

RISE OF QUAKERISM—LILLIAS SKENE, THE QUAKER
POETESS.

A GREAT wave of religious excitement passed over our country during the Puritan period, and brought into more or less prominence and notoriety Brownists, Anabaptists, Familists, Millenarians, Antinomians, Libertines, Seekers, Perfectists, Böhmenists, and a host of other sects; but of all such, none has equal claims on public notice with the Quakers, if for no other reason than that they have played such a leading part in the history of civil and religious liberty, and made sacrifices which no other body has made in their endeavours to secure some advances in human wellbeing.

Every age has had its apostles of Rationalism under one disguise or another, whether that age recognised them as such or not. Every reformation is brought about, in the first instance, by a revolt of reason against the existing state of affairs, and is only approximately completed when a partial adjustment of affairs to reason has taken place. The chaos in which religious matters in Scotland had weltered during the seventeenth century was the product of such a revolt, and none of the approximate adjustments, then so much in vogue, could completely heal the many and wide breaches which existed in faith and practice. As regards the mere machinery of the church, the adoption of Presbyterianism by the leading reformers had a smack of democracy about it which suited the popular notions, helped to overthrow Popery, and gave to the struggles of the Covenanters against James I., Charles I., and Charles II., a political flavour highly favourable to their success. The same spirit, however, which moved Melville, when he bearded Bancroft to shake the rochet sleeves of the arch-

bishop, and call them "romish rags", began to stir up others against a ritual which buried in its ceremonials the true spirit of godliness, and to shake the forms of clamant churchism, and call them "superstitious rags". It was thus, during the long conflict between Presbyterianism and Episcopacy, that gradually but surely, some streaks of light broke through the intolerance and fanaticism which, for almost a century, had sacrificed in their struggle the best interests of religion and humanity. Men were beginning to weary of this eternal fighting about ritual, and began to discover that religion was a life, not a ritual. Whether God should be worshipped through "a kist o' whistles" or by the more manly "uptakin' o' the psalm" was fighting a mere side issue, and losing sight of the main question. Whether the Lord's supper should be taken kneeling or sitting was of little moment to those who looked to the spiritual side of that sacrament, and ignored its material form. Whether a babe at baptism should have one or a hundred god-fathers was an equally insignificant point for discussion, to those who had come to see nothing but a fragment of superstition in the whole rite. Beginning thus as a phase of rationalism, Quakerism soon merged into mysticism, to come up again after a lapse of almost two hundred years in the rationalism of the Hickites of to-day.

Hence it came about that, in 1662, when William Dewsbury first preached the principles, subsequently recognised as Quakerism in Aberdeen, he found many minds sufficiently prepared for his gospel in a small band of quasi-Independents, who ten years before had separated from the Establishment, and had a temporary meeting place in the old Greyfriars monastery.

Among the earliest converts to the new doctrine in Aberdeen no more saintly soul appears than that which possessed Lillias Gillespie or Skene, wife of Baillie Alexander Skene of Newtyle, the well-known author of "Memorials for the Government of the Royal Burghs of Scotland". She was born in 1626, and belonged to the same family as Patrick Gillespie, principal of Glasgow University, and was related to the Fifeshire family of that name, which produced George Gillespie of covenanting celebrity. She was married to Alexander Skene about 1650,

and not only moved in the best society of the town, but was held in great estimation for her worth of character and high religious attainments. Her husband was a merchant in Aberdeen; and from 1649 to 1671 held office in the Town Council, as Treasurer, Dean of Guild, and Baillie, besides being a leading man in the church courts. He held the small freehold of Newtyle till about 1685, when it passed into the hands of a William Gordon.

Very little notice was taken of Quakerism in Aberdeen until it drew into its ranks some of the leading inhabitants. Among these we notice Margaret Smith, wife of Baillie Gilbert Mollison, whom contemporary satire is said to have described as wearing thin her knees through the frequency of her devotions. She died in 1669, and was buried in St. Nicholas churchyard, three lairs south of Back Wynd gate, where a stone built into the wall, with the letters G. M. M. S. rudely cut towards its upper left-hand corner, for long marked her resting place. A more recent stone in front gives the names and dates. Such another was Margaret Scott, wife of Baillie John Scott. Her husband, from the commencement, was, and continued to be, a violent opponent of Quakerism. In 1673 (April 23) he informed the Council "that Alexander Harper was causing the recently demolished walls of the Quaker burial ground to be rebuilt, and that he put a stop to the same, and destroyed them". He received the approval of the Council. To these the name of another baillie's wife was soon added, by Lillias Skene joining the new sect, and very shortly after her husband took the same step. The infant sect appears to have met for worship at this time in one another's houses, in the teeth of an Act of Council which forbade such, under heavy penalties.—*Council Register, 16th December, 1663.*

