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*The Mountain Minstrel.*

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—THE—

# MOUNTAIN MINSTREL.



## A MAY MORNING IN GLEN-SHIRA, ARGYLESHIRE.

Lo. dawning o'er yon mountain grey  
The rosy birth-day of the May!  
Glen-Shira knoweth well 'tis Beltane's blissful day.

The Maum has donned its brightest green,  
The hawthorne whitens round Kilblane,  
And shews Dunchorvil's crest its own heath-purpling sheen.

Hark! from yon grove, that thrilling gush  
Of song from linnet, merle, and thrush!  
To hear herself so praised the morning we'll may blush.

The lark, high up the clouds among,  
Rains down a very flood of song;  
An age, that song to list, would not seem lost or long.

Yon cushat by Cuilvocan's stream  
The spirit of some bard you'd deem—  
One who had lived and died in love's delicious dream.

Thrice welcome minstrel ! now at hand,  
 The cuckoo joins the tuneful band :  
 A choir like this might grace the bowers of fairy-land !

Now is the hour by Duloch's tide  
 To scent the birch that decks its side,  
 And watch the snow-white swans o'er its calm bosom glide.

Now is the hour a minstrel might  
 Be blameless if, in his delight,  
 He druid-like adored the sun that crowns yon height.

O May ! thou'rt an enchantress rare—  
 Thy presence maketh all things fair ;  
 Thou wavest but thy wand, and joy is everywhere.

Thou comest, and rude winds are not,  
 The skies a deeper blue have got,  
 The gossamer again is in the air afloat.

The foaming torrent from the hill  
 Thou changest to a gentle rill—  
 A thread of liquid pearl, that faintly murmurs still.

Thine is the blossom-laden tree—  
 The meads that white with lambkins be—  
 Thine, too, the nether world that in each lake we see.

Cheer'd by thy smile, the herd-boy gay  
 Oft sings the rock-repeated lay,  
 And wonders who can be the mocker in his way !

Thou givest fragrance to the breeze,  
 A gleaming glory to the seas,  
 Nor less thy grace is seen in yonder emerald leas.

Around me in this dewy den  
Wild flowers imparadise the scene,—  
Some look up to the sun—his worshippers, I ween.

Some, here and there, with modest grace,  
Yield to the butterfly's embrace,  
While others coyly share the bee's more rude caress.

Above—around me—all things seem  
So witching that I almost deem  
Myself asleep, and these, creations of a dream!

But cease, my muse ambitious! Frail  
Thy skill in fitting strains to hail  
The morn that makes a heaven of Shira's lovely vale.

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### MY OWN NATIVE COT.

My own native cot, aye so dear unto me—  
Whose hearth to the homeless was always so free,—  
Though long from it roaming, and far from it, too,  
That home of my childhood is always in view:  
That home where the stranger found welcome unbought,  
That home where sweet fancies came to me unsought,—  
Its place in my heart nothing else e'er can fill:  
God bless the old cot at the foot of the hill.

Methinks I still see the sweet neuk of bright green  
Where calmly it nestles, half hid and half seen;  
I hear the bees hum in the sycamores fair  
That vied with each other to shelter it there;

The burn, wimpling nigh it, still sings in its glee,  
The gowan and primrose still bloom there, for me :  
Illusions, alas ! yet my heartstrings they thrill :  
God bless the old cot at the foot of the hill !

Though much in the city I well can admire ;  
Though song, wit and beauty to charm me conspire,  
Yet love I far better the birch-belted lake,  
And the song of the thrush in the balm-breathing brake.  
Then give me again the old homestead to see ;  
Its threshold, though lowly, is holy to me ;  
The warm love I bear it death only can chill :  
God bless the old cot at the foot of the hill !

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#### ANNIE'S EYES.

My Annie's form, so full of grace,  
Fain would my rustic pencil trace ;  
But Fancy will not compromise—  
She bids me sing of Annie's eyes.

Theirs is the dew-drop's gleaming glow,  
'Neath lids more fair than flakes of snow ;  
Love's star, just seen when daylight dies,  
Reminds me well of Annie's eyes.

Ye bachelors who boast the skill  
To ward off Cupid's darts at will,  
How would your vaunting change to sighs  
By one love-blink from Annie's eyes !

The more I look, the more I see  
How matchless is their glamorie ;

Himself he would immortalize  
Who'd fitly sing of Annie's eyes.  
Enough from them is one sweet glance  
To set me in a blissful trance ;  
Her starward watch let Science prize,—  
My sweeter watch be Annie's eyes.

Were she on Ida 'mong the fair  
For Beauty's prize once rivals there,  
Methinks the Trojan's verdict wise  
Would take its cue from Annie's eyes.

The patriot will forge the soil  
That nursed him, bards the muse's smile,  
And saints their hopes beyond the skies  
Ere I forget my Annie's eyes.

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### AN AUTUMN DAY ON LOCH-LOMOND.

Lake of peerless grace and grandeur !  
All-enchanting Lomond rare !  
Fondly to thee would I render  
Praise befitting scene so fair.

Matchless mirror of the Highlands,  
Cold's the heart that feels no glow,  
Viewing thee with all thy islands—  
Heaven above and heaven below !

All, from margin unto margin,  
Sleep'st thou in thy matchless grace,  
Calmly-fair as might a virgin  
Dreaming of some chaste embrace.

See, where, watching thee serenely,  
Takes yon Ben his kingly stand !  
Hills that else were great look meanly  
In Ben-Lomond's presence grand.

How they all in grand confusion  
Now seem piercing heaven's concave,  
Now seem in as grand profusion  
Overturnd in Lomond's wave !

Lo, yon bird !—an eagle, soaring !  
Now she poises in her pride ;  
Now she swoops !—the prey alluring  
Was her image in the tide !

Here, the wary heron seemeth  
Watching me with careful look ;  
There, a salmon sudden gleameth,  
In his spring to catch—the hook !

Hapless trout ! Exultant angler,  
Vaunt not *too* much of thy skill :  
Thou hast met a sturdy wrangler,  
One that yet may thwart thy will.

Coasting Innic-chailleach holy,  
Mark yon otter wide awake !  
Doubtless there the knave sups duly  
On the best of all the lake.

Where the insect-chasing swallow  
Hither-thither skims thy breast,  
And yon wild duck—timid fellow—  
Flaps his wings in awkward haste,

See with what an air of scorning  
Sails yon swan in beauty's pride,  
Bright as sunbeam of the morning,  
Fairer far than Eastern bride !

Little cares the yeoman yonder  
What to *me* such rapture yields ;  
More to *him* than all thy splendour  
Are his own gold-tinted fields.

'Tis for him yon maids the *corran*\*  
Ply among the yellow corn,  
Cheered on by the chorused *oran*†  
Of such happy labours born.

Hark now ! 'tis some youthful shepherd  
Whistling all his cares away  
Near yon fold where lately upward  
To the milking went his May.

Nature now is hushed to silence ;  
Ceased the sportsman's pastime fell ;  
Ill becomes his licensed violence  
Heath-clad Fruin's fairy dell.

Now thy face, loved Lake, is beamless ;  
Dies the daylight in the west ;—  
Never mind, my beauty blameless,  
Stars will soon bedeck thy breast.

Vanished is the ray that crimson'd  
Yonder sky-sustaining pile  
O'er which, like some spirit ransomed,  
See how Vesper now doth smile !

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\*Reaping hook.

†Song.



'Tis the witching hour of gloaming,  
 Just the very time to hear  
 Fairy footsteps lakeward roaming,  
 Fairy minstrels piping near.

From his lair the fox is stealing,  
 Quits the owl her hermit cell ;  
 Vision fair, past all revealing,  
 Dear Loch-Lomond, now farewell !

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### RAVEN-BLACK TRESSES.

Of fair flaxen ringlets oft sung I thē praises,  
 Oft found my heart caught in the auburn's loved mazes ;  
 But of all the sly snares cunning Cupid possesses,  
 There's none like one woven of raven-black tresses.

Yes—raven-black hair that, a wavy web weaving,  
 Would in vain veil the bosom below it fond-heaving  
 Like a sunbeam that bursts through some dark cloud's  
 caresses ;—

Hearts are never love-proof nigh to raven-black tresses !

To see them, Louisa, *thy* fair shoulders hiding,  
 Or down to thy waist in their glossiness gliding,  
 One feels that, however angelic thy face is,  
 Beauty's grand crowning glory are raven-black tresses.

The poets, fond fools ! in the time 'clept the olden,  
 Described Love's own queen proud of locks that were golden ;  
 But had they seen thee, they would own that the Graces  
 Misjudged in not giving her raven-black tresses.

