

## THE BATTLE OF SHERIFF-MUIR.

The meeting between the clans under the Earl of Marr, and the royal forces under the Duke of Argyle, at Sheriff-muir, near Dunblane, on the 13th of November 1715, with its wavering proceedings and uncertain issue, as also the particular behaviour of many of the chief persons on both sides, are all cleverly and clearly described in the following contemporary song, the writer of which appears to have enjoyed the poor conduct of both parties with great impartiality. The air to which he composed his verses is one styled *John Paterson's Mare rides foremost*, being that of a rough ballad descriptive of the confused horse-race which used to take place at all country bridals long ago, between the home of the bride's father and that of her husband ; of which ballad a specimen follows :

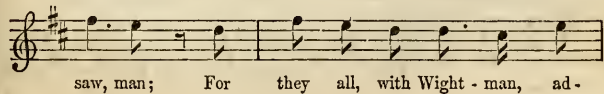
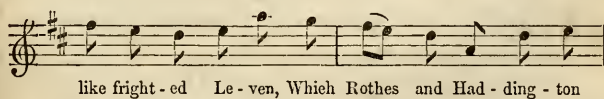
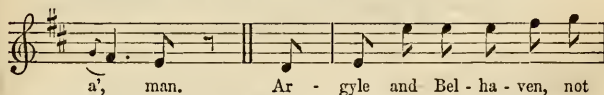
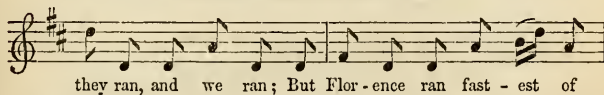
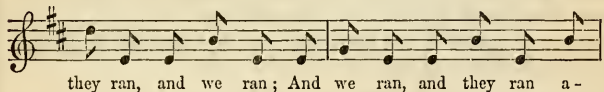
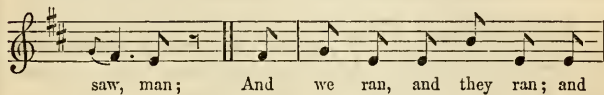
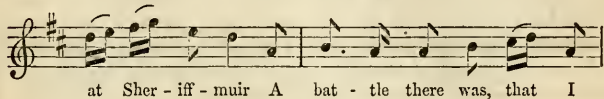
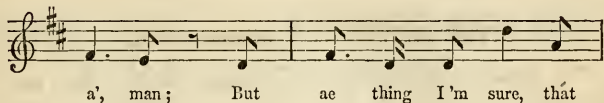
The black and the brown  
 Cam nearest the town,  
 But Paterson's mare she came foremost ;  
 The dun and the gray  
 Kept farthest away,  
 But Paterson's mare she came foremost.  
 Fy, whip her in, whip her out,  
 Six shillings in a clout,  
 O'er the kirk-style and away wi' her !

One can discern a deep comic sense in the poet's adoption of such a strain for the description of a battle which was to decide the fate of dynasties, but only shewed the miserable effects of inferior discipline and generalship.

There's some say that we wan, And  
 some say that they wan, And some say that nane wan at

## THE BATTLE OF SHERIFF-MUIR.

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vanced on the right, man, While others took flight, be - ing  
raw, man. And we ran, and they ran, &c.

There's some say that we wan, and some say that they wan,  
And some say that nane wan at a', man ;  
But ae thing I'm sure, that at Sheriff-muir  
A battle there was, that I saw, man ;  
And we ran, and they ran ; and they ran, and we ran ;  
And we ran, and they ran awa', man.

Brave Argyle and Belhaven,<sup>1</sup> not like frightened Leven,<sup>2</sup>  
Which Rothes<sup>3</sup> and Haddington<sup>4</sup> saw, man ;  
For they all, with Wightman,<sup>5</sup> advanced on the right, man,  
While others took flight, being raw, man.

Lord Roxburgh<sup>6</sup> was there, in order to share  
With Douglas,<sup>7</sup> who stood not in awe, man,  
Volunteerly to ramble with Lord Loudoun Campbell ;<sup>8</sup>  
Brave Ilay<sup>9</sup> did suffer for a', man.

<sup>1 2 3 4</sup> Lord Belhaven, the Earl of Leven, and the Earls of Rothes and Haddington, who all bore arms as volunteers in the royal army.

