

OBSESSION?

WHAT gars ye rime in Auld Scots leid
 Sae sair an' lang,
 When few there be that read or heed
 Your auld rife sang?

*What sweeter tongue can ever hae
 A lien on me?
 I'll screeve awa in't, yea or nay,
 Until I dee.*

Is't worth your while to carp awa
 Wi' nane to sing?
 Forbye, what scouth hae ye ava
 On ae gut string?

*There's aye an anterin chiel can feel
 The lilt o't yet,
 An' gar the her't's bluid race an' reel
 Wi' sang an' sett.*

But wae's me! sir, it canna last,
 Oor auld Scots tongue;
 It's fautit, fleer'd at, an' declass'd
 By auld an' young.

*When a' oor story is forgot,
 Oor tongue may dee:
 Fell the affront an' fell the blot
 Gin that should be!*

J. G. HORNE.

leid, dialect.
lien, claim.
scouth, scope.
anterin, occasional.

sett, adaptation.
fautit, faulted.
fleered, sneered at.
tell, great.

PLOOMAN PHILOSOPHY.

It's a queer warl' this, stock an' brock,
But there's nocht in't queerer nor folk.

The craws forgether
To croak
An' blether
Amaist like folk.

Cheenges are lichtsome, ploomen say,
An' a gangin fit's aye gettin;
A stog will gether nocht but fog,
Sae, let us e'en be flittin.

Some ploomen flit for cheenge o' air,
An' some for cheenge o' vittle;
"Man never is, but to be, blest,"
An' wanderlust is smittle.

It's no human natur
To be thirled to the bit
Like a shae to the fit.

A plooman wi a wife an' weans
May sit as lang's he's letten,
But a' his duds
A reepyun hauds
When halflin Tam is flittin'.

A jack-daw in the same auld lum
Will keaw awa or "sooty" come.

A bonnie pass!
When ony lass,
Wi' e'en begritten,
Can stop a flittin'.

A winter's a langsome sittin
Withoot a foy,
A kirn, or ploy,
Or hope o' a simmer flittin.

J. G. HORNE.

stock an' brock, all of it.
smittle, infectious.
thirled, bound.
balflin, a farmer lad.

foy, a farewell party.
kirn, harvest-home.
ploy, frolic.

MASHLUM.

GIN "Wolf!" be aye the fermer's cry
 In ilka season, wat or dry,
 As few will heed him as afore
 E'en when the wolf *is* at the door.

Wha aince a name has fairly won
 For airly risin'
 May lie abed till settin' sun
 Dips the horizon.

To ca' a sinner hypocrite
 Ne'er brocht him suner to the bit.

Ye canna touch a human he'rt
 To finer issues wi' a dert.

Aye mind, when in satiric vein,
 It's no ill-gi'en what's no ill-taen.

There maun be sweetness i' the nit
 To pey oorsels for crackin' it.

To mak' a heav'n for wife an' weans
 Is worth a serkfu' o' sair banes.

J. G. HORNE.

CHERCHEZ LA FEMME!

(There's aye a lassie in't!)

WHY staun' ye there, ye stookie,
 Wi' face an' haun's sae brookie?
Ye coupit i' the glaur?
 Weel, weel, ye're nane the waur;
 Aff tae the well
 An' wash yersel'!

What's that ye say? *'Twas no your wyte?*
A tow-haired lassie gart ye clyte?
 Eh, man, that tale has saired its day,
 An' looks like sairin' mony mae;
 Ye micht hae gien't a canny miss,
 For, faith, it's auld as Genesis.
 Be thankfu' that ye fell sae saft,
 An' no staun' there sae gaupie-daft!
 What's that? *Ye steevlt owre her fit?*
 The mair fule you for ownin' it:
 Aff tae the well
 Ye gomerel!

J. G. HORNE.

brookie, dirty.
coupit, fell.
glaur, mud.
wyte, blame.
clyte, fall heavily.

saired, served.
gaupie-daft, gaping-silly.
steevlt, stumbled.
gomerel, simpleton.

THE VERSE SPEAKER.

FAIR fa' her grave sweet Scottish tongue
 An' snaw-white heid!
 I could for very joy ha'e sung
 To hear again the lallan leid—
 The canny, kin'ly souch o' the thing,
 Like watters wimplin thro the ling.

The beauty o't
 Lumpt in my throat,
 And aye her lilt
 Had a tang intilt
 That dirled me thro an' thro;
 I could hae kissed the woman's mou'.

Puir, thowless cuif!
 She had me in the hollow o' her luif
 An' couldna help but win me;
 At her ilka word
 A wild young bird
 Wis chirmin, chirmin in me.

J. G. HORNE.

lallan, lowland.*leid*, dialect.*souch*, croon.*ling*, species of rush.*tang*, savour.*dirled*, thrilled.*thowless*, useless.*cuif*, fool.*luif*, palm of the hand.