Then choose whoso will beauties auburn or flaxen,  
 Give me, when I mate—be she Celtic or Saxon—  
 A girl who can add to the sweetest of faces  
 The rarest profusion of raven-black tresses !

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### THE RIVER BEAULY.

Of all the witching scenes the North  
 Can boast of well and truly,—  
 Haunts which no bard of any worth  
 Would fail to honor duly,—  
     There's none, I ween,  
     To match that scene  
 Where quits its Drumm, the Beauly,  
 And, laughing, leaps into the plains  
 Where plenty smiles on happy swains.

I've stood by Foyers' thundering leap,  
 Seen Lora's rush astounding,  
 Heard the swift Brander's moaning deep  
 'Mong Cruachan's caves resounding :  
     These have their share  
     Of grandeur rare,  
 But, Beauly, thee surrounding  
 Are scenes that might Elysium grace,  
 The beauty-spots on nature's face !

'Tis grand thy crystal flood to view  
 Benvaichard's borders leaving  
 Nor less to see the Strath below  
 Thy fuller flow receiving ;

But grander far  
 To see thee where  
 Its narrowing bounds thou'rt cleaving  
 Through rocky ridges opening wide  
 In very terror of thy tide.

Now through the Druim's dark gorges deep,  
 Methinks I see thee going,  
 Half hid 'mid woods that love to keep  
 Fond watch upon thy flowing  
     From rock to rock,  
     With flash and shock,  
 And fury ever growing,—  
 A giant fettered, it is true,  
 Yet bound all barriers to subdue.

O for a home on Agais fair,  
 Nigh which, anon, thou wendest  
 Thy way, proud-rushing on to where  
 In thy great might thou rendest  
     The one more chain  
     That strives in vain  
 To fetter thee, and lendest  
 To our charmed sight thy grandest gift of all,  
 The gleaming glory of Kilmorack's Fall!

O scene most magically wrought!  
 What minstrel pen can paint thee?  
 Thy charms, fantastic beyond thought,  
 Art never could have lent thee:  
     Enchanting spot,  
     I wonder not  
 The Muses love to haunt thee;

And long, loved Agais, may they joy to stray  
Through thee with tuneful, King-descended Hay.\*

Majestic stream ! methinks I see  
Thee through the Aird now going,  
Calm-glassing many a lordly tree  
On thy fair margin growing.  
    Soon in thy grave,  
    The German wave,  
Shall ever cease thy flowing ;—  
*Cease ?* deathless flood ! till time shall cease to run,  
Thy race is finished, and yet but begun.

### A PICTURED BEAUTY.

(Written on seeing, in the studio of Mr. Alex. MacInnes, Inverness, a painting representing a very young girl—his own beautiful daughter—in the attitude of caressing a favourite Newfoundland dog.)

Was ever mortal maiden half so fair  
As thou, the form all-perfect pictured there !  
If breath were thine, I'd almost wish to be  
Myself a dog, to be caressed by thee !

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\*John Sobieskie Stuart Hay, author of "The Bridal of Kilchurn," and other poems of great merit, and who for some years resided in the vicinity of the scene here alluded to.

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 THE CASTLE OF LOHAVICH.
 

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## A WEST-HIGHLAND LEGEND.

The Castle of Lochavich (better known in the traditional lore of the West Highlands as "Caisteal na h-ighinne ruaidh") stands on a little islet lying close to the western shore of Lochavich—a lake whose legendary associations, altogether apart from its romantic beauty, may well justify a pilgrimage to Glendovan, the valley in which it is situated. Tradition points to Innis-luna, the islet already alluded to, as having been, in Ossianic times, the scene of a very tragic occurrence—that which forms the subject of a poem well known to all students of ancient Gaelic poetry as "*Laoidh Fhraoich*." There is no question whatever as to Lochavich having been, at a period much less remote, the scene of the leading incidents related in the following poem, and which in all their main features form an "over true tale."

LOHAVICH's banks are fair to view,  
 The swan loves well its bosom blue,  
 And well the angler is aware  
 His paradise of sport is there.  
 Yet, pilgrim to that solitude,  
 However sceptical thy mood,  
 I would not counsel thee to bide  
 On Avich's breast at twilight tide,  
 And least of all, to ply the oar  
 Near Innisluna's haunted shore.  
 Thou'lt know it from all scenes around  
 By the grim castle, ivy bound,  
 There tow'ring. Pile unhallowed! though  
 The winds wail through its chambers wide,  
 It looks upon the floor below  
 With something yet of feudal pride.

When night resumes her dusky sway,  
The shepherd shuns yon beechward way ;  
The hunter, lated and alone,  
May well with quickened pace move on  
Whenever meets his watchful eye  
Lochavich's castle frowning nigh,  
For often there, close by the tide,  
A phantom form is seen to glide,  
Now, with a low beseeching wail,  
Now, silent as a cloudlet frail  
Dissolving in the moonlight pale,  
Causing the dark-o'ertaken wight,  
There passing homeward, sore affright.  
" It is the Nighean ruadh," he says—  
" Protect me, Heaven good !"  
And while he yet doth wildered gaze,  
She sinks into the flood.

But listen, stranger, while I tell  
A legend of old Dovan-dell,  
So may thy doubting mood give way  
To a wise wish that Heaven may  
Be from all ill thy shield and stay !

Glendovan's lord—a chief far-famed  
For daring deeds unblest,—untamed  
And fierce as wild boar of the wood,  
Lived in Glendovan's solitude,  
Where, in a wild, barbaric way,  
Five hundred clansmen owned his sway.  
Alas for them, or friends or foes,  
Who would stout Ardan's will oppose !

A chief was he who never long  
 From strife his hand could stay ;  
 The leader of a reiving throng  
 Who ne'er distinguished right from wrong—  
 His creed was that unto the strong  
 The weak were lawful prey.  
 But now at length grown grey in strife,  
 With foemen thirsting for his life,  
 And deeming insecure, I ween,  
 His home ancestral in the Glen,  
 He plans that on yon isle ere long  
 Shall tower a castle stout and strong,  
 Where, if in war no longer famed,  
 He'll pass life's winter still untamed  
 When Art can wield his father's hand,  
 And chiefs contend for Runa's hand,  
 (Fair Runa, his sole daughter mild—  
 The Sunbeam of Glendovan styled)—  
 Stern Ardan on his castled rock  
 His stoutest foe right well may mock.

What speck is that upon the wave ?  
 Where fleetly glides yon *biurlinn* brave ?  
 It hastens off to Erin's shores  
 In search of Patrick of the Towers.  
 No castle then on Albin's coast  
 Could match with those by Patrick planned  
 And Erin of no towers might boast  
 Like those which owned his master hand.

Famed Patrick found— himself and son—  
 (A youth he fondly doated on,

Though loving harp and song much more  
Than all his sire's masonic lore)—  
Together with the strangers sail ;  
Straight steers their bark for Erraghael,  
And, by propitious breezes borne,  
Safe reaches now the coast of Lorne.  
On haste her crew o'er waste and wild  
To where, 'mid hills o'er hills high-piled,  
Lochavich fair in sunshine gleams—  
Lochavich that forever seems  
Calm-listening to the voice of streams !

Glendovan's chief was glad to see  
Wise Patrick, and they soon agree  
As to the site—the plan—the fee ;  
Nor did sage Patrick lose a day  
His skill masonic to display ;  
Grim Ardan ill can brook delay.

“ Why, Fergus, is that frequent sigh ?  
That dreamy, unobservant eye ?  
Thy duty fitly to fulfil  
Needs all thy wonted zeal and skill ;  
My cares are doubled since the day  
Thou'st taken to this moody way !  
It seems, my son, as thou would'st have  
Us never more to cross the wave,—  
As if the day our task is done  
You'd have it *only* just begun !”  
Ah, Patrick, thou art old as wise—  
'Tis long since love could wake thy sighs,—



But yet experience might thee shew  
 What woman's witching smile may do,  
 And how in vain would youth defy  
 Th' omnipotence of Beauty's eye.

