

A WINDOW IN THRUMS.

I.

A LITTLE cottage just atop the brae,
That now within its patch of ground is shown,
Stood for long years unnoted and unknown,
And light and shadow each in turn did play
Through one small window, till there came a day
When one came upward, not as by his own
Fancy but by genius led alone.
He paused like one whose feet are far astray,
Then reaching forth a consecrating hand
Touched the low walls, and lo! each little room
Became immortal with its humble band.
For Hendry still will bend above his loom,
Jess ever watch, and Leebie take a part
In all; a yearning in her sister's heart.

II.

I will not enter; I but came to see
One little window and the humble door
That now is as a temple—nothing more—
I want to keep my dream, for unto me
The beings at whose touch they were to be,
Live in our fancy, and by fancy's shore,
Dwell in the light that crowns them evermore,
And makes them part of our humanity.
Hush! standing here in all this summer day,
Light all around and glorious clouds above,
I hear faint spirit whispers all around,
As if that little patch were holy ground,
And tender with a dear unspoken love,
And see one sad face as I turn away.

III.

Nay, but another look before we part,
 A day-dream we may fashion as we will,
 And see with open eyes before us still,
 As fancy comes and goes and plies her art,
 Hendry and Jess, and Leeb of loyal heart,
 Rich in all homely ways of homely skill—
 These are not visions that the light can kill,
 They stay with us, and in a higher air,
 Touched with that light which genius only gives,
 Live, not the common round that mortal lives.
 Shall we think of that other* standing there,
 Bearing the burden of his inward pain,
 And desolate amid the desolate rain?

Jamie.*

IF ANY SONG THAT I HAVE SUNG.

IF any song that I have sung
 Should rest a moment on the lips,
 Or linger kindly on the tongue
 Of friends, when death, whose finger tips
 Creep over mouths of men, has set
 His icy touch against my own,
 And I have passed beyond the fret
 Of life, and am no longer known
 Or seen within the simple street,
 Or by the meadows and the rills;
 But sunk within the past, as fleet
 As shadows fade among the hills.
 If such a song should linger still
 On lips behind me, let it be
 A voice that wakens at its will,
 And, singing, brings no thought of me.

THE PLEASURES THAT ARE OLDEN.

We left the dear old house behind,
And where the moon was glancing,
We stood amid the low soft wind,
To hear the feet still dancing.
The moonlight fell upon her hair,
Made golden still more golden ;
There are no pleasures half so fair
As pleasures that are olden.

For what to us were dancing feet,
And what the fiddle playing,
When all the moonlight fell so sweet
And soft the winds were straying.
I felt her hair upon my cheek
Touch like an angel's blessing ;
My heart had not one wish to speak,
So sweet was the caressing.

The years they come, the years they go,
And as they still go stealing,
They take away the early glow
And all the finer feeling.
But still I feel against my cheek
That touch of hair so golden ;
There are no pleasures that can speak
Like pleasures that are olden.

JOSEPH THOMSON.

He sleeps among the hills he knew,
They look upon his early rest.
The winds that in his childhood blew—
They stir the grass upon his breast.

JOSEPH THOMSON

His grave is green in that sweet vale
Where the fair river flows the same;
It rolls, and gathers to its tale
The added memory of his name.

And youth is his: though time extends
The growing years from spring to spring,
He still will be to all his friends
Secure from what their touches bring.

Calm then will be his wished for rest
After the weary toil of feet,
To sleep—the grass above his breast—
And know that perfect peace is sweet.

O better thus than he should lie,
To mingle with no kindred earth,
In the lone desert where the sky
Burns all things into fiery dearth,

And where not even one kindly eye
Could note the grave wherein he slept;
The dusky savage passing by
Would heed it not as on he swept.

But this was not to be: he lies
Near to the murmur of his rills;
He rests beneath our Scottish skies,
And in the silence of his hills.

His feet had travelled far in lands
Where all was strange and ever new;
And he was girt by swarthy bands
That round his eager footsteps drew.

But yet, when spending all his strength,
And when the shadow by his side
The beckoning finger raised at length,
It was not in those lands he died.

JOSEPH THOMSON

The roar of London and the rush
Of all that mighty life he heard—
And then the silence and the hush
By which his early youth was stirred.

Within this hush he sleeps; no call
To feel the wild desire to roam
Around the hills he knew, and all
The well-known fields and paths of home.

His grave is green in that sweet vale
Where the fair Nith flows on the same;
It rolls, and gathers to its tale
The dear possession of his name.

SAM ADAMSON.

SAM ADAMSON, the driver, he
Flung a bunch of waste to me.

“That’s to keep your hands,” he said,
Then he turned and looked ahead.