To stand idly aside while such sheep were wandering from the fold was not in clerical human nature. The "three priests of Aberdeen" (as Barclay called them) David Lyall, George Meldrum, and John Menzies—were soon on the alert, and were the bitterest and most violent persecutors that the exponents of the new opinions had to cope with. Sunday after Sunday in the city pulpits, either or all of these ministers set up men of straw as representing Quakerism, and, of course, demolished

them to their own satisfaction. Denunciation and raillery are more easily managed than argument, and the clergy of these times had early made the discovery. To describe men as “blasphemous”—“distracted”—“possessed of the devil”—“foes to social stability”, &c., may set popular feeling against, but can never convert, them. In fact, when we think upon it now-a-days, it looks very ludicrous to find the clergymen of Aberdeen in 1663 persecuting men for changing their opinions; for never in the history of our church were there such ecclesiastical weathercocks as those ministers themselves. They changed their opinions with as little discomfort, and probably about as often, as they changed their linen; except perhaps in such cases as those of our townsmen, Menzies and Forbes, whose long-winded and laborious vehemence in the pulpit was such that they had to change their shirts after every sermon!

Of the growth and development of the religious life in Lillias Skene, a curious relic has been preserved in a manuscript volume of verses written by her between 1665 and the year of her death, 1697. Though most of these verses are directly related to her own spiritual experiences, and are full of that dreamy, subtle mysticism, peculiar to the compositions of all highly strung religious minds which persist in searching introspection, yet some of them have a distinct bearing on incidents of no small importance in the local history of the sect. The first poem in the volume, under date 1665, entitled “On Growing Tryalls”, and which, opening thus—

When Israel in Egyptland
 Did grone for libertie,
 From under strangers' cruel hand
 And Pharoah's tyrannie ;

Then was their tale of brick increast,
 And tax masters did more
 Afflict them, that they had no rest,
 Throw toyle and labour sore.

Even so the Lord doth at this day
 With Abra'm's faithful seed ;

gives a clear indication of her tendencies at that period—being a godly ballad on how, when people are struggling for spiritual freedom, they cannot but expect (as illustrated in Scripture

history) greater griefs and tyrannies than usual to befall them. Her first decided step, however, to Quakerism was not taken until next year, when, on 4th July, 1666, the Council appointed the first day of August for celebrating the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. 'Twas then she wrote "*A song of praise when the Lord first revealed to me His mynd that I should not joyne in the Comunion at Aberdecne, 1666*". The manuscript referred to, which is all in her own handwriting, with the exception of a few pages written by her husband and her daughter Anna, contains in all thirty-three pieces, three of which are anagrams—one on her own name, Lillias Gillespie, one on Alexander Skene, one on Patrick Skene. We give the first as a sample:—

LILLIAS GILLESPIE

Doth yield this anagram—"Al ills I'll dispel".

Into my name I many ills doe see,
 Yett in my heart feel many more to be :
 Since evils with me doe so much abound,
 Sinfull, or penaltis doe me still surround,
 I will make vertu of necessitie,
 Employ the Son of God to make me frie ;
 He who performeth all things for me will
 My anagramme make good—my ills dispell.

Six of the pieces refer directly to events in the history of the sect between 1668 and 1681, a period during which they passed through the fires of persecution heaped upon them—by the kirk, students, populace, and civil powers—with a firmness and persistence which conquered all. The remaining contents of the manuscript consist of a number of hymns relating to her own personal states of mind and spiritual experiences, with now and again a godly ballad, in which consolation is sought in detailing the workings of Providence as recorded in Scripture, bringing light out of darkness, good out of evil, to those who trust in God's love and mercy. Many of these are very beautiful, although they lack the general interest which attach to those connected with events which have long since been woven into the history of early Quakerism. Taking these latter in chronological order, we find, under date "21st, 7th month, 1668" (in her husband's hand) "*Ane answer to a nameless authour of a letter wrot full of mistakes and groundless challenges,*

with reflexions upon truth, this nameless authour is supposed to be G. M.—for R. N. T. D. B.”