His day's work o'er, young Fergus there  
 Oft in his harp found solace rare,  
 And—oftener than his father knew—  
 His evening walk he would pursue  
 To where, begirt by rock and brake,  
 An *airidh*\* overlooked the lake,—  
 A scene whose features wildly fair  
 Young Runa loves, and oft is there  
 With maids who milk her father's flocks ;  
 The while they vocal make the rocks  
 With songs whose melody so sweet  
 Alone might thither tempt his feet,—  
 Nor did their lilting charm for nought  
 The youth who thus their presence sought,  
 For often, when encouraged by  
 A word or glance from Runa nigh,  
 He'd touch his harp, and sing, the while,  
 Some thrilling lay of Erin's Isle.  
 The wondering shepherds praise his skill,  
 Confessing Torran's fairy hill  
 Could boast no minstrel to compare  
 One moment with that harper rare !  
 Their fair companions, though they praise  
 Less loudly, list with glad amaze ;  
 Or rude or gentle—one and all,  
 His music held in willing thrall.

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\*A Shieling.

Another and another strain  
Succeed,—so charms he heart and brain,  
The briefest silence seems a pain !

But why, like wavelet in the light  
Of sunbeams on the lake,  
Heaves Runa's bosom lily-white ?  
Can song such tumult wake ?  
Ah, Runa ! be upon thy guard !  
Thou lov'st the music well,—  
Yet frequent sighs may well be spared,  
And blushes more than tell the bard  
How much he doth excel ;—  
Then tempt him not 'gainst fate to cope :  
Alas, what will not minstrel hope ?

Time passes on ; the builder's skill  
Is shewn to be unrivalled still,  
And Ardan's castle soon shall stand  
The stoutest structure in the land,  
And Patrick ready be to hail  
Once more his native Innisfail.  
Alas, poor Patrick ! never he  
That land beloved again may see !  
He little weens that when he has  
His task complete, and would be gone,  
Resolved is Dovan's chieftain base  
To rob of life both sire and son !  
“Why should o'er ocean's distant flow  
The guerdon of their labors go ?  
His steel is sharp—yon rock is steep,—  
His gold shall never cross the deep !”

His daughter sees his brow assume  
 From day to day a deeper gloom,  
 And strives in winsome way to chase  
 That gloom unwelcome from its place.  
 As well that maiden fair might try  
     To dissipate the cloud  
 That in its sable canopy  
     The thunderbolt doth shroud !

One night, when oft the cup went round  
 Grim Arden's table, plenty-crowned,  
 Strange whisp'rings reached young Runa's ear—  
 She heard what it was death to hear :—  
 “ 'Tis fixed—this night must be their last ;  
 Let fox and cub alike be cast  
 Together o'er yon rocky steep—  
 The lake below is dark and deep ;  
 The gold with which they hope to swell  
 Their purse, will portion Runa well.”

Poor Runa, well thy heart may quake :—  
 What can be done for Fergus' sake ?  
 Another hour may seal his doom ;  
 Yon lake may be the minstrel's tomb !  
 O that he had but time to fly !  
 O that some warning voice were nigh  
 The idol of her secret sigh !  
 He whom, alas ! she cannot tell,  
 Yet feareth much she loves too well,  
 Silent she stealeth forth : Ah me,  
 What may not in extremity  
 By woman's love accomplished be !

One minute, and the dread cabal  
That night convened in Ardan's hall  
Unconscious prisoners will be all,  
And Fergus, ere the dawn of day,  
Be from Lochavich far away.

'Tis done ! she locks the pond'rous door,  
And quitteth now with quick'ning pace  
That home to which in life no more  
She may her path retrace—  
Resolved her lover's life to save  
Or with him sleep beneath the wave.

'Twas midnight : Just behind yon Ben  
The crescent moon had set ;  
Upon Lochavich's breast serene  
Her parting smile seemed yet  
To linger as if loth to die  
Amid such sweet tranquility.  
Fair lake, no grief disturbs thy rest ;  
Young moon, no terrors thee molest ;  
And thus ye both can calmly sleep  
Unheeding of her anguish deep  
Who now — as some poor doe might fly  
From hounds whose bay betray them nigh—  
Speedeth the lake's green margin by,  
Till soon, in Innisluna's sight —  
Her lover's resting place at night—  
She halts and sends her voice whereto  
The flood forbids herself to go,—  
A warning voice that yet may reach  
His tent on Innisluna's beach.

## THE WARNING.

" O Fergus, wake !  
 Hence quickly take  
 Thy flight, for death lurks by thee !  
 A ruthless knife  
 That seeks thy life  
 Gleams at this moment nigh thee !

Awake ! awake !  
 Beyond the lake  
 Afar thy flight betaking,  
 Else wilt thou sleep  
 That slumber deep  
 From which there's no awaking ! "

Such was the fateful warning wail  
 Of Runa's anguish born ;  
 Can Fergus hear it and yet fail  
 Its meaning dread to learn ?  
 He may have heard, and yet may he  
 Suspect her but some lone Banshee  
 Who fain would frighten him, maybe,  
 And thus he haply may  
 Within his tent list, laughingly,  
 That warning sent his way.  
 Oh, that she had but wings to fly,  
 Or shallower the tide ;  
 Then, spite of maiden modesty,  
 She'd soon be by his side !

Ye streamlets, why so rudely rush ?  
 Ye birds of night, your discords hush !

What if dread Ardan's step is near ?  
What if poor Runa's words of fear  
Should fail to reach her lover, where  
He sleeps a sleep whose end unblest  
May be a dagger in his breast !

Again across the tide is sent  
Poor Runa's warning cry,  
When, lo ! a torch from out his tent  
Is waved in fond reply ;  
And though the bearer of it be  
Too distant yet his face to see  
She knows, and shouts, " 'Tis he ! 'tis he ! "

Dear is the long-expected rain  
Of summer to the thirsty plain,  
And joyful to a mother mild  
The accents of a long-lost child ;  
But to the lover still more dear  
The voice of his heart's chosen near ;  
And O, the rapture 'tis to prove  
The depth of Beauty's long-hid love !

Thus Fergus feels, as out into  
The darkness hurries he ;  
For well young Runa's voice he knew  
Was that which broke his slumbers through :  
Now for her sake to die or do,  
Resolves he, gallantly,  
As on, across yon narrow tide,  
He hastes to where her voice doth guide.

Fast plies his hand the bending oar,  
 And fast his skiff flies to the shore,  
 Where half expects he soon to prove  
 Her fears a mere excess of love ;  
 Yet Runa, if good cause he find  
 For flight, shall not be left behind !

Lone maiden ! why dost thou renew  
 That tone beseeching ? dost not view  
 Thy lover nearing quick the beach ?  
 O Heaven ! a well-known voice doth reach  
 Her ear,—it is—it is her sire !  
 A scornful laugh reveals his ire.  
 He heard her cry : The wolf is meek  
     Compared with Ardan's fury wild  
 As forward hastens he to wreak  
     Revenge on his own child.  
 His brandished steel now flashes nigh,  
 Yet—"Fly ! devoted Fergus, fly !"   
 Was still that maiden's anguished cry.

In vain, O Fergus, thou art brave ;  
 In vain thou rushest on to save  
 Thy Runa from her father's sword—  
 His minions thine own blood have poured,  
 But with thee dies Glendovan's lord !

On fair Lochavich's western shore  
 The traveller still may see  
 Two stony heaps—the swelling store  
 Of more than centuries three.  
 One marks—so say old senachies—  
 The spot where Ardan fell ;

The other, where his daughter lies  
    With him she loved so well.  
The herd-boy oft, in passing by,  
    Adds to each cairn a stone ;  
The pilgrim, with a pitying sigh,  
    Thinks of the early gone,  
And brands with execration brief  
Thy memory, Dovan's demon-chief !

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ON VIEWING GLEN-URQUHART,  
    INVERNESS-SHIRE.

HAIL, thou Arcadia of the North !  
    Glen-Urquhart lovely, well I trow  
Yon sun above thee ne'er looked forth  
    On any landscape fair as thou.

When Nature's seeming negligence  
    Left rough Stratherrick what we see,  
Meseems; as if in recompense,  
    She made a paradise of thee !

This path, so prodigal of flowers,  
    Yon dark-blue lakelet zephyr-curl'd,  
Those murmuring streams and greenwood bowers  
    Seem all as of some brighter world.

'Mid scenes like this, methinks, was given  
    To minstrels first to strike the lyre ;  
'Mid such, methinks, the Sons of Heaven  
    Learned Earth's fair daughters to admire.



'Tis well such wooers are no more  
 Permitted thus on earth to rove,  
 Else they would haste to yonder bower,  
 All rivals for fair Ellen's love !\*

1837.

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### JESSIE OF CARLUNNAN.

I own that in the Lowlands fair  
 Blooms many a winsome marrow ;  
 But for a charmer past compare,  
 Give me Carlunnan's Jessie dear :  
 Love's queen, when she would gods ensnare,  
 Might well her graces borrow !

