

Burns Out Bright

"Five Carlins"

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Five Carlins
(Robert Burns)
There was five carlins in the South,
They fell upon a scheme,
To send a lad to London town,
To bring them tidings hame.
Not only bring them tidings hame,
But do their errands there;
And aiblins gowd and honor baith
Might be that laddie's share.
There was Maggie by the banks o Nith,
A dame wi pride eneugh;
And Marjorie o' the Monie Lochs,
A carlin auld and teugh.
And Blinkin Bess of Annandale,
That dwelt near Solway-side;
And Brandy Jean, that took her gill,
In Galloway sae wide.
And Black Joan, frae Crichton-Peel,
O' gipsy kith an kin:
Five wighter carlins were na found
The South countrie within.
To send a lad to London town,
They met upon a day;
And monie a knight, and monie a laird,
This errand fain wad gae.
O, monie a knight, and monie a laird,
This errand ain wad gae;
But nae ane could their fancy please,
O, ne'er a ane but tway!
The first ane was a belted Knight,
Bred of a Border band;
And he wad gae to London Town,
Might nae man him withstand.
And he wad do their errands weel,
And meikle he wad say;
And ilka ane at London court
Wad bid to him Guid-day.
The neist cam in a Soger youth
And spak wi' modest grace;
And he wad gang to London Town,

If sae their pleasure was
He wad na hecht them courtly gifts,
Nor meikle speech pretend;
But he wad hecht an honest heart
Wad ne'er desert his friend.-
Now wham to chuse, and wham refuse,
At strife thir Carlins fell;
For some had Gentle Folk to please,
And some wad please themsel.-
Then up spak mim-mou'd Meg o'Nith,
And she spak up wi'pride,
And she wad send the Sodger-lad
Whatever might betide.-
For the Auld Gudeman o'London Court,
She didna care a pin;
But she wad send the Sodger-lad,
To greet his eldest son.-
Then started Bess of Annandale,
A deadly aith she's taen,
That she wad vote the Border-knight,
Tho' she should vote her lane.-
'For far-off fowls hae feathers fair,
'And fools o' change are fain;
'But I hae try'd this Border-knight,
'I'll try him yet again.
Says black Jan frae Crighton-peel,
A Carlin stoor and grim;
"The Auld Gudeman, or the Young Gudeman,
For me may sink or swim."
"For fools will prate o' Right and Wrang,
While knaves laugh them to scorn;
But the Solder's friends hae blawn the best,
So he shall bear the horn."
Then Brandy Jean spak o'er her drink,
Ye weel ken, kimmers a',
The Auld Gudeman o'. London Court,
His back's been at the wa':
And mony a friend that kiss'd his caup,
Is now a fremit wight;
But it's ne'er be sae wi' Brandy Jean,
We'll send the Border-knight.'
Then slaw rase Marjory o' the lochs,
And wrinkled was her brow;
Her ancient weed was russet-grey,
Her auld Scots heart was true.-
There's some Great Folk set light by me,
I set as light by them;
But I will send to London town
Whom I lo'e best at hame.'-
So how this weighty plea may end,
Nae mortal wight can tell:

God grant the king, and ilka man,
May look weel to themsel.-
Tune: Chevy Chase (269)
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