What a night it was! The rain
Dashed against the cabin pane,

While the winds in frenzy flew—
Tore the very clouds in two.

“Stand well in,” said Sam, “I fear
You will find it stormy here.

“Now, then, Jim, the brake,” and he
Drew the levers back, and we

With a rush, and roar, and grind,
Plunged into the rain and wind.

Then I stood well in. Ahead
Naught but lights—green, white, and red.

Changing as we came in view,
When the shrieking whistle blew.
Over all the sweep and dash
Of the storm I heard the crash
Of the great wheels that, with a clang,
Struck the rails until they rang—
Rang and clicked, as if to beat
Time to the huge demon's feet.
The red spirit hid in steam
From footplate to buffer beam
Bound him till, in very ire,
This swart god of steel and fire,
Each huge muscle, white with strength,
Shook through all his mighty length,
Till his deep breath growing red
Made it crimson overhead.
And at times as on we swung,
Back the furnace doors were flung.
Then the stoker bent and fed
Coiling flames of molten red,
Licking tongues, with hiss and glare,
Like a knot of pythons there.
I, who sang the engine long
Years before in many a song,
Felt the old desire to sing
As I saw him rush and swing;
Felt the grinding of each wheel
Answer piston-strokes of steel;
Felt his molten bosom beat
Till it shook my very feet;

SAM ADAMSON

Knew that all this mass of might
By a fellow on my right

Could be led at his command
Like an infant by the hand.

How this miracle of man,
With a brain to shape and plan,

How he works till everywhere
Genii of the earth and air

Come. He rubs the lamp, and, lo!
Mightier than Prospero,

Bends them with his potent mind
To knee-service of his kind.

Whush—the brake—a shriek or two
From the whistle; we are due,

And at last we stand within
The wild city's restless din.

While the engine, back again,
All his black girth drenched with rain,

Glad to see his journey through,
Gives a weary sigh or two.

Said Sam Adamson, as he
Took the bunch of waste from me,

"Hope you feel yourself all right;
We have had a dirty night;"

Adding, as he wiped his brow,
'Seems a little better now.'

AN AULD, AULD STORY.

O, THERE'S nocht can tak' us back like the broom upon
the brae,
In the auld, auld times that are noo sae far away,
When we gaed an' cam' thegither frae the schule in
summer heat,
It's an auld, auld story, but it's sweet, sweet, sweet.

Is the broom still growin' bonnie on the brae abune
the burn?
If I thocht it was as yellow—O, it's there my feet
would turn,
For my heart is thick wi' fancies, an' a saft, sweet
westlin' win'
Brings its scent up through the years that are noo sae
far ahin'.

It canna be sae yellow as it used to be langsyne—
An' the burn has lost its music that was aye sae sweet
an' fine.
I winna gang an' listen, it wad only mak' me sair,
For the voice it had in boyhood, is a voice it has nae
mair.

We canna noo turn back, for it wad only bring us pain.
We've left a something far ahin' we canna fin' again.
But let the broom wave yellow, an' the burn blink in
the heat,
It's an auld, auld story, but it's sweet, sweet, sweet.

A PERFECT DAY.

THIS is a perfect day to lie
Without one single thought but eye
The wonder of the earth and sky.



A Perfect Day.

T. Corsan Morton

A PERFECT DAY

The clouds that slowly form above,
Or like to snowy vessels move
Through silent seas of peace and love.

The leaf that sways upon the tree,
The very blade of grass I see,
And how it ever came to be.

The streamlets tinkling as they fall,
The birds half hidden as they call,
The winds that send a thrill through all.

The impulse that unfolds the flowers,
By cot or hall or palace towers,
This little fleeting life of ours.

I wonder for I cannot grasp
The secret hidden in their clasp—
Death only can undo the hasp.

It is enough to-day for me
To put aside the mystery,
And wonder at the things I see.

THE SISTERS.

“And the sea gave up the dead which were in it.”

Two sisters stood by the window,
The winds were in their hair;
And cheek to cheek they watched and saw,
The smooth sea sleeping there.

“O sister,” said one, “my heart beats high
For the moving of the sea;
I wait for the rising of the dead,
That will bring my lover to me.

THE SISTERS

“But the sea is calm and no stir is seen,
Yet I know the breath of the Lord
Will blow like a wind on the depths and bring
My lover to keep his word.”

“And I,” said the other sister, “wait
For the moving of the sea;
For there, far down in its gulfs, is one
Who on earth was false to me.

“He sleeps in the depths, with a thousand things
That lie in the caverns there;
And I know, as he sleeps, that upon his breast
Is a lock of my sister’s hair.”