Her mouth and breath find emblems fit  
 In June-time's opening rose  
 Her eyes are of the hue deep-  
 In spring-tide's dew-gemmed violet ;  
 The Greek's ideal nymph complete  
 Her form all-perfect shows us.

No wonder that such love for her  
 Within my heart is springing ;—  
 But that I fear such freedom might  
 Find little favour in her sight,  
 How glad I'd make her beauty bright  
 The theme of all my singing !

---

\*The "Fair Ellen" here alluded to was a sister to Patrick Grant, Esq., once proprietor of the estate of Redcastle, and who, at the time these verses were penned, made his home in Glen-Urquhart, on the banks of the beautiful Loch-Meikley.

## ANOTHER DAGON DOWN.

(Lines occasioned by the abolition of slavery in the British West  
India Colonies.)

HURRAH ! thrice hurrah for the news just received !  
A victory rare in Truth's cause is achieved ;—  
One link more is broken in slavery's chain ;—  
Heav'n grant quick destruction to those that remain !

All honoured be they through whose labours beloved  
Britain finds a foul stain from her forehead removed :  
Shame on her past record !—'tis high time indeed  
Man's possession in man should be dropt from her creed.

No more in her Isles of the West far away  
Shall the slaver accursed find a mart for his prey :  
There's a price on his head ; he must henceforth steer shy  
Of a coast where, if caught, like a dog he must die.

Of profits unhallowed no more left to boast—  
Hark the howl of the hell-hounds whose harvest is lost !  
By hell only pitied, long let them howl on ;  
Their traffic was worthy of demons alone.

O, for the quick advent of that happy time  
Foreseen by the prophet of Patmos sublime —  
That time when, as brothers in loving accord,  
Earth's tribes all shall joy in the smile of her Lord !

## THE FINDHORN.

(Dedicated to the memory of the late Lady Gordon Cumming, of Altyre, Morayshire, for whose album these lines were originally penned.)

FINDHORN the Beautiful !  
Fain would I sing thee ;  
Praise is the dutiful  
Homage I bring thee.

Child of the Mist and Snow,  
Nursed 'mong the mountains,  
Well loves the red deer to  
Drink at thy fountains.

Glassing the skies above,  
Ycnder thou glidest ;  
Now in some piney grove,  
Sudden, thou hidest.

Here, with a rushing might,  
Rocks thou art rounding ;  
There, like a flash of light,  
Over them bounding !

Calm in the distance now,  
Rest thou seem'st craving,  
Darnaway's forest bough  
Over thee waving.

What though a-near thee  
No orange grove springeth ?  
What though to cheer thee  
No nightingale singeth ?

More love I to mark  
What is thine in full feather,  
The song of the lark  
O'er the bloom of the heather !

O witching Relugas !  
O Altyre enchanting !  
The Findhorn, in you, has  
Good cause for loud vaunting.

What stream e'er was given  
A neighbourhood fairer ?  
What maidens 'neath heaven  
More lovely than *there* are ?

But hark !—'twas the whirr  
Of the night-hawk, bold rover !  
The bat is astir,  
The lark's vespers are over.

The angler, spoil bringing,  
Now homeward proud paces ;  
'Tis time I ceased singing  
Of Findhorn's wild graces.

October, 1838.

## DEFINITION OF A POET.

A PLAYER strange on life's rough stage,  
Now saint, now sinner, and now sage ;  
A dreamer oft of creed unsound,  
And yet a prophet frequent found ;  
A wayward wight of passions wild,  
Yet tender-hearted as a child ;  
A spirit like the lark endowed  
To sing its sweetest in a cloud ;  
A soul to whom, by beauty given,  
A frown is hell, a smile is heaven !  
The friend of Truth, past contradiction,  
And yet the very slave of Fiction ;  
The mortal foe of vanity,  
Yet no one half so vain as he ;  
The moralist high-toned, withal  
Oft bound in Pleasure's circean thrall—  
The vices he can ban so well  
Himself the weakest to repel !  
A vapour in the whirlwind's pow'r,  
A dewdrop glittering for an hour,  
A flow'r whose pow'r to charm is due  
More to its fragrance than its hue,—  
Such aye has been from days of old  
The traits and types that truest shew out  
That strange compound of mud and gold,  
That Rara Avis called a poet.

## MAGGIE OF LOCHGAIR: A PASTORAL.

So fain is my hope e'er to win  
The hand of a maiden so fair,  
That often I wish I'd ne'er seen  
Young Maggie, the pride of Lochgair.

Her form is the sum of all grace,  
Her heart is as warm as 'tis pure ;  
One look at her sweet, smiling face  
Is to love her, and love evermore.

Methinks I now see that loved one—  
Her tresses of gold in full flow  
O'er shoulders as fair to look on  
As sunshine on Oineachan's snow !

When she moves 'mong the girls on the green,  
Dancing there to some heart-stirring lay,  
I could fancy her Fairyland's queen —  
Such grace all her motions display.

When she sings, vainly would I declare  
The thrilling delight that is ours,  
For ne'er was heard liltng so rare  
Outside of celestial bowers !

O would that less rich were her kin,  
Or I laird of Glassary know !  
I then might despair not to win  
And wear this bright pearl as my own.

Courage, heart! Maggie's kind as she's fair,  
And the Cannuck land fertile and wide ;  
Who knows but this lass of Lochgair  
May yet bloom 'mong its towers as my bride !

## A FAIR HARPIST.

She knelt beside the harp—her hand  
Swept o'er its quivering wires,  
And soon, as if some fairy band,  
Unseen, beside her took their stand,  
Assisting with their lyres,—  
Such tones melodious filled the air  
As made it almost heaven to hear !

Anon, as if in envy of  
The harp's rich harmony,  
She sings,—it is a song of love,—  
And while her fingers gently move  
The wires, I think of thee,  
Malvina, when in Selma's hall,  
Thy song was of thy Oscar's fall.

What mortal man, with ears to list  
Those sounds divinely sweet,  
But would forever listen, blest,  
And feel as if he would have kissed  
The ground beneath her feet ?  
Such was the witching spell profound  
In which she all her audience bound.

Dear woman ! what mean bard unblest  
Would not thy praises make  
His chosen theme o'er all the rest ?

A world with thy fair presence graced,—  
A world where Anna's\* fingers chaste  
Such raptures can awake,—  
With all its heavy sum of ill,  
There's much of Eden in it still !

---

MARY MINE.

THEY tell thee that I'm a deceiver ?  
A deceiver ! Mary mine,  
While this heart beats, never, never,  
Can it be aught else than thine.

What although of other Mariés  
I may sometimes sing the charms ?  
Not the less my heart's sole care is  
To live only in thine arms.

Moons may change in yonder heaven,  
Oceans still may ebb and flow ;  
But my love, so fondly given,  
Change nor ebb shall never know.

---

\* The "Anna" whose skill as a harpist led to the production of the above verses was Mrs. Robert Chambers, of Edinburg, the beautiful and accomplished wife of the founder of *Chambers' Journal*.



## STAFFA.

OFF with the morn's first faint ray, our trim bark, west away,  
 Like a ghost from the dawn, was flying  
 Before a fair wind which, from Ulva behind,  
 O'er the solemn sea went, sighing.  
 With all eyes in full strain, scanning leeward the main,  
 Swift and swifter thus on we go proudly ;  
 The mere thought soon to stand upon Staffa's famed strand  
 Made the coldest heart 'mong us beat loudly.

On the Paps we scarce thought—of Eigg's cliff took slight  
 note ;  
 Nor, although its blest shore was so nigh us,  
 Could Columba's own Isle for a moment beguile  
 Our charmed gaze from that now which lay by us.  
 Like a fragment chance-hurled from some fairer-framed  
 world,  
 Mid the waves, round it joyously dancing,  
 Stood that Isle which all there well indeed might declare  
 All unmatched save in Sinbad's romancing.

And now thy weird beach, wondrous Staffa, we reach—  
 Now we kneel with devotion beseeching ;  
 Now that grotto we mark, where, 'tween daylight and dark,  
 Combs the mermaid her tresses gold-gleaming ;  
 And now wend we our way where, above us, in play,  
 Wakes the seagull a clamorous chorus,  
 Till a joyful " hurroo ! " sudden stops us, and lo !  
 Fingal's cave in its glory before us !

What vain fool would compare with that fabric rare  
 Palace, Church or Cathedral splendour ?  
 Charms that far more amaze the rapt pilgrim's fond gaze  
 It has there in its own gloomy grandeur.  
 No—there's nothing can be, of man's work, matched with  
 thee,

Thou famed fane of the ocean solemn !  
 He who see's not God's hand in a temple so grand  
 Never will in the holiest volume !