<sup>5</sup> Major-general Joseph Wightman, who commanded the centre of the royal army.

<sup>6</sup> John, first Duke of Roxburgh, a loyal volunteer.

<sup>7</sup> Archibald, Duke of Douglas, who commanded a body of his vassals in the royal army.

<sup>8</sup> Hugh Campbell, third Earl of Loudoun, of the royal army.

<sup>9</sup> The Earl of Ilay, brother to the Duke of Argyle. He came up to the field only a few hours before the battle, and had the misfortune to be wounded.

Sir John Shaw,<sup>1</sup> that great knight, with broadsword most bright,  
 On horseback he briskly did charge, man ;  
 A hero that's bold, none could him withhold,  
 He stoutly encountered the targemen.

For the cowardly Whittam,<sup>2</sup> for fear they should cut him,  
 Seeing glittering broadswords with a pa', man,  
 And that in such thrang, made Baird aid-du-camp,  
 And from the brave clans ran awa', man.

The great Colonel Dow gaed foremost, I trow,  
 When Whittam's dragoons ran awa', man ;  
 Except Sandy Baird, and Naughton, the laird,  
 Their horse shewed their heels to them a', man.

Brave Marr and Panmure<sup>3</sup> were firm, I am sure ;  
 The latter was kidnapped awa', man ;  
 But with brisk men about, brave Harry<sup>4</sup> retook  
 His brother, and laughed at them a', man.

Grave Marshall<sup>5</sup> and Lithgow,<sup>6</sup> and Glengary's<sup>7</sup> pith, too,  
 Assisted by brave Logie A'mon',<sup>8</sup>  
 And Gordons the bright, sae boldly did fight,  
 The red-coats took flight and awa', man.

<sup>1</sup> Sir John Shaw of Greenock, an officer in the troop of volunteers, noted for his keen Whiggish spirit.

<sup>2</sup> Major-general Whitham, who commanded the left wing of the king's army.

<sup>3</sup> James, Earl of Panmure.

<sup>4</sup> The Honourable Harry Maule of Kellie, brother to the foregoing, whom he recaptured after the engagement.

<sup>5 6</sup> The Earls of Marischal and Linlithgow.

<sup>7</sup> The chief of Glengary.

<sup>8</sup> Thomas Drummond of Logie Almond.

Strathmore<sup>1</sup> and Clanronald<sup>2</sup> cried still, 'Advance, Donald!'  
 Till both of these heroes did fa', man ;  
 For there was sic hashing, and broadswords a-clashing,  
 Brave Forfar<sup>3</sup> himsel got a claw, man.

Lord Perth<sup>4</sup> stood the storm, Seaforth<sup>5</sup> but lukewarm,  
 Kilsyth<sup>6</sup> and Strathallan<sup>7</sup> not slaw, man ;  
 And Hamilton<sup>8</sup> pled the men were not bred,  
 For he had no fancy to fa', man.

Brave, generous Southesk,<sup>9</sup> Tullibardine<sup>10</sup> was brisk,  
 Whose father, indeed, would not draw, man,  
 Into the same yoke, which served for a cloak,  
 To keep the estate 'twixt them twa, man.

Lord Rollo,<sup>11</sup> not feared, Kintore<sup>12</sup> and his beard,  
 Pitsligo<sup>13</sup> and Ogilvie<sup>14</sup> a', man,  
 And brothers Balfours, they stood the first stours ;  
 Clackmannan<sup>15</sup> and Burleigh<sup>16</sup> did claw, man.

<sup>1</sup> The Earl of Strathmore, killed in the battle.

<sup>2</sup> The chief of Clanranald.

<sup>3</sup> The Earl of Forfar—on the king's side—wounded in the engagement.

<sup>4</sup> James, Lord Drummond, eldest son of the Earl of Perth, was lieutenant-general of horse under Marr, and behaved with great gallantry.

<sup>5</sup> William Mackenzie, fifth Earl of Seaforth.

<sup>6</sup> The Viscount Kilsyth.

<sup>7</sup> The Viscount Strathallan.

<sup>8</sup> Lieutenant-general George Hamilton, commanding under the Earl of Marr.

<sup>9</sup> James, fifth Earl of Southesk.

<sup>10</sup> The Marquis of Tullibardine, eldest son of the Duke of Athole.

