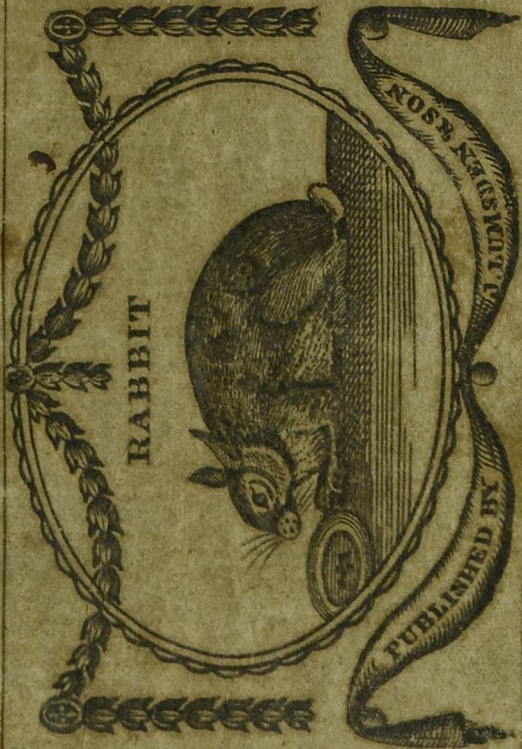


RABBIT

ROSE KESKENT C. LUDWIG

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THE
HISTORY
OF
ELSPY CAMPBELL.

PRESENTED TO ALL GOOD
LITTLE MASTERS AND MISSES,
IN CHRISTENDOM.

Embellished with Copperplates.

GLASGOW:
SOLD WHOLESALE BY J. LUMSDEN & SON,
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1799.
(Price one Penny.)



ELSPY CAMBELL.

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THE
HISTORY
OF
ELSPY CAMPBELL.

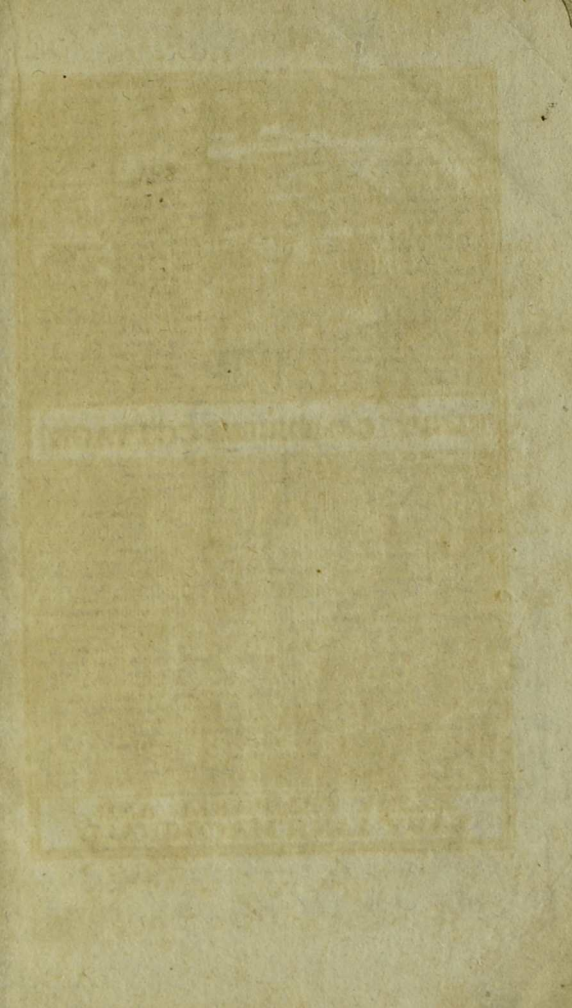
LADY Jane Macdonald, born in Scotland, of an ancient and illustrious family, was in her state of widowhood, at fifty years of age, reduced to indigence. She never had been blessed with any children, who might now support her by the labour of their industry; and every other individual of the family was equally involved in her misfortunes. Wandering in the Highlands, she was all day long soliciting a shelter for the night, and something to subsist on. Elspy Campbell, who had been her faithful

servant many years, and treated very kindly by her ancient mistress, learns these dismal tidings in her humble cottage, whether she was now retired to pass the remnant of her days, far distant from her former service. She immediately sets out in search of so respectable a mistress, whom at last she hears of, but still necessitated to pursue her, as she frequently changed place; but this, though tedious or requiring time, was no way difficult. There was a line marked out by her misfortunes, and the grateful Elspy had but to walk in it. After much laborious travel, she at last attains the mournful subject of her journey, falls down on the ground before her, and begins as follows: Oh, my dear good mistress, Lady Jane Macdonald, daughter of Lord James and grandchild of Lord Osbaldiston; (for her future pensioner had both those titles:) though I'm hardly younger than