O the joy of that hour ! O the heart-stirring pow'r  
 Of the music so wildly romantic,  
 Which the light summer gale 'neath its roof blended well  
 With the sough of the moaning Atlantic !  
 Still in Fancy's charmed air that wild anthem I hear—  
 Still, the echoes that answered our voices,  
 As we hymned our delight at His goodness and might  
 Who could fashion such things to rejoice us.

Witching Isle of the West, never made for thy breast  
 Was the slow-gliding plow nor the harrow ;  
 But the lightnings that fly, and the storms passing by,  
 On thy brow have left many a furrow.  
 What, to thee, is the spring of which bards love to sing ?  
 What, to thee, how the harvester speedeth,  
 When the life-teeming sea giveth amply and free  
 All thy feathered inhabitant needeth ?

Thine are no gowan'd leas--thine no bloom-kissing bees,  
 Nor the cuckoo with spring returning ;  
 Thine is never a thrush in the hazel bush  
 Glad-greeting the Maytide morning ;

But thine is the shell where the pearl loves to dwell,  
The wild swan and the fulmar wary,  
And the spar-spangled cave which the murmuring wave  
Lightens up with an emerald glory.

Yet withal, thou weird Isle, heaven help him thou'dst wile  
In the winter to voyage by thee,  
When the west winds rave, and a ready grave  
Finds the bark that would dare to nigh thee,  
And from Skerrievore comes the ceaseless roar  
Of the mountain-waves over it bounding,  
While thy echoes reply to the seabird's shrill cry  
Heard afar mid that music confounding!

It is then one might hear with a trusting ear  
(What the Isleman believes in, devoutly—)  
That, though haughty enow in the calm lookest thou,  
On thy pillar-propped throne seated stoutly,  
In the hurricane hour, when the storm-fiend's full pow'r  
Breaks upon thee in surges snowy,  
Thou dost quiver and quake like a leaf in the brake,  
As if fearing their force would o'erthrow thee!

When but yet a boy the most cherished joy  
Of my heart was the hope to view thee ;  
Of all pleasures rare mine some day to share  
None seemed equal to roaming through thee.  
The long fret is o'er : Mine may be no more  
To renew the delight attending  
My first sight of thee, yet its memory  
Shall dwell with me, a joy unending.

## DONALD AND SAWNEY.

## A DIALOGUE.

'Twas at last Autumn's Falkirk fair  
 Two rustics waged a battle rare : —  
 The one, a drover stout and stern,  
 Was from the braes of fair Muckairn ;  
 The other chap, as stout as he,  
 A Lothian farmer seemed to be.  
 Their labours for the day quite ended,  
 To a near "houf" their way they wended,  
 Where, while the glass goes often round,  
 And both in talking mood are found,  
 They joke and laugh and boast by turns,  
 Of Ossian, this, and that, of Burns.  
 Nor long it was till themes as good  
 For wordy warfare fired their blood, —  
 And Lowland thrift and Highland pride,  
 And mountains high and corses wide,  
 And bonnets blue and tartans gay,  
 And "rig and fur," and hodden gray,  
 Alternate, in the well-fought fray,  
 Provoked the jibe or waked the boast, —  
 'Twas doubtful which prevailed the most.  
 So much premised ; — who had the best o't  
 May from what follows here be guessed at.

D.—Give me the land of mountains high, bedecked with  
 purpling heath,  
 And glens like to that happy one where first I drew my  
 breath, —

Where, be he rich or be he poor, the stranger, roaming  
 there,  
 Finds Highland hearts and Highland homes to give him  
 welcome rare.

S.—Awa wi' a' your mountains rude, where the wild eagles  
 be !  
 Gude laying hens and stacks o' corn hae far mair charms  
 for me.  
 As for your welcomings, I think he is a fool, right plain,  
 Whase brose wad any belly fill till first he filled his ain.

D.—Confusion to such selfish ways ! I hate men coldly  
 calm—  
 The same thing listening to a speech, a sermon, song or  
 psalm ;  
 The man with all his thoughts and cares concentrated in  
 himself  
 Is but a poor man after all, no matter what his pelf.

Not thus you'll find the manly Gael ; though nursed  
 amid the storm,  
 His sympathies are wide and deep—his heart is ever  
 warm :  
 No selfish wish e'er finds *his* breast, except the wish  
 to be  
 The bravest aye among the brave, the freest 'mong the  
 free !

S.—Preserve me frae a Hielander, tho' clad in a' the pride  
 Of philebeg and bonnet blue, and skian-dhu by his side !

His voice is, like his beard, so rough—an' then his bare,  
grit knees—

Ye'd think them, as he gangs the street, a pair o' birken  
trees !

D.—Trees here or there,—one thing is sure,—his is the  
honour high

Which never yet betrayed a trust—much sooner would  
he die,—

His, too, the songs that tell of sires unmatched in days  
of yore ;

The tyrant's dread and Freedom's guard is still the  
Gael's claymore !

S.—As for his sangs, I've yet to ken that sangs can fill the  
pot ;

An', sure, wha wad for "honour" bleed maun be a  
muckle stot :

I think the lad that hauds the pleugh and swingeth weel  
the flail

Mair worthy o' his kail an' beef than Ossian was himsel' !

D.—No doubt you do ; yet kail and beef, though good in  
their own way,

The man to whom they're all in all maun be but sorry  
clay ;

Here's to the soul that brooks no guile, the heart that  
knows no fêar,

That paragon of life and grace—the kilted Mountain-  
eer !

S.—Gudesakes ! did ever mortal man give ear to sic a blaw !  
 A cock upon his ain dunghill could not mair crouselly  
 crawl ;  
 But keep your poortith and your pride,—thank heaven  
 I was born  
 Wi' common-sense and plenty, in the land o' carse and  
 corn !

-----

### LOVE IN HIDING.

'Tis well for lovers such as I  
 Love has a rare variety  
 Of ways his presence to make known  
 Else might I often sigh, Ochone !  
 My Mary has such wilful ways  
 As well might much misgiving raise,  
 But that her lover's vision true,  
 All vain disguises piercing through,  
 Sees in the breast of that dear one  
 A heart that beats for him alone.

I know it, when at Gloaming's hour  
 She meets me in yon garden bower  
 With well-feigned start and bashful air—  
 "She never thought to meet *me* there !"  
 I note the love-light in her eye,  
 And stop her feigning with a kiss—  
 One which, of course, she'd sooner die  
 Than give, yet giveth, ne'ertheless,  
 Though under protestation grave  
 'Twould be the last from her I'd have !

A dire lookout,—but never mind,  
A secret solace quick I find,  
When to my love-tale, fondly told,  
She feigns to give attention cold,  
Though in her bosom's wild unrest  
My suit's best answer is expressed.  
My pleading done, she giveth me  
A look that settles all the plea ;  
And after being kissed anew,  
'Mid maiden blushes not a few,  
With fluttering heart she springs away,  
Much wondering what "mamma" will say!

When in some social circle free  
She finds some other girl with me,  
I know she loves me by the care  
She takes to keep a distance rare,  
Vain-trying, in her maiden pride,  
The shadow on her brow to hide.  
When in her praise my verses flow,  
The light within her eyes well show  
A joy her lips would quite disclaim—  
A revelation all the same  
To me that, hide it as she may,  
She loveth well both bard and lay!

'Tis thus, despite those feigning ways  
Familiar to that darling dove,  
My songs are all in Mary's praise,  
My hopes all centred in her love.



## ON VIEWING TOBERMORRY BAY.

SWEET Tobermorry Bay! well may  
Thy beauty in the poet's lay  
Oft find expression free.  
No storm-tossed mariner am I,  
And yet I feel a perfect joy  
Thy bosom fair to see.

How grand, when waves without run high,  
To see thee, their wild tumult nigh,  
Enjoying slumber calm!  
Nought to disturb thy peace profound,  
Save airs that from the groves around  
Delight in stealing balm!

Yon pebbly shore of rarest sweep,  
Near which the salmon, in his leap,  
Oft stirs thy placid tide,—  
The woods that grace thy margin fair,  
The streams whose murmurs charm my ear,  
As on to thee they glide,—

Yon Isle that guards thee from the sea,  
The fisher's song so full of glee,  
The sea-birds joyous cry,—  
All, all are graces that well might  
Cause any pilgrim rare delight,—  
To scene so sweet to bid good-night  
'Tis sweet to heave a sigh!