Thy queries all I answere come and see;
 Then shall thou know the doctrine if it be
 Of God or not, when thou hath done his will.
 Iff what's already knowne, thou doe fulfill,
 Then with me come, bow downe thy neck, and take
 The cross of Christ, and beare shame for his sake.
 And tho' thy outward trouble doe not cease,
 Thou'l reap an hundred-fold in inward peace.
 I answere all the threat'nings breathed 'gainst me,
 The Lord's my suretie, shamed I cannot be;
 Thy calumies and misreports I leave,
 No time for jangling nor for jeast I have.
 Iff thou be one who to God's holy hill
 Seeks to ascend, and there desires to dwell,
 Receave no false reports against thy brother
 Proceeding from the mouth of one or other.

The “G. M.”, to whom Baillie Skene refers, was George Meldrum, who had been a regent in Marischal College, but was called in 1658 to be one of the ministers of the town—Baillie Skene being a prominent supporter of the call. He was suspended for non-conformity, from October to December, 1662, when he was again reinstated, and signed the promise and profession of canonical obedience. He was considered by some of his contemporaries to be “a man of great knowledge, learning, grace, pious conversation, and utterance”. Lillias Skene had been a special favourite of his, and her deflexion from orthodoxy must have incensed him considerably against the Quakers. Those who are curious to learn Meldrum's connection with the Quaker controversy will find an account of it in the preface and appendix to Barclay's “Truth Cleared of Calumnies, 1670”.

The many pictures of spiritual “tryalls and conflicts” which occur in verses of Lillias Skene had objective counterparts in the imprisonments, finings, buffetings in the street, and insults in their own meetings, which to Quakers were then matters of every-day experience. If Lillias Skene was secure from these, she did not in her retirement forget those who were bearing the burden and heat of the day. To one such incident the following refers:—

UPON THE IMPRISONMENT OFF FRIENDES FOR THE TRUTHIE AT MONTROSE
THE 8TH OF THE 10TH MO. 1671-72.

By patient sufferings, long imprisonments,
Resisting unto blood and banishments,
The auncient worthies crueltie o'recam;
Treading their steps we witnes shall the same.
Through manifold and weighty tryalls they
Wydned the doore for us and pav'd our way,
So must we now for those who shall succeed
Goe as the needle throw before the thread;
And that we may prepare the way for those
Who follow, reckon nought too deare to lose.
When Christ to God his soul for sin did make
A living sacrifice for sinners' sake;
He of the travail of his soul did see,
Was satisfied in th' seedes prosperitie;
In suff'ring death his days he did prolong,
Obtain'd a portion with the rich and strong.
This divine nature and enduring love
Flows downward in all ages to promove
The seedes enlarg'ment, Truth's dominion
That our opposers all may see us one;
One Lord, one faith, one building, one foundation,
One gyde, one government, one consolation,
One lyffe, one love, one peace, one joy, one way,
One in our principles, our strength our stay,
One mark, one pryze, one hope, one expectation,
One crowne of glory, one compleit consolation.
In lyffe, in death, in bonds, at libertie
In Christ we're one, O glorious mysterie!

The circumstances on which the above was composed are fully detailed in John Barclay's "Memoirs of the Rise and Persecutions of the Quakers", p. 252. Quakerism for some time had been making advances in and around Montrose, and the local magistracy being much exercised in their endeavours to put down its meetings, had communicated with the Privy Council anent William Napier—who convened them in his house "to the great scandal of religion, and disturbance of the peace and quiet of the burgh"—and represented the Quakers as "deboshed in their principles". It was from the house of the said William Napier that the deputation of Quakers from Aberdeen were marched off to prison on the above date.

