



AIRDRIE



COTLAND

BY

CHRISTINE ALEXANDER

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PHILADELPHIA

1875

THE annexed lines were written by
MISS CHRISTINE ALEXANDER; and I
have the original, in her own handwriting.
"AIRDRIE HOUSE" stands near the village
of Airdrie, on the Edinburgh and Glasgow
road (Scotland), about ten miles from the
latter place. It was the family seat of the
Aitchesons, and when these lines were written
(before 1812) had long been the residence of
Miss Isabella and Miss Margaret Aitcheson,
its owners. They were the sisters of my
grandmother, Mrs. William Alexander; and,

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after her death, several of her children, my aunts Bethia, Christine and Jane Alexander, found it a welcome, permanent, and happy home.

In 1816, I spent several months with my great-aunts, Miss Isabella and Margaret Aitcheson, and their three nieces, Bethia, Christine and Jane, in their pleasant and quiet home at Airdrie; and I can witness that the picture given by these verses is not only beautiful, but perfectly just. These most excellent and kind-hearted ladies were, amidst all their infirmities (the elder, Isabella, being confined to her bed and sofa by a paralysis of the nerves of her neck; and the younger, Margaret, almost blind from a chronic inflammation of her eyes) a blessing and an example to their whole neighbourhood. They were quite rich, and

dispensed their charities with a most liberal hand.

Great-aunts and aunts have all now gone to another world, where, I trust, they have forgotten the sufferings and sorrows of this life.

Airdrie House was situated upon a most valuable coal and iron estate, but the Miss Aitchesons would not allow it to be worked. After their death, it passed to their nephew, Sir William Alexander, Lord Chief Baron of the Exchequer, under a Scotch entail, to whom it is said to have produced £12,000 sterling a year. It came, upon his decease, into the possession of Robert Aitcheson Alexander, the eldest son of Robert Alexander, of Kentucky, the next brother of the Lord Chief Baron, and thus the eldest male representative of the Aitcheson and

Alexander families. He is still in its possession.

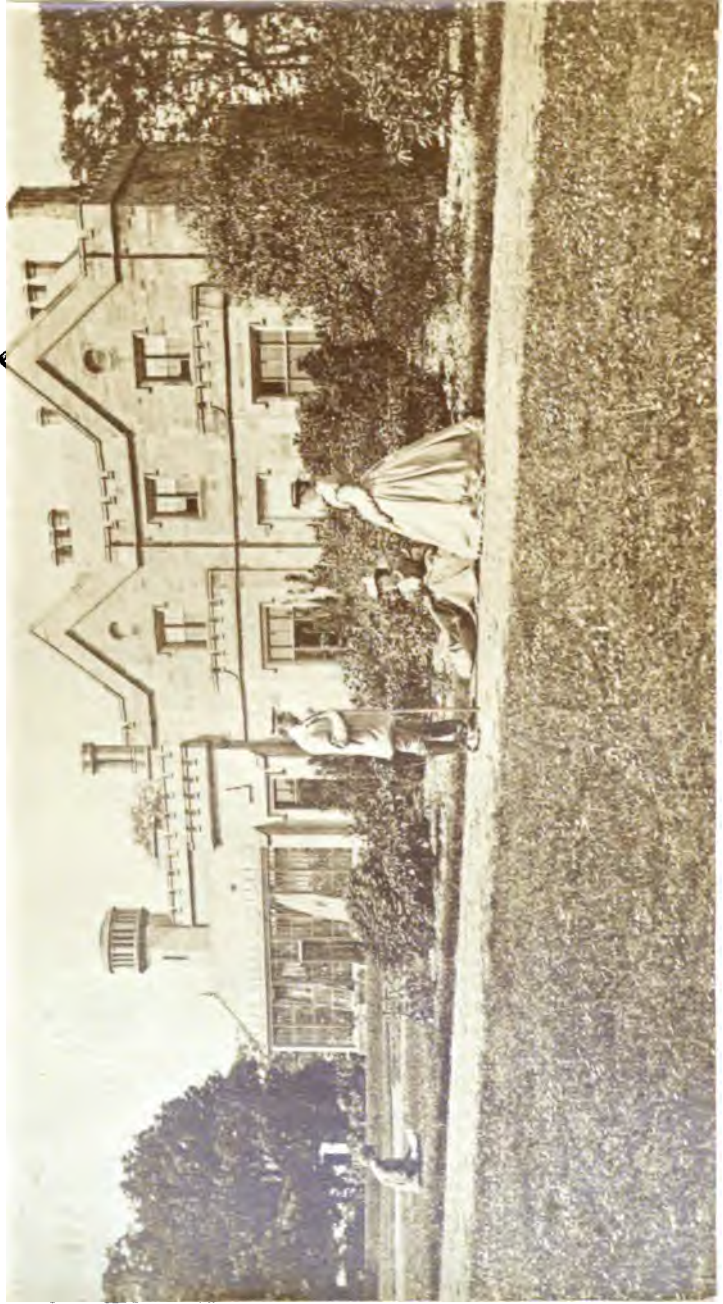
HENRY J. WILLIAMS.