## SHAMS.

THERE are some honest folks who *would* be  
What nature never meant they *should* be—  
Men who, themselves alone deceiving,  
Are always mighty things achieving ;  
But since what they so fain would seem  
Is what they really may esteem,  
Poor souls ; we bid them quick adieu,—  
I see the Hypocrite in view,—  
That knave in heart, though saint in face,  
That creature basest of the base,  
Yet finding favour oft, withal,  
Where men more upright get the wall !  
My muse, unheeding who may blame,  
Would make him, for the nonce, her theme.

Here goes he, solemn as an owl,  
His forehead hid in priestly cowl ;  
There, in Geneva cloak and bands,  
Your ready reverence he commands ;  
So meek look both—you'd think they'd die  
Ere either would have hurt a fly.  
Alas to think that, ne'ertheless,  
May oft be found more gall than grace  
Within their hearts—as one may ween  
From the keen zest and sure precision  
With which each proves the other in  
The very high road to perdition !  
What matters that ? Do they not each  
Of charity and mercy preach,

And ape the saint in such a key  
As might make Satan laugh to see ?  
Small wonder that their flocks oft place  
In bigot zeal the sign of grace,  
And judge that man most grace-possessed  
His neighbour's creed who damneth best !

If in the Ebenezer camp  
You would appear a shining lamp,  
You'd best consult my neighbour Jones,  
Who shows his wealth of grace in groans ;  
Or, to make surer of thy name  
Attaining quick to saintly fame,  
Feign horror at a laugh or song,  
Thy speech into a drawl prolong,—  
Aim at a Pharisaic air,  
Be very lengthy in thy prayer,—  
Find in all pastime only evil,  
Be loud in railing at the devil ;  
Nor will it harm thee to throw in  
Something about the " Man of Sin,"  
And how all good men soon cause common  
Should make against " The Scarlet Woman."'  
If but, withal, you learn to prate  
About " Foreknowledge, Will and Fate,"  
And to the Church with liberal air  
Give of thy worldly wealth a share,  
You may be all a rascal can,  
Yet pass for a most saintly man !

I might enlarge—for thick as peas  
Are painted sepulchres like these—

Some of that hue and some of this,  
And some of colours mixed, I wis—  
Here, in Episcopalian ground,  
And there in Baptist borders found.  
But let them pass : I would not choose  
To press too hard on saintly toes,  
Since not alone in churchly regions  
Are hollow shams and shows in legions.  
Think how they swarm in Fashion's train—  
The Bench and Bar's red-tape domain—  
The Court, the Camp, the Senate Hall,  
And Marts commercial most of all ;  
Scarce one profession you may name  
Where humbug rules not all supreme.

Leaving to bards more gifted to  
Give to such shams the justice due,  
I would, in winding up my lay,  
One or two minor shams pourtray.

Would'st thou, at quite an easy rate,  
Pass for a man of learning great ?  
The more a thing transcends thy reach,  
The more pretentious be thy speech ;  
Commit to memory, carefully,  
Quotations classic, two or three ;  
Seem quite familiar with the flames  
Of mythologic gods and dames ;  
Get most great minstrel names by rote,  
From Homer down to Walter Scott ;  
Prate much about " the tale divine  
Of Troy," and eke " the sacred Nine,"

"The Graces three," "Calypso's cave,"  
 And "Venus rising from the wave ;"  
 Affect to find Herodotus  
 Making of history quite a muss ;  
 Keep babbling 'bout the wondrous store  
 Of Egypt's hieroglyphic lore ;  
 Be great on "the Draconian code,"  
 Nor quite forget "the Sapphic Ode."  
 If to all this thou should'st essay  
 A prompt, dogmatic Yea or Nay  
 To leading questions of our day,  
 'Tis ten to one thou'lt soon be owned  
 "A man of learning most profound !"

Would'st thou, with parts however mean,  
 Wish to be thought a critic keen ?  
 Get practised in sarcastic sneers,  
 Looks consequential, gibes and jeers.  
 Though by thee never read, yet still  
 Feign finding "Orion" work up-hill,  
 The "Vestiges" a failure sad,  
 And "Festus" simply "prose run mad."  
 Talk of this bard as writing trash,  
 That other, writhing 'neath thy lash—  
 This novel, one of interest deep,  
 And that, first-rate to make one steep.  
 Though thy sole standing with the Press  
 May be of the waste-basket class,  
 Hint that thou art of *the Review*  
 The "Veritas" or "O. P. Q."—  
 That even *Blackwood* could not stand  
 Without thy modest helping hand ;

Chime in with those who labour hard  
 To make a myth of Selma's bard ;  
 There's " Junius " also—subject grand  
 For sage conjectures second-hand !  
 The Bacon-Shakespeare question, too,  
 To help thy purpose much may do ;  
 To make thy chances still more fair,  
 Thou might'st do worse than join that Club  
 Who once a week their learning air  
 At *The Athenic*, 10, Goose-dub.\*

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### MY THREE CHARMERS.

OfT myself I question which of  
 Three dear girls my bride should be :  
 Jeanie owns a treasure rich of  
 Golden hair well loved by me ;  
 Raven-hued are Jessie's tresses—  
 Contrast sweet to sunny brow,  
 While not least of Maggie's graces  
 Are rich locks of auburn glow.

Let my heart be ne'er so joyless,  
 One fond glance from Jeanie fair  
 Sets it dancing ; Jessie's smile has  
 A care-killing grace as rare ;—  
 When a rougher mood needs smoothing  
 'Tis with Maggie I would be.  
 Finding in her converse soothing  
 For my choice a ready plea.

---

\*The Club above referred to was a Debating Society often attended by the author during a short sojourn in Glasgow.

Jeanie hath a wit excelling,  
 Jessie loveth speech demure ;  
 Grace and goodness love-compelling  
 Meet in Maggie's bosom pure.  
 Law —not love—must rest the fault on,  
 If mine only *one* must be,  
 For, if free to play the Sultan,  
 Gladly would I wed the three !

---

LINES ADDRESSED TO A YOUNG BROTHER  
 BARD.

SING on, my brother minstrel young—  
 Sing on, unheeding them  
 Who now may in thy rustic song  
 Find less to praise than blame.

When did the blackbird's woodland lays  
 The hawk forbearance teach ?  
 When was the fox e'er found to praise  
 The grapes he could not reach ?

A joy above all joys supreme  
 Does to the bard belong ;  
 Far more than India's wealth to him  
 His own proud gift of song.

Then sing thou on, regardless though  
 Thine yet be scanty praise ;  
 The time may come thy gentle brow  
 May wear unfading bays.

Be thine the patriot in thy veins  
Oft in thy verse to show,  
Nor yet forget the sweeter strains  
To Love and Beauty due.

Thus may'st thou win, spite fortune's slight,  
A fame forever growing ;  
Not the least welcome stars, at night,  
Are those through cloud-rifts glowing.

---

## SNOWFALL IN A HIGHLAND GLEN.

OFFSPRING fair of cloud and cold,  
Glorifying wood and wold,  
Who could, mute, thy grace behold ?  
Welcome, welcome, snow !

Painter matchless ! nought to me  
Gives more gladness than to see  
Earth thus beautified by thee :  
Welcome, welcome, snow !

Unlike Flora's offerings fair,  
Partial spread—thy kindly care  
Beautifies her everywhere :  
Welcome, welcome, snow !

At thy touch, behold, to-day  
The dark Holly looks as gay  
As the Hawthorn does in May :  
Welcome, welcome, snow !



See how 'neath thy gentle tread,  
Bright as bride to altar led,  
Bends the Lady-birch her head :  
    Welcome, welcome, snow !

Yonder cascade, in its glee  
Down the hillside dashing free,  
Looks like darkness matched with thee :  
    Welcome, welcome, snow !

Fields that late looked bare and brown,  
Whiter now than Solan-down,  
Well uphold thy fair renown :  
    Welcome, welcome, snow !

Let him boast of landscapes green  
Who no Highland Glen hath seen  
Mantled in thy chaster sheen :  
    Welcome, welcome, snow !

O, to be thus always nigh  
When Glen-Urquhart, lovingly,  
Dons the virgin livery  
    Of the falling snow !

Ha ! thou ceasest—scarce a flake  
Falleth now o'er bank or brake,—  
Good-bye, Meekley's lovely lake !  
    Good-night, snow !

## CRAIGANTAIRVE.

A SCENE IN NETHER LORNE, ARGYLESHIRE.