In Aberdeen, Meldrum and Menzies, the town's ministers,

did all in their power to inflame the magistrates against the Quakers. This Menzies belonged to the Pitfodels family; was born in 1624; appointed one of the ministers of St. Nicholas Church, 1647; became professor of divinity in Marischal College, 1649; and, in 1652, was made minister of Greyfriars kirk. In 1662, he was suspended for two months to give him time to consider the necessity of conforming to Episcopacy. He was in succession a Papist, Presbyterian, Independent, Anabaptist, and Episcopalian; and died in 1684, and was buried in St. Nicholas Churchyard—a northern vicar of Bray! The following excerpts from the Council Registers will show the attitude of the civil power to the Quakers in Aberdeen. “*15 February, 1670, an Act anent setting houses to Papists and Quakers, or accepting of them.* In spite of all attempts otherwise it is found that Papists and Quakers have frequent meetings and conventicles within this burgh, to the contempt of authority and scandal of the Gospel”;—no inhabitant “sall resett, supplie, entertaine, or furnish meat and drink, and keep correspondence with, or sett houses or chambers to Jesuits, priests, or trafficking strangers, Papists or Quakers, or permit them to keep meetings or conventicles within their houssis upon whatsoever pretext” under penalty “500 merks, loss of freedom, or banishment, unless the magistrates give liberty to resett or lodge the same”. 16 March, 1670, the Quakers still continuing to meet, it was enacted that “the men Quakers at one next meeting be apprehended and imprisoned”; and for fear the women should continue to meet “the doors of the houses where they ordinarily meet to be kept close, and the keys taken from them”. The war of pamphlets had begun. Barclay, the young apologist, had newly entered the field, and had put a feather in his cap by extinguishing that “stable Christian”, William Mitchell, catechist at Footdee, and his vaunted “Dialogue”. But while queries and replies, dialogues and counter-dialogues, were being thrown off, fierce and hot on both sides, anent questions of doctrine, the attention of the Council was called to a question of practice, which touched the vitals, by touching the purse-strings of the venerable kirk. The Quakers, having many objections to the interment of their dead in the city church-

yards, walled in a piece of ground belonging to themselves in the Gallowgate, and set it aside for burial purposes. The Council, as we learn from their records, being informed that "Thomas Milne, cordiner, ane profest Quaker, had buried ane chyld of his, in ane kail-yard in the east syde of the Gallowgate", had the corpse taken up and buried at "Futtie chapell", shut Thomas' shop, deprived him of liberty, ordered him out of the burgh, and demolished the walls of the "kail-yard". This was in November, 1671. The Quakers quietly rebuilt the walls. Thomas did not leave the town, but in June, 1672, buried, "ane other chyld in the kail-yard", which again coming to the ears of the Council, was removed to "Futtie", Thomas being mulcted in £20 Scots. "Taking into consideration the results of such practices on the revenue of the kirk", the Council again ordered the demolition of the walls, and the ground to be applied to its former "kail" bearing uses. The magistrates, in order to strengthen their position, petitioned the King's Council at Edinburgh anent this practice, but that body declined to interfere. With more persistence than judgement, they now attempted to turn the "Conventicles Act" against the Quakers, denouncing them from the Market Cross as rebels against the State. Their meetings were invaded by noisy and tipsy disputants, challenging them to debate. This culminated in the famous dispute between some students of divinity on one side, and Barclay and Keith the Quakers on the other. Baillie Skene was one of the presidents at this meeting, which was held "in Alexander Harper his close (or yard) upon the 14th day of the 2nd month (April), 1675". Both parties claimed the victory in their separately published accounts of the affair; but Quakerism added considerably to its ranks after it. Such, however, was the antipathy against them that we find some books of theirs, which were being printed by John Forbes, "seasit", and the bishop acquainted therewith (*Coun. Reg., 1 Mar., 1676*). In 1676, and again in 1677, Baillie Skene and many others were in prison. On both occasions they were heavily fined; and in default of payment, George Melvill, who had been elected in 1669 captain-lieutenant over the "six-score men" that formed "the burges company of foot for the militia", was empowered to distrain

them. While Baillie Skene was thus lying in a dirty, dark, and over-crowded cell in the Tolbooth, and Melvill making free with his cattle—his wife wrote “*A warning to the magistrates and inhabitants of Aberdeen, 31st 1st month, 1677*” (given fully in Barclay’s “*Memoirs*”, p. 294) and at the same date among her poems we also find one of those long ballad pieces we have spoken of, entitled “*Some lessons learned in the light of Jesus and the inward exercise of the soul:—in the same also, they are communicat for the good of others. Copied out to Jn. Thomson*”. It opens thus—

The darkest houre is ever nearest day;
 And tryalls deep for mercies great make way,
 When powers of darknes, hell, and death assaille,
 When hope is gone, and human help doth faille,
 The Lord is neare, his present help appeares,
 Gives secret strength, our doore of erreore cleares.

