

IN THE DAYS OF NEBUCHADNEZZAR

Jehoiachin was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned three months and ten days in Jerusalem: and he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord.—2 Chronicles xxxvi. 9.

A KING ance ruled in Israel,
But whatna king was he?
No' eident, like a mensefu' scribe,
Nor douce, like Pharisee.
For he was but a wean this king,
An' fain would flee a kite,
Or play at bools, or treel a girr
Like some wee Ishmaelite.

He couldna thole his cooncillors,
An' grat to wear a croon.
He aye sat fidgin' on his throne
When elders gethered roon'.
On Sawbath whiles the royal pew
Within the tabernacle
Was tume, while he jinked doon the burn
Wi' rod an' fishin'-tackle.

The high priest flytit him gey sair,
The prophets garred him grue
Wi' tales o' doom that he jaloused
Micht vera weel come true;
But, still an' on, the lad was thrawn,
An' de'il a haet he steered;
The mighty men o' valour lauched,
Weel pleased he wasna feared.

But, when the captains o' the hosts
Said: "He is but a bairn;
He's daein' fine; ye canna rule
Yer king wi' rod o' airn,"

The priests, the scribes an' Pharisees
Juist pit their pows thegither
An' clypit on him to King Neb—
An' faith! he didna swither

But ordered oot his chariots
An' yokit for a flittin',
An' brocht the lad to Babylon,
As chroniclers ha'e written.
The wee king lost his throne an' a',
His coort went tapselteerie;
But weel he likit Babylon
Whaur he could spin a peerie.

THE WEE FAT STOT

THERE was a wee fat stot, lang syne,
Grazed in a field in Palestine :
He ate his fill frae morn till mirk,
An' thocht to grow a muckle stirk ;
But Fate let flee a weel-aimed shot
Ae waesome day at the wee fat stot.

His maister was a bein auld laird,
Wha wi' twa sons his siller shared ;
Richt douce an' canny was ae brither,
But gey camsteerie was the ither ;
Ane stayed at hame, ane aff did trot
Frae his faither's hoose, an' the wee fat stot.

The feckless chiel was no' content
Till a' his faither's gowd was spent.
He took a job at herdin' swine.
Watchin' the clarty craturs dine,
He thocht on things he'd maist forgot,
His faither's ha', an' the wee fat stot.

Thinks he : " At hame there's rowth o' meat ;
Here there is nocht but brock to eat.
I'm sittin' here wi' gey tume wame ;
I've been a gowk—but I'm for hame.
There even the beasts a roof hae got,
A braw wee byre has the wee fat stot."

The ne'er-dae-weel cam' hirplin' hame,
Said : " Faither, I hae been to blame."
The auld man cried : " I'm gled ye're back :
Come awa' ben an' gi'e's yer crack.
We maun get something in the pot—
Hey! cut the craig o' the wee fat stot."

The canny brither at the yett
Smelt the fine supper steamin' het.
Cries he: "Guid sakes! I've come ower late;
My ill-daein' brither isna blate:
Gin I'm ower saft he'll grab the lot—
But I'll ha'e my share o' the wee fat stot."

The moral to this waesome sang:
While pasture's guid an' days are lang,
Enjoy yersel' an' tak' your sport;
Wha kens when life may be cut short?
Fate deals his dunts, nor cares a jot
For mortal man, or a wee fat stot.

THE TRAGEDY OF ANANIAS

SOME sinners in the Bible story
Get muckle praise, an' gang to glory,
While ithers, for some wee bit fau't,
Are turned like stookies into sau't.
I'm wae for yon chiel Ananias,
Wha gat his paiks for bein' pious.
There's mony a saint wi' truth made freer,
Yet wasna brandit as a leear.
Inspired by zeal an' true devotion,
Puir Ananias took the notion
To sell his croft, an' ilka stirk,
An' gie the siller to the kirk.
" It's mair than we can weel afford,
But, faith! " says he, " we'll please the Lord.
An' as the kirk o' funds is short,
They micht mak' me a deacon for't."