WHERE, when comes the joyous Spring,  
Is first heard the carolling  
Of the songbirds, loving well  
'Mong our Highland woods to dwell ?  
Where first tries the tuneful thrush,  
Perched on the yet leafless bush,  
To drown Winter's dying sigh  
In a flood of melody—  
Merles and linnets, glad as she,  
Joining with her in her glee,—  
While the skylark, no less gay,  
Far among the clouds away,  
Pipeth, in her heavenward flight,  
Music such as seraph might  
Almost fill with envy to  
Listen to its thrilling flow ?  
Would you know ? then thither come,  
And make Craigantairve your home.

Where—when, after absence long,  
The cuckoo resumes her song—  
Is first heard her welcome lay  
Bringing in the happy May ?  
Where — his harem's love to gain—  
Joys to croon the heathcock vain,  
With his wings outstretchéd wide—  
Twenty fair ones at his side ?

Where delighteth most the bee  
On sweet blooms to banquet free—  
Finding them abundant, too,  
Almost all the long year through ?  
Would you know ? then hither come  
And make Craigantairve your home.

Where be the green woodlands where  
Finds the roe his choicest lair ?  
Where, the grassy hillsides green  
First to don their emerald sheen,  
And the clovered meadows fine  
Dearest to the milky kine,  
And the streamlets, clear and cool,  
Marged by birches beautiful,  
Vase wind-wafted fragrance rare  
Miles around perfume the air,  
Would you know ? then hither come,  
And make Craigantairve your home.

Scene beloved ! who here can view  
All thy graces, ever new,  
Would not pity men who toil  
'Mid the city's sad turmoil ?  
Making "fortunes" if they can,  
Careless how, so be it done !  
Give to me to spend my days  
Among Highland birks and braes,  
Finding there the best of wealth,  
Rural joys and rosy health ;

And, when wedded, proudly find  
Mine some mountain maiden kind—  
One who, like the matchless flower  
Blossoming in yonder bower,\*  
Would make any place to be  
Quite a paradise to me !

1836.

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BRITAIN vs. AFGHANISTAN.

(WRITTEN IN 1843.)

'Tis grand to grasp the glaive  
Some sacred cause to shield ;  
'Tis grand to find a grave  
In Freedom's battle-field.

Not thus fight they who seek  
Now, in ignoble strife,  
'Mid Afghan's mountains bleak  
The Afghan's country—life.

O Britain ! when will be  
Thy lust of conquest quenched ?  
'Tis infamy to see  
Thy skirts so blood-bedrenched.

---

\*Miss Eliza Bell Maclachlan, sister to the then laird of Craigantairve. ▲  
At the time the above lines were written Miss Maclachlan was generally allowed  
to be the most beautiful woman in all Argyleshire.

Rude though the Afghan be,  
He loves his native land,  
And well may dread to see  
Its rule in thy red hand.

Let Kyber's fatal fight  
And Ackbar's blade of doom  
Warn thee to shun the fight  
Where freemen strike for home.

The brave respect the brave—  
• Thou seek'st revenge: For shame!  
Go sheathe thy braggart glaive;  
Aspire to honest fame.

If Afghan thou would'st lord,  
Go blessing—not to slay,—  
The Bible, not the Sword,  
Paving for thee the way.

How beautiful upon  
The mountains then would be  
Thy feet! This—this alone—  
Were conquest worthy thee.

## THE FISHERMAN'S RETURN.

'Tis night : dark lour  
The storm-clouds scowling ;  
O'er main and moor  
Wild winds rush, howling ;  
Rocks Ellen's cot  
In manner fearful ;  
Yet not for that  
She there sits, tearful.

“ My love is tossed  
Upon the billow !  
O that my breast  
Were now his pillow !”  
The storm increased—  
Her heart beats wildly ;  
“ Rest, rude waves, rest !  
Ye winds, blow mildly !”

When just as die  
All hope within her,  
In steps, O joy !  
Her brave bread-winner.  
Love's couch is spread,  
Love's kiss is given ;  
The fisher's shed  
Is now a heaven.

---

THE HIGHLAND EMIGRANT'S LAST  
FAREWELL.

ADIEU, my native land, adieu  
The banks of fair Lochfyne,  
Where the first breath of life I drew,  
And would my last resign !  
Swift sails the bark that wafteth me  
This night from thy loved strand :  
O must it be my last of thee,  
My dear, dear Fatherland !

Land of the Bens and greenwood glens,  
Though forced with thee to part,  
Nor time nor space can e'er efface  
Thine image from my heart.  
Come weal, come woe—till life's last throe  
My Highland home shall seem  
An Eden bright in Fancy's light,  
A heaven in memory's dream !

Land of the maids of matchless grace,  
The bards of matchless song,—  
Land of the bold, heroic race  
That never brooked a wrong !  
Long in the front of nations free  
May Scotland proudly stand :  
Farewell to thee—farewell to thee,  
My dear, dear Fatherland !

## ON THE DEATH OF A BELOVED MOTHER.

O THOU whose love was dear as life to me,—  
 My first, best, fondest friend beneath the skies!  
 Though hence removed by Heaven's all-wise decree,  
 Yet seem'st thou still as present to mine eyes,—  
 The same fond look, the same endearing voice—  
 Thy face so fair, thy smile so sweet to see!  
 Alas, that all too late I've learnt to prize  
 Thy peerless worth—a worth that well may be  
 Within my heart of hearts a treasured memory.

Methinks I see thee by the couch of pain,—  
 Thy presence fraught with healing—keen complaint  
 Changing to grateful smiles, or making fain  
 Some orphan'd home with needful nourishment.  
 How often o'er my bed of sickness bent  
 Thy form beloved—an angel seeming there,—  
 Night after night in weary watching spent  
 Counting as nothing, in thy tender care  
 That I should nothing lack a mother's love could spare!

A task more pleasant was the loving zeal  
 With which to me, in boyhood, day by day,  
 Thou would'st fresh fountains of delight unseal,  
 Making Instruction's path a pleasant way.  
 'Twas thine to show Vice smiles but to betray,  
 Thine to persuade me ever to pursue  
 The path of duty, nor from that e'er stray,  
 No matter what of sacrifice ensue—  
 Thine own example still to all thy precepts true.



If friends departed may permitted be  
 To mingle sympathies with those they best  
 Loved on this earth, O, be thou still to me  
 A guardian spirit, chasing all unrest  
 And sorrow from my oft despondent breast,—  
 Bidding me hopeful tread life's journey o'er,  
 Cheered by the thought that, when at Heaven's behest  
 Hence called, I'll meet thee on that blissful shore  
 Where re-united friends are parted nevermore.

---

### A STOLEN KISS.

No, Maggie ! I'll take no denying :  
 Anear thee, my winsome wee witch,  
 What dullards deem proper decorum  
 I never could practice or preach.  
 Come, come, then ! my sweet blushing bright one,  
 What needs you should take it amiss  
 If from those red lips so inviting  
 I sometimes should pilfer a kiss ?

Let gommerals, blind to thy beauty,  
 A better behaviour shew,—  
 'Twere nonsense to find in such fellows  
 A rule by which others must go.  
 As for me, love, I must and *will* win it,  
 Whate'er be the price of my bliss :  
 Your mamma — will be here in a minute !  
 Meg's lover, of course, had the kiss !

## ON VISITING IONA.

THRICE hallowed island of the wave,  
Saint Callum's chosen home and grave,  
Iona! as he thee surveys,  
One well may feel all prayer and praise;  
No pilgrim reaching thy loved bound  
E'er bent the knee on holier ground!  
I look around, and ages gone  
Return in all their glory on  
My raptured sight; the Present seems  
    As nothing to the past:  
I wander in a world of dreams  
    Too beautiful to last  
'Mong such sad proofs as here I view  
Of what remorseless time can do—  
Time, that withal, Columba's name  
    In fond and fresh remembrance saves,  
While kings and chiefs once known to fame  
    Beside him sleep in nameless graves.

Here—as with reverent steps I tread—  
Now lingering 'mong the mighty dead,  
Where saints and heroes, carved in stone,  
Seem almost as still living on,—  
Now viewing sad yon sacred fane  
Which, spite all spoilers, Celt or Dane,  
Tow'rs still the glory of the scene,—  
Or wandering where good Oran toiled,  
And, strong in truth, the Druid foiled,

Ere year from darkness and from sin  
 He learnt far distant tribes to win,—  
 Here feels my soul a holy glow ;  
 I glory in the Long Ago -  
 Here, did the truth my aid require,  
 I'd champion it through flood and fire ;  
 Here, ruthless Time's reforming skill,  
 Could wish the Past were present still,  
 And thou, long-desolated I,\*  
 The heaven thou were wont to be !

