

Bonnie Charlie

A Traditional Scottish Folk Song

Bonnie Charlie's noo awa',
Safely o'er the friendly main;
Many a heart will break in twa',
Should he ne'er come back again.

Chorus:

*Will ye no come back again?
Will ye no come back again?
Better lo'ed ye canna be,
Will ye no come back again?*

Ye trusted in your Hielan' men,
They trusted you dear Charlie.
They kent your hidin' in the glen,
Your cleadin' was but barely.

Chorus

English bribes were a' in vain
An' e'en tho puirer we may be
Siller canna buy the heart
That beats aye for thine and thee.

Chorus

We watched thee in the gloamin' hour,
We watched thee in the mornin' grey.
Tho' thirty thousand pounds they gi'e,
O there is nane that wad betray.

Chorus

Sweet the laverock' s note and lang,
Liltin' wildly up the glen.
But aye tae me he sings ane sang,
Will ye no' come back again?

Chorus

Meaning of unusual words:

cleadin' = covering (This word can refer to concealment, or to clothing. In this case, it most likely means that he was
"but barely" concealed.)

gloamin' = twilight

laverock = skylark

"Bonnie Charlie" was the son of James Stuart, last son of the Stuart line, who hoped to regain control of Scotland from the British crown, in the mid-1700s. He had been experiencing some success in his uprising, but after a terrible defeat at Culloden in 1745, was forced to flee. His clansmen hid him from the British, though at great personal risk to themselves.

The British offered an immense reward if any Scot were to turn Bonnie Charlie over to the Crown, but instead they helped him escape back to supporters in France. This song, which is an essential song among the Scottish, dreams of Charlie's return, and an independent Scotland once again.