And cheek to cheek the sisters stood,
And breathed as with one breath;
Their eyes set fast on the sleeping sea,
With its hidden things of death.

WHEN FIRST I SAW THE TWEED.

WHEN first I saw the Tweed, the light
Of autumn, tender, sad and grey,
Lay on the Eildon’s triple height,
And lent a sadness to the day.

It fell on field and wood around,
Soft as a single leaf may fall;
It mingled with the river’s sound,
And gave a meaning unto all.

And, as I slowly walked, I felt
An unseen presence step with me,
That gave to field and woodland belt
A universal memory.

WHEN FIRST I SAW THE TWEED

I heard the Tweed, but in its voice
That came to me another rang;
I lent myself to dreams by choice—
I knew the mighty minstrel sang.

And, lo, as at a trumpet call,
I saw knights, grim of look, and bold,
Crash through the lists, or, dying, fall
Within their harness as of old;

I saw the royal pageant glide
In pennoned and in plumed array,
And barons in their armoured pride,
And silken ladies, glad and gay;

Grim warders on each Border keep,
To cry the foray when it nears—
I saw the rough-clad troopers sweep,
The moonlight gleaming on their spears,

All this, as in a mirror, passed,
A dim old world of sunken things,
To waken, as it did at last,
When one great Wizard touched the strings.

He sleeps beside the Tweed to-day,
Whose music mingles with his dream;
And this is why my footsteps stray,
And why I linger by the stream.

Thou river of the minstrel's heart,
Whose latest murmur reached his ear,
Thou soundest, as though far apart—
His only is the voice I hear.

Flow, then, around his sacred dust,
Through the long years that are to be,
And leave the Eildons to their trust,
To sentinel his memory.

A CASTLE OLD AND GREY.

I NEVER see a castle
That is gaunt and grey and grim,
But my thoughts at once go backward
To the past so misty and dim.
To the time when tower and turret,
Kept watch far over the vale;
And along the sounding draw-bridge
Rode knights in their suits of mail.
I see the sunshine glancing
On helmet, pennon, and spear;
And hear from the depth of the forest,
A bugle calling clear.
I fill the hall with visions
Of ladies rich in their bloom;
And stately knights in armour,
And waving with feather and plume.
If I climb the broken stairway,
Where the stone is smooth and fine,
I hear a rustle and whisper,
And footsteps in front of mine.
Whisper of youth and maiden,
As they met in the long ago;
His deep and strong and manly,
Hers tender and sweet and low.
But maiden and youth have vanished,
Away from the scene and the light;
Gone, too, the high-born lady,
And the plumed and armoured knight.
Only the grey old castle,
Of crumbling stone and lime,
Still stands to speak of the ages,
And the iron footsteps of Time.



A Castle Old and Grey

J. D. Finlayson

THE CAGED LARK.

WITHIN an unseen cage he sings,
Hung high above the rush of feet,
He ruffles up his little wings,
This poet of the noisy street.

I stop and look, but all in vain,
He pipes not near a single cloud,
And yet though soft as April rain
His melody is clear and loud.

What makes him sing? He cannot see
The green fields of his native place,
Nor hill and stream, nor glen and tree,
Nor haunts that suit his singing race.

Perchance a single sunbeam floats
About him where the space is dim;
He feels the light, and all his notes
Gush out: it is enough for him.

Bold heart! he knows in his own way
What that sweet touch of sunshine brings
From far-off fields the summer day
Whose light is that to which he sings.

Ah, would that I who stand and hear
His music, he himself unseen,
Could make my doubting heart his peer,
And sing of seasons that have been.

In vain. The narrow streets surround
A dull unthinking brain, and I
Can only touch a note where sound
Is heard, and only heard to die.

But he—he is so strong, and rife
With that large heart of his, that he
Draws from a spot of early life
Enough to make his melody.

THE CAGED LARK

And so he sings, hung far above
The daily round of eager feet,
And pours out from his heart of love
A gush of song upon the street.

THE GAME OF LIFE.

I HEARD a voice—the voice of Fate—
That whispered when the hour was late—
“The past claims all things soon or late.
“The little children on the street,
The youth, strong-limbed and swift of feet,
The bridegroom and the bride so sweet.
“The old man and his life-long mate,
Who watch the fire within the grate
At night when shadows form and wait.
“The king, who wears but for an hour
The golden circle of his power
And feels it a most dangerous dower.
“The warrior, who lays aside
The blood-red banner of his pride,
The sword whose steel perchance is dyed.”
All these and more—they pass from view,
But Life, still eager to pursue,
Whispers, “Shall we the game renew?”
So this came from the lips of Fate—
“Make the first move, I only wait,
The past claims all things soon or late.”