Feb'y, 1862.

Robert Aitcheson Alexander having since died, without issue, the estate is now in the ownership of his brother, Alexander John Alexander, to whom it passed by his brother's will, the entail having been broken.

C. B.


Dec. 18, 1874.



AIRDRIE MANOR HOUSE.

AIRDRIE:

SCOTLAND.

 O mountain rises here sublime,
Inviting still to try
Its wild and wooded steps to climb,
The distant scene to spy.

No torrent in its furious course,
With dread the mind appalls,
As rushing with resistless force,
Thro' the deep chasm it falls.

No castle struggling with decay
In gothic pride is seen,
To tell the children of to-day
The mighty here have been.

And here no venerable wood
Excludes the noontide beam,
Hangs o'er the deep majestic flood,
Or skirts the wizard stream.

No scenes here move the Poet's pen—
The Poet's genius raise—
For these go roam wild Finlass Glen,
Or on old Melrose gaze.

Yet of some secret charm possessed,
The modest mansion stands ;
Allures the ever willing guest—
His lengthened stay commands.

'Tis not youth's rosy lips and cheeks ;
'Tis not her sparkling eye ;
'Tis not her sportive voice that speaks,
And bids the minutes fly.

It is the kind and generous heart,
Still candid and sincere;
'Tis smiling patience 'midst the smart
Of sufferings most severe.

It is the firm immortal mind,
Resisting all decay,
Altho' time's withering hand we find
Upon its mould of clay.

Two sisters here, from youth to age,
Have still united grown;
In both this character appears,
Yet each preserves her own.

The one* all smiling and serene,
Looks careless o'er the earth,
And wonders what these turmoils mean
For things of little worth!

* Miss Isabella Aitchison.

Calm 'midst disease's present pangs ;
In dangers undismayed ;
The stoic's firmness still maintains,
Without his high parade.

Nature to her that polish gave
That courts and cities boast ;
And her kind manners never have
Their sweet attraction lost.

Nor yet her playful wit is fled,
But bright and sparkling shews,
Tho' fifteen lustres o'er her head
Have flung their winter snows.

'Tis sweet upon her couch to tend ;
'Tis sweet her voice to hear ;
'Tis sweet to see life's latter end,
So bright, so calm appear.

Within the other's* generous heart,
Emotions keener rise;
With lightning speed to the distressed,
Her ready succour flies.

To her the cherished orphans rise,
And bless her early care;
And age, amidst its latest sighs,
Breathes out for her a prayer.

She, too, with unrepining calm,
Can pain's sharp pangs endure;
On others' wounds still pouring balm,
Whilst her's admit no cure.

Dim o'er this rich and goodly scene
Her darkened eye must roam;
But bright and glorious rise within
Prospects of worlds to come.

* Miss Margaret Aitchison.

In her pure mind religious love
Expansive and sincere;
And whilst she leads to realms above,
She strives to bless us here.

Long of each powerful charm possessed,
Oh! may yon mansion be
A refuge still to the distrest,
The abode of peace to me.