale.'
- 14 She 's doen her to her father dear,
Fa'n low down on her knee:
'A boon, a boon, my father dear, 55
I pray you, grant it me.'
- 15 'Ask on, ask on, my daughter,
An granted it sal be;
Except ae squire in fair Scotlan,
An him you sall never see.' 60
- 16 'The only boon, my father dear,
That I do crave of the,
Is, gin I die in southin lands,
In Scotland to bury me.

- 17 'An the firstin kirk that ye come till, 65
Ye gar the bells be rung,
An the nextin kirk that ye come till,
Ye gar the mess be sung.
- 18 'An the thirdin kirk that ye come till, 70
You deal gold for my sake,
An the fourthin kirk that ye come till,
You tarry there till night.'
- 19 She is doen her to her bigly bowr, 75
As fast as she coud fare,
An she has tane a sleepy draught,
That she had mixed wi care.
- 20 She 's laid her down upon her bed, 80
An soon she 's fa'n asleep,
And soon oer every tender limb
Cauld death began to creep.
- 21 Whan night was flown, an day was come, 85
Nae ane that did her see
But thought she was as surely dead
As ony lady coud be.
- 22 Her father an her brothers dear 90
Gard make to her a bier;
The tae half was o guide red gold,
The tither o silver clear.
- 23 Her mither an her sisters fair 95
Gard work for her a sark;
The tae half was o cambrick fine,
The tither o needle wark.
- 24 The firstin kirk that they came till, 95
They gard the bells be rung,
An the nextin kirk that they came till,
They gard the mess be sung.

- 25 The thirdin kirk that they came till,
They dealt gold for her sake,
An the fourthin kirk that they came till,
Lo, there they met her make! 100
- 26 'Lay down, lay down the bigly bier,
Lat me the dead look on;
Wi cherry cheeks and ruby lips
She lay an smil'd on him.
- 27 'O ae sheave o your bread, true-love, 105
An ae glass o your wine,
For I hae fasted for your sake
These fully days is nine.
- 28 'Gang hame, gang hame, my seven bold brothers,
Gang hame and sound your horn; 110
An ye may boast in southin lans
Your sister 's playd you scorn.'