yourself, I'm notwithstanding that, much stronger, and more capable of working. You upon the other hand, are far too feeble to go through with any thing, like labuor, owing to your way of life, your troubles and the several infirmities come all at once upon you. Come, and take up your abode with me. I have a little cottage. It is well situated, and keeps out the weather. In addition to my cottage, I've a garden also, that will grow me more potatoes than both of us can consume. When I have tried all methods to support you if I can, or rather when God's providence has done whatever he thinks proper to support us both, you shall be free to quit me, if you find an inn with better entertainment, or stay with me if you should not find one. Be of courage, my dear mistress. I was always stout and hearty in your service, and (*thank God*) I'm still the same. I'll find you

food if any will but show itself, in that case I'll dig down till such time as I find it.

Oh, my generous Elspy said the afflicted widow, I resign myself entirely to your friendship. I will live and die with one of so much gratitude, for I am sure God's blessing will be always with you. They set out immediately for Elspy's hermitage. The cottage was indeed extremely little, but possessed a healthful situation; cleanliness and order were the only decorations it could boast. There was a hole on one side in the wall, through which a little light proceeded, when the wind was not that way; but when it would have incommoded her, the hole was stopped completely by a sod with rose leaves beat into it: and poor Elspy was obliged to be contented with the little light that reached her down the





ELSPY CAMPBELL'S COTTAGE.



ELSPY CAMPBELL AND
LADY JANE MACDONALD

chimney. Elspy's bed, which was invisible when people entered, was defended from the cold that would have reached it through the door-way, by a bank of earth. It had a mattress stuffed with straw, good sheets, a pair of blankets, and a coarse woollen rug. It had no curtains, but when Elspy found she was in future to be honoured with the friendship and society of such a noble woman as the Lady Jane Macdonald, daughter of Lord James, and grand-child of Lord Osbaldiston, she bethought herself to hang the walls about it with a bulrush lining, which was warmer than the silkiest damask. In this bed slept Lady Jane Macdonald, with her feet both placed against poor Elspy's bosom, who was used to bend herself into a circle or half-moon, at least, about the widow's legs, that she might keep them warm. She never would consent to lie beside her mistress: but the more she saw

her fallen from her former splendour, still the more obedience and respect she shewed her, to wipe out by that means all idea of the change she had experienced in her fortune. An old Bible, Robinson Crusoe, and a few old volumes of devotion and morality, that once had covers, furnished ample matter for their evenings conversations. With respect to their repasts they frequently had eggs, at all times milk, and were never without potatoes. The best baked potatoes, freshest eggs, and largest bowl of milk, were constantly for Lady Jane Macdonald, daughter of Lord James, and grandchild of Lord Osbaldiston.

It will doubtless be a matter of some curiosity to know how Elspy could keep up the honours of her cot, in such a state of æconomical abundance. To do this, she had her spinning-wheel in winter, and her labours

of the field in harvest. It must, notwithstanding, be acknowledged, she possessed a manifest advantage over every younger woman, not so much for any natural activity, as for an obtruse angle in her line of bodily direction, so that both her hands and eyes were nearer by a great deal to the ground than otherwise they would have been; and readier for her spinning-wheel. Besides, when things were got in price above her means to purchase them, she had but to go out and beg assistance in the neighbouring towns and villages. For this she had contrived a tolerable efficacious method. She would go among the richest farmers only, and when got before their door, stand still, and lifting up her hands to heaven, cry out, I come to ask your charity, by no means for myself, for I can live on any thing, but for my mistress Lady Jane Macdonald, daughter of Lord

James, and grand-child of Lord Osbaldiston. If the farmers gave her any thing, or what sufficed her reasonable expectations, she would add, MAY THE ALMIGHTY'S BLESSING, with my MISTRESS's, and ELSPY CAMPBELL's, come upon this house and its inhabitants. 'Tis easy to imagine what success this blessing, and the expectation of a different salutation from the lips of Elspy, had she been refused, produced from people naturally hospitable, and exceedingly attached to their nobility. She got by this means, victuals, clothes, and very often money, which she carefully put up to buy her mistress shoes and stockings. As for her own wants, in this way they were very few, since Lady Jane Macdonald never wore them out so much but they would do for her.