<sup>11</sup> Lord Rollo.

<sup>12</sup> The Earl of Kintore.

<sup>13</sup> Lord Pitsligo.

<sup>14</sup> Lord Ogilvie, son of the Earl of Airly.

<sup>15</sup> Bruce, Laird of Clackmannan—the husband, I believe, of the old lady who knighted Robert Burns with the sword of Bruce, at Clackmannan Tower.

<sup>16</sup> Lord Burleigh. He was an excitable person—almost a madman—and at this time a condemned criminal, having murdered a schoolmaster for marrying a country girl he was in love with.

But Cleppan<sup>1</sup> acted pretty, and Strowan,<sup>2</sup> the witty,  
 A poet that pleases us a', man ;  
 For mine is but rhyme, in respect of what's fine,  
 Or what he is able to draw, man.

For Huntly<sup>3</sup> and Sinclair,<sup>4</sup> they baith played the tinkler,  
 With consciences black like a crow, man ;  
 Some Angus and Fife men, they ran for their life, man,  
 And ne'er a Lot's wife there at a', man !

Then Lawrie, the traitor, who betrayed his master,  
 His king, and his country, and a', man,  
 Pretending Marr might give order to fight  
 To the right of the army awa', man ;

Then Lawrie, for fear of what he might hear,  
 Took Drummond's best horse, and awa', man ;  
 'Stead of going to Perth, he crossed the Forth,  
 Alongst Stirling Bridge, and awa', man.

To London he pressed, and there he addressed,  
 That he behaved best o' them a', man ;  
 And there, without strife, got settled for life,  
 A hundred a year to his fa', man.

In Borrowstounness, he rides with disgrace,  
 Till his neck stand in need of a draw, man ;  
 And then in a tether, he'll swing from a ladder,  
 And go off the stage with a pa', man.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Major William Clephane.

<sup>2</sup> Alexander Robertson of Struan, chief of the Robertsons.

<sup>3</sup> Alexander, Marquis of Huntly, afterwards Duke of Gordon.

<sup>4</sup> The Master of Sinclair.

<sup>5</sup> These four stanzas seem to refer to a circumstance reported at the time ; namely, that a person had left the Duke of Argyle's army, and joined the Earl of Marr's, before the battle, intending to act as a spy ; and that, being employed by Marr to inform the left wing that the right was victorious, he gave a contrary statement, and, after seeing them retire accordingly, went back again to the royal army.

Rob Roy<sup>1</sup> stood watch on a hill, for to catch  
 The booty, for ought that I saw, man ;  
 For he ne'er advanced from the place he was stanced,  
 Till no more to do there at a', man.

So we all took the flight, and Mowbray the wright,  
 But Lethem, the smith, was a braw man,  
 For he took the gout, which truly was wit,  
 By judging it time to withdraw, man.

And trumpet M'Lean, whose breeks were not clean,  
 Through misfortune he happened to fa', man ;  
 By saving his neck, his trumpet did break,  
 Came aff without music at a', man.

So there such a race was, as ne'er in that place was,  
 And as little chase was at a', man ;  
 From other they ran, without touk of drum,  
 They did not make use of a pa', man.

Whether we ran, or they ran, or we wan, or they wan,  
 Or if there was winning at a', man,  
 There's no man can tell, save our brave generall,  
 Wha first began running awa', man,

Wi' the Earl o' Seaforth, and the Cock o' the North ;<sup>2</sup>  
 But Florence ran fastest ava, man,  
 Save the Laird o' Finhaven,<sup>3</sup> who swore to be even  
 Wi' any general or peer o' them a', man.

And we ran, and they ran ; and they ran, and we ran ;  
 And we ran, and they ran awa', man.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The celebrated Rob Roy. This redoubted hero was prevented, by mixed motives, from joining either party : he could not fight against the Earl of Marr, consistently with his conscience, nor could he oppose the Duke of Argyle, without forfeiting the protection of a powerful friend.

<sup>2</sup> An honorary popular title of the Duke of Gordon.

<sup>3</sup> Carnegie of Finhaven.

<sup>4</sup> From Herd's Collection, 1776, except the sixth and the two last verses, which are added from the *Jacobite Relics*, although they contain a contradiction regarding the conduct of the Earl of Marr.