The gude-wife lat him say his say :
A wilfu' man maun hae his way.
As for hersel', she wasna fidgin'
To sell her sark for her religion.
But when the roup was ower, 'tis true,
Her canny husband took the rue.
On Sawbath morn, wi' waefu' e'e,
He said, " Gosh! that's a lot to gie.
The hale jing-bang! I'm in a swither—
We're gyte to gie them't a' thegither!
We'll keep a wee thing to oorsels.
Come on, Sapphira, there's the bells! "

Sae, aff to kirk they took the gate,
Whaur Peter, staun'in' at the plate,

Castin' a glower in their direction,
Jaloused they'd brocht a guid collection.
"The Sustentation Fund," thinks Pate,
"Needs a bit heeze at ony rate."
But syne the saint's neb sniffed the win';
He smelt the foosty smell o' sin.
As Ananias, faur frae blate,
Plunked doon his offerin' in the plate,
The auld apostle speired, fu' wae,
"Is that the best that ye can dae?"

Dumfounert, Ananias stood,
Dashed by the saint's ingratitude,
Then answered, heedless o' decorum,
"That's a' ye'll get, auld cockalorum!
It's ilka boddle I can gie."
Saint Peter answered, "That's a lee!
The Lord hae mercy on yer heid!"—
An' doon drapt Ananias deid.

The young men dragged him oot the gate,
Saint Peter still stood at the plate.
Doon in the darkness o' a dunny
They ryped the corp's pooch for his money.
O, Peter man, it ance befell
Ye tell't a gey big whid yersel',
That garred the very cocks to crawl.
Had ye nae mind o' this ava?

The tragedy was no' complete;
In cam' Sapphira trig an' neat.
Smilin' she gaed to grace her pew,
Nor kent she was a weedow noo.

Saint Peter's question garred her loup—
“Did ye mak' muckle oot the roup?”
O she was young an' she was bonnie!
Yet tell't a lee as guid as ony.
To free himsel' frae ony bias,
Pate sent her efter Ananias.

BABEL

LANG syne, afore the days o' Moses,
Ere Israel raised his tribe wi' noses,
Mankind, wi' wickedness gane wud,
Had clean forgot about the Flood,
Forgot Cain's paiks for killin' Abel,
An' sae begood their ploy at Babel.
They ettled to erect a biggin',
A steeple heich, whase tapmaist riggin'
Would reach to heaven, an' ilka storey
Would be a temple to man's glory.
Puff'd up wi' windy, warldly pride,
They thocht this wark would aye abide
The plains o' Babel to adorn ;
An' generations yet unborn
Would envious glower at it an' say :
" We canna raise the like the day ;
The present race are thowless de'ils ;
Oor faithers were the clever chieils."

Sic thochts in heaven's sicht were evil ;
The Lord kent fine the muckle deevil
Was in the ploy frae the beginnin' .
" Let them gang forrit wi' their sinnin' ,"
He said, " for yet a wee while langer ;
Then I'll confound them in my anger ."
An' sae the job was fairly startit,
The plains o' Babel were weel scartit.
As thrang an' thick as flocks o' sparrows
Folk cam' wi' hods, an' mells an' barrows.
They spared theirsels' nae botheration
To lay a geyan strang foondation ;

The mortar was weel slaigered on,
Ilk stane an' brick laid doon by haun',
An' syne the too'er was risin' brawly,
A monument to mankind's folly.

But, when they're biggin' great erections
The warkmen need a wheen directions,
An' up the wa's, roon' a' its borders,
Were gaffers, shoutin' oot their orders.
The Lord beheld them in their pride,
An' said: "This thing I canna bide:
I'll gar their tongues turn tapselteeie,
Then they can shout until they're weary."
An' sae the Lord turned men dementit
An' foreign languages inventit.

"Sprechen Sie deutsch?" "Que voulez-vous?"
"Carramba!" "Cia mar tha an diugh?"
A' tongues at ance begood their clamour,
Then silent was each mell an' hammer.
The gaffers swore in Greek an' Dutch;
The men replied: "Yer granny's mutch!
We canna un'erstaun' yer flytin',
Ye'll hae to pit it doon in writin'."
An' thus was mankind's pride dimeenished
For Babel's too'er was never feenished.

The form may change, the substance never;
In ither channels rows the river.
Man frae his sires maun aye inherit
The auld, thrawn, steeve, contentious spirit.
Babel survives through generations—
We ca' it noo: The League o' Nations.