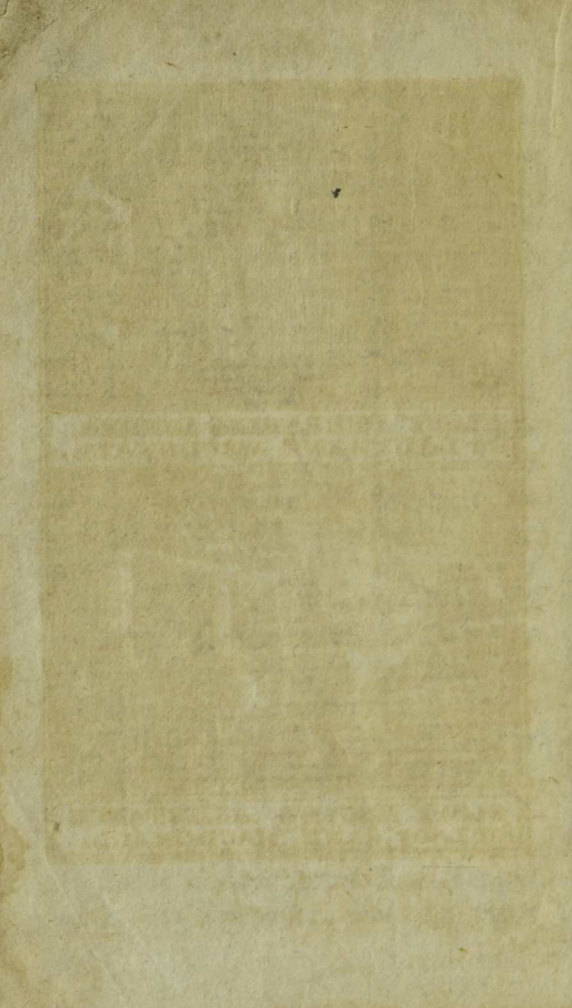
'Tis thus, they lived both happy; one in her exertions, and the other



ELSPY PREPARING DINNER
for LADY JANE MACDONALD.



ELSPY BEGING ASSISTANCE
for LADY JANE MACDONALD.



in her gratitude: The generous Elspy was extremely rigorous on the subject of her duty, Lady Jane Macdonald, as I've said before, was noble, and though kept by Elspy, was not to forego the privileges of nobility, that is to say, she was not to do any thing like work, no not so much as to wash her feet herself. One day, as Elspy was employed in carrying out a basketful of dung to lay on her potatoe-beds, her mistress had come out to get a pitcher full of water, and was now returning with it to the cottage. Elspy saw her, put the basket down, and running to her, took away the pitcher, emptied it, and fetched her other water. When she brought it in, she said, forgive my freedom Lady Jane Macdonald, daughter of Lord James, and grand-child to Lord Osbaldiston, but you never shall demean yourself by drawing water while I live, and have my limbs to do it for you.

The report of so much generosity in one so indigent, at last reached me who am the writer of this story, and I sent her every quarter, such assistance as my fortune would allow. As long as Elspy lived, and which was upwards of six years, computing from the day I was first informed of these particulars, whenever I sat down to dine or sup in company, and was required to give my toast, 'twas always Elspy Campbell. My attachment to this name, made those I sat with eager to know something of the lady who engrossed so great a share of my affection. They would consequently ask me, begging pardon for their freedom; when I told them, Elspy Campbell was an ancient beggar-woman. What! they would cry out, a beggar? Yes, was my reply, but hear the rest: and then would follow the whole story, such in substance as already I have told it. Hardly ever could finish, but

the sixpences and shillings rained into my hat for Elspy. These small sums, which I was sure to send her pretty often, once occasioned her to ask my servant who it came from? Doubtless he's a friend of God. He does me good as God does, though I never see him.

Lady Jane Macdonald died, and Elspy very quickly after. Such was the affliction she gave way to for the loss of her good mistress, she remembered nothing but the bounty of her former benefactor; what her gratitude had done in consequence of that remembrance she forgot.

The generous, the heroical fervility of Elspy was not, as it might have been, a spark of gratitude that crackled for a moment and went out. It was an ardent flame that blazed for twenty years, till death suppressed it

for a season in the grave, where she was laid to rest, for it is not utterly put out; since from her ashes it will certainly burst forth again, with renovated brightness, on the morning of that day that never is to finish.



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The AUTHOR of this HISTORY.



THE BURIAL
OF LADY JANE MACDONALD.

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