My lashes many are indeed,
 Yett are my lessons more;
 In waight and number they exceed,
 And are laid up in store.
 Some of them memorable, I
 Have by experience bought,
 As Succoth’s elders, who were by
 The thorns and briars taught.

and runs on for 16 eight-line stanzas, in which she enumerates many Scripture incidents as running parallel to her own personal experience, and bearing over all a strong similarity in method of treatment to those godly ballads of Walter Cullen’s, of which we have given examples. The John Thomson, for whom the “lessons” had been copied out, is no doubt the poor old man mentioned in Barclay’s “*Memoirs*” (p. 274) as having “been a soldier in the King’s service at the battle of Worcester, was taken prisoner, and sent a slave to Barbadoes, where he remained five years”. About the same time she also penned the following:—

Some thinges concerning freindes in Prison, which came before me in the tyme of my sickness; to be delyvered to them.

My freindes, stand fast, lett none affrayed be,
 And in this winnowing season faint not yee;

But feel yourselves so fixed on the rock,
 That present sufferings may not thence you knock.
 O! let your love, your patience, and your hope
 Outlive a prison, yea, a whip or rope;
 Outlive the malice, and outlive the pryde
 Off truth's opposers all on every syde.
 For sure the Lord will trouble them at lenthe,
 Who still to trouble you employ their strenthe,
 As Pharoah's might and host shall by the Lord
 Be overthrowne and left upon record
 That ages yett to come may see his hand,
 And heare and feare to break his just command.
 But ere his glorious name shall thus appeare
 Freindes, tryalls may encrease more close and neare;
 Freindes, mark it, for it opens in the light
 Delyverance comes not by man's help or might.
 The tryalls come to diffrence and to prove
 What wisdom's from below, what from above.
 The zeall, the meeknes and humilitie,
 The love and lyffe, the faith and constancie,
 His graces all, he'l have in exercise
 That which he calleth up may sacrifice.
 For some who think they stand, may flee the feild,
 And to the adversary their weapons yild;
 The selfe-denyall and the resignation
 Best knowne is, through sutable temptation;
 Some may have constancie that wanteth love,
 The-manly pairt may filshing dissaprove,
 Yett something still remaines that proves him nought,
 When Gideon's armies to the watters brought.
 The meeke and lowly living ones are they
 Who shall be overcomers in this day,
 And take the kingdome, and obtaine the crowne
 Of Glory, victorie, and great renowne.
 The living in Jerusalem, I say,
 Shall sound the trumpet, and shall take the prey.
 So till the Lord your further service have,
 You and your present work with him I leave,
 Who doth his vynyard watter momently,
 And watcheth over it continuallie.

The 5th of the 10th mo., 1677.

In another piece, written at the same time as the above, she calls on the Christian warrior, now that the "service growes hott" and the victory is in sight—

Come all ye mightie men, bring forth your sheild,
 Yee valiant ones appeare now in the feild;
 All ye expert in warre gird on your thigh
 Your swords, so as in readines yee be;
 Yea, breastplate, buckler, helmet, and a sheild,
 That none unharnash'd may goe to the feild
 When called forth to serve the living God,
 Whether to fight at home or serve abroad.
 With loynes girt, armed all yee may be found
 Whene'er the trumpet gives the certaine sound.

More "*Comfort for the Captives*" was written on the 2nd of the 11th month, 1677—but, happily, the period when captivity for religious opinions was more than a possibility was drawing to a close; for, through the exertions of Robert Barclay, such influence was brought to bear on the Government of the time that the prison doors closed for the last time on persistent Quakers on the 4th November, 1679. The more rational mode of treatment, by discussion through books and pamphlets, continued, however, with all the virulence and bitterness which only religious animosity can evoke. It is to one of these very bitter attacks on Quakerism—to wit, Brown's "Quakerism the Pathway to Paganism, with a postscript by R.M.C.", printed at Amsterdam for the Edinburgh booksellers in 1678—that we are indebted for some slight autobiographic notes of our authoress. This Brown of Wamphray had been banished for non-conformity in 1662, and died in Holland in 1679. The author of the postscript was Robert Macquare, who had been a minister in Glasgow, and was imprisoned in Edinburgh, along with Patrick Gillespie and others, in 1661, for protesting against the King's power in treaties of peace and war, and was latterly banished, when he went to Holland. Besides the attack on Quakerism noted above, Macquare was also the author of another on Samuel Rutherford's "Letters"; and Lillias Skene wrote from Newtyle, in 1678, an expostulatory letter to him anent these doings. She reminds him of the occasion of their first acquaintance, how it was "in a very serious season with both of us", how he was shut up a close prisoner in daily expectation of the sentence of death, and how she yet remembers, and has a very fresh sense of his deliverance from that position. She then goes on to tell him of the experiences

she has had since then—experiences which make her a true witness of his misrepresentation of things. “I am a witness, when the Lord called me out from among the Presbyterians, I was one who, according to my education, and information, and inclination from my childhood, a true lover of that called the glorious gospel—the messenger’s feet that published it were beautiful to me so long as the ordinances of men were unto me as the ordinances of God.” She then goes over the ground of her adoption of Quakerism, which is little other than a good prose version of the poems we have been making our selections from.

In her book of verses we find “*A consideration of the duty requisit under reproches*”, which has evident reference to this postscript of Macquare’s.

Deare Hezekiah went to God
 With Rabshakah his railing,
 And humbled was under the rod,
 By weeping and bewailing,

The adversar’s reproach and pryde,
 His hatred, and his lies,
 And laying feare of God asyde,
 Inventing calumnies.

Before the Lord he spread his wordes,
 And did implore his aide,
 For hee was pierced as with swordes
 With what he did upraide.

No sooner, however, had the pressure of outside foes begun to relax—no sooner were their meetings free from the unseemly conduct of intruders, and their persons and property safe from the violence of all opponents—than discord began to creep into the little band who had hitherto, “in unity of the spirit and the bond of peace”, overcome all difficulties and struggled into consistant life, shoulder to shoulder, as one man. Alexander Harper and Isabella Keilo, following after the English apostates, Rogers and Bugg, began to shed “jealousies and evil surmisings”, “dissatisfaction and reproches”, among their brethren in worship. These circumstances, fully noted in Barclay’s “Memoirs” (p. 333), are the subject of one of Lillias Skene’s poems, entitled—

*Efter some unjust reproaches which were met with in the
ij month from I. K., 1681-1682.*

Come, cure my many bruses, Lord,
By thy sweet healing lyffe,
By mingling of thy sweetning love
In watters full of stryfe.

They are become so bitter, and
So bloody, yea they stink;
Those fish doe rott, and die also,
At Babel's streams who drink.

Thou mighty arme who brought me out
Safely from Egipt land,
From Babel's streams my soul conduct,
And lead me by the hand.

Make me to know the place which thou
Prepared hath for me,
Make me to know those wings wherewith
I thither am to flee.

The tyme and tymes and half the tyme,
Which there I must abyde:
Till those calamaties be past,
Thy shaddow will me hyde.

Dispell all that obscures thy shyning light,
Make pure my heart, and in it shine more bright,
That I with clearnes may distinctly see,
Each motion that's from selfe, and what's from thee.
And when I meet with unjust accusation,
Lett me obtaine thy inward approbation,
O lett the sense of it with me remaine,
In feeling the selfe-justifier slaine.
My present work is to abyde with thee
In all temptationes that befalleth me,
Which thou permitts, or suffers, or else send
Things to discover, and things to amend.
My night of trouble is dark and verie long,
The watter's verie deepe I'm come among;
I feel no ground, I can discerne no shoares,
The waves doe swell, the storms hath broke myne oars;
All broke and shattered thou God seith me,
Thou knew my soul when in adversitie;
In deepe distress thou knowes the way I take,
Make haste to save me, for thy mercies' sake.

Lett me not guess at causes of my grieff,
 But be inspired with a firme beleff,
 That I no more may of thy love be doubtfull,
 Because of teares to drink, I have my cupfull;
 That all my sines are pardoned, testifie;
 A heart to pardon others, giving me.

These, then, are all the verses in Lillias Skene's manuscript to which an objective origin can be traced in the circumstances of the time. The vast majority of pieces still unnoticed are, in point of literary workmanship, no whit better than those we have given—some few of them worse. They all bespeak a state of mind single in its aims, simple in its absorbing trustfulness in God, keenly introspective and watchful over its motives. In fact, one cannot rise from their perusal without a strong sense of the high spirituality of the author's nature, and the entire saintliness of her character. Before closing the book, we will give one or two examples more:—

TRUE LYFFE.

The nipping, frostie, stormie blasts
 As advantagious prove
 To herbs and fruit trees, and at last,
 Their increase doth promove,

As sun-shyne blinks, and summer showers,
 In their appointed season,
 Doe send forth pleasant plants and flowers,
 Agreeable to reason.

The lyffe of thinges, not being bound
 So much to what appeareth,
 As in the root and underground
 It lurketh and retireth.

When flowres doe fade, and leaves and fruit
 From everie tree doth fall,
 The living substance in the root
 Remaines untoucht at all.

And each retirement of this sap
 A fresh spring issues in:
 Which is of spirituall thinges a map—
 Throw death, lyffe doth begin.

SAMPSON'S RIDDLE.

Now Sampson's riddle I have read,
 Forward and back againe,
 Both wayes, as iff I spelled had,
 Before me it's as plaine.

The bitterest tryalls I have past
 Or in my day have knowne,
 The sweetest mercies have at last
 To me through them been showne.

What seem'd to swallow and devoure,
 And on my flesh did feed,
 Was made my soule's lyffe to restore,
 And give strength to the seed.

Againe, thinges I desired most
 In all the whole creation,
 Throw these I was most hurt and crost
 By burdens and temptation.

Both when obtained and deny'd,
 They have afflictions been;
 This by experience I have tryed
 And very clearely seen.

The rose of Sharon only I
 Have found without a briar,
 When toucht and sweetly savour'd by
 The sences pure and cleare.

Wherefore, my chastened soule, retire
 Unto thy place of rest,
 Lett no temptation come so neare
 Thy quyet to molest.

Abstract from all, cease from desires,
 Forbeare to have a will,
 Wait till thou know what God requyres,
 Which cheerefully fullfill.

Whose power is only pryed by
 That soule whom he hath weaned
 And disciplin'd, till it deny
 The breasts to which it leaned.

20th 9th mo., 1674.

Her husband died, full of years and honours, in 1693, and was buried at Kingswells, the seat of his son-in-law, Andrew

Jaffray. He was a man of great public spirit, and loved his native town dearly. Under his direction, in 1649, the Blockhouse was renewed and cannon for defence planted at it. In 1658, his name appears among the subscribers for additional buildings to King's College. He rebuilt, at his own expense, the Well of Spa, which yet stands in the same form as he left it, and he got the Council to re-print Barclay's celebrated treatise on the medicinal virtues of its waters. He was also the author of the earliest history of our town—"A Succinct Survey of the Famous City of Aberdeen, printed by John Forbes, 1685"—appended to his larger work, "Memorialls for the Government of the Royall-Burghs of Scotland". His wife survived him barely four years; her little household numbering, besides herself, her daughter Anna, and two servants, Marjorie Robertstone and Margaret Couper. Still she continued her verse writing, and in one piece dated 11th month, 1693, the date of her husband's death, while returning thanks for help in a needful hour, mourns—"But oh, my sweet is gone". Again, in 1695, there is a curiously mystical, in some passages almost unintelligible, piece, beginning

I have three times been visited
In body and in mynd.

The last piece of all, written in a younger hand, no doubt that of her daughter Anna, is dated and initialed in the same way as all the others are—"25th day of March, the 1st month, 1697, L. S." Three months later, in the language of the Meeting Records, "it pleased the Lord our God to bring to the sweet harbour of his everlasting rest, a long-tossed vessel upon the waves of many afflictions—Lillias Gillespie or Skene, 21st of the 4th month, 1697". She was buried beside her husband at Kingswells. The manuscript, from which these verses were copied more than thirty years ago, was then in the possession of the late Mr. William Smith, tea merchant, Union Street. It bore the following inscription:—"This booke pertaines to Lillias Skene, and is for containing some verses upon severall subjects made by her severall yeares agoe, this 12th of the 12th month, 1675-6". The original manuscript would seem to be no longer in existence; inquiries made regarding it some years ago proved fruitless, except for the fact that an old book

answering to the description of the missing manuscript had been burned among waste paper some time after Mr. Smith's death. In the event of such having been its fate, we are glad to have the means of handing down to, we hope, a not altogether unappreciative posterity, specimens of the versicles of the gentle Quakeress.