O could my muse, unskilled to sing  
 Of mitred priest or sceptered king,  
 From hoar Tradition take her cue,  
 And paint thy past in colours true,  
 My verse of nobler deeds would tell  
 Than ever graced crusading zeal,—  
 Labours outmatching far away  
 The noblest of our own proud day,—  
 Triumphs by mighty men achieved,  
 By meaner men now scarce believed,  
 Yet meriting in song sublime  
 To flourish green throughout all time !

Iona blest ! some bard, whose lyre  
 Is touched with true poetic fire,  
 May yet complete what in this lay  
 I far too feebly would pourtray.  
 The Druid, were the picture true,  
 In the dim distance might we view

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\* I, an island: Hence *I-Challum-Chaille*—the name by which the Western Gael generally designates Iona.

Within his stony circle, where  
Now towers yon sacred fane in air ;  
The noblest of that noble band  
Who pagan soil made Christian land—  
Good Callum would be seen once more  
Steering his currach from thy shore,  
Intent on spreading gospel light  
Where erst was darkness deep as night ;—  
Some godless Viking's pirate host  
Once more would hover round thy coast ;  
While quickly, too, to thy relief  
Would muster many an Island chief ;—  
The war-axe would strike sharp and sore ;  
The Norsemen, scattered evermore,  
Would go in song indignant down  
To fitting infamous renown !—  
Nor should forgotten be the fair  
Whose virgin lives passed peaceful here  
In deeds of mercy, praise and prayer,—  
Who, living, loved, and piously  
Bequeathed in death their dust to thee.

'Tis evening's hour : The sun has gone  
To rest his ocean couch upon ;  
Lo ! where Dunchalva's distant pile  
Is crimsoned by his parting smile—  
A loving smile that seems to say  
How gladly would the God of Day  
His wonted rest a while delay,  
To gaze a little longer space  
On loved Iona's hallowed face !

In sober sooth, I'd like to know,  
Of all our earth to him can show,  
Where vieweth he in all his round  
A spot more worthily renowned ;  
Where sees he any coast as fair  
As that which forms thy setting rare,  
Thou gem so worthy of his care !  
Oh, take the whole resplendent view  
Of islands cradled 'mid the blue  
Of ocean, from far Barra's crest  
To where the clouds on Cullin rest,  
And Jura's sister-summits three  
Love in the path of stars to be,—  
What man with any soul at all  
A sight so charming would not thrall !  
Who would not leave earth's furthest strand  
'To gaze upon a scene so grand !

Farewell, Iona ! Yonder, lo !  
My bark awaits, and I must go ;  
A little space, and envious night  
Shall hide thee from my loving sight.  
Yet, hallowed Isle, thou'lt ever be  
A blissful memory to me—  
My Mecca, to which often I  
In thought will wend my way,  
Much wishing that whene'er I die  
My last long slumber may  
Be on thy bosom : Who can tell ?  
Once more, enchanting Isle, farewell !

## DUNCAN'S-BAY HEAD.

(Written in a Visitor's Album kept at the Huna Inu, John O'Groat's.)

PILGRIM, not when skies are smiling,  
And old Ocean lies asleep,  
But when raves the blast despoiling  
Should you view yon headland steep.

When o'er liquid hills and hollows  
Pipes the wind an anthem grand  
Heard o'er all the roar of billows  
Breaking on the rock-ribbed strand,—

When, o'erhead, the storm-cloud's marge is  
Brightened by the lightning's play,  
And, far down, the foaming surges  
Dashing, die in clouds of spray,—

When upon the distant skerrie  
Cowers the cormorant in fear,  
While the screaming seagull merry  
Rides upon the wave-crest near,—

When the scud that o'er it sweepeth  
The vext Pentland's visage veils,  
Where some stout ship, natlless, keepeth  
Breasting it, 'neath close-reefed sails,—

*Then* it is that fancy pictures  
Haco and his galleys good  
Swallowed up where oft, as victors,  
Rose their wave-cries o'er the flood ;—

Then it is that *I* would, cheerful,  
 Tarry on yon giddy height ;  
 Then old Ocean's turmoil fearful  
 In my soul wakes wild delight !

Tides in which, with zest untiring,  
 Sea-birds many-millions feed,—  
 Wave-girt rocks more awe-inspiring  
 Than earth's proudest pyramid,—

Cliffy scaurs of rarest grandeur,  
 Craggs where broods the eagle grey,  
 Chasms, caves, where wild waves thunder—  
 These thy charms are, Duncan's-bay !

1838.

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#### A VANISHED HOPE.

My once loved and loving fond one,  
 Though thou willest it to be  
 That all hope I now abandon,  
 More I blame myself than thee.

Had I, spite thy charms alluring,  
 Made thee less my all in all—  
 Never owned my heart, adoring,  
 Thine—thine only, past recall,—

Haply, the old oak tree under,  
 Mine were yet to oft enjoy  
 Thy love-lighted glances tender,  
 Smile for smile and sigh for sigh !

Was it that I made thy beauty  
My choice theme in many a lay,—  
Making it my muse's duty  
All thy graces to portray ?

Was it that I thought of Heaven  
Far less often than of thee  
That my love so ill has thriven ?  
That no hope is left for me ?

Think how, by yon river, queenly  
Flowing thy loved home anear,  
Thou oft promised, O ! how vainly,  
All thy life with me to share.

Think—but no,—the thought might sadden  
Thee too much ; so take thy way,  
Of regrets that come unbidden  
Leaving me alone the prey.

---

### LOVE'S LAST APPEAL.

MAIDEN of Adgartan !

Hear me, while I fain  
Would pour out my heart in  
One appealing strain—  
My last appeal to thee, if now I plead in vain.

Once thy heart would question  
Aught in my dispraise ;  
Once thine eyes could rest on  
Mine with loving gaze,  
Or droop, as soul to soul sent love's electric rays.



Though all unavailing  
Now such memories be,—  
Bootless as the wailing  
Of the winds my plea,—  
Song soothes the wounded swan—it, too, may comfort me.

As some gem enriching,  
Lost as soon as found,—  
As some strain bewitching  
In a discord drown'd,—  
As Eden fruit within some fair forbidden bound,—

As a starlet looking  
On some wreck-strewn tide,—  
With its brightness mocking  
The destruction wide,—  
So is to my fond heart thy beauty and thy pride.

What though all unmatched  
Be thy mien and mould,  
Would the slave less wretched  
Feel it chained with gold?  
The victim of the block, should crimson him enfold?

Tell, bewitching creature!  
Tell me why thou art  
Angel in each feature,  
Tyrant in thy heart?  
A rosebud that yet wills no odour to impart?

Suns were made to warm us,  
Stars to cheer us shine,  
Soars the lark to charm us  
With her song divine :  
O think not less to please such peerless graces thine !

Love, thou archer clever,  
If thy shafts must fly,  
Aim at Annie,—give her  
In her turn to sigh,  
Or teach me of thy grace her scorning to defy.

Ah, too well Love knoweth  
The attempt were vain ;  
Much as Beauty oweth  
To the minstrel train,  
Weak is the power of song where wealth her smiles would  
gain.

Memory, gift of Heaven  
To the happy—gay !  
My poor heart is driven  
Mad beneath thy sway,  
Thou vulture at my breast, exulting o'er thy prey !

Hopeless love, bright maiden,  
Is a fever strong,  
But the grave once laid in,  
We sleep sweet and long :  
Alas, that Lethe's stream flows but in idle song !

## MISS MAKEBELIEVE.

A SKETCH FROM LIFE.

SINCE moralizing's out of fashion,  
And gossiping the "ruling passion,"  
Methinks it were but little harm here  
To sing you of a certain charmer.

And first, it might be well to state here  
How lords and lairds were "wooing at her,"  
In youthful prime, when every charm  
Of hers the coldest heart might warm,—  
How many Collins she had slain,  
How many Strephons sighed in vain,  
How many sonnets in her praise  
Were penned by bards of other days,—  
But lest ye'd think my tale too long,  
We'll leave her "dancing days" unsung,  
And hasten on to picture how—  
Gone the last lover in her "tow,"  
Her pow'r to please forever fled,  
Her last faint hope of wedlock dead—  
She, nun-like, from the world retires,  
And to a saintly life aspires,  
As many of her sisters do  
When we, poor sinners, cease to sue.

No more she apes the peacock gay,  
Attending opera or play;  
No more she heedeth Fashion's call;  
She hates to hear of rout or ball,

And thinks such scenes of sinful mirth  
Should be quite banished from the earth.  
As for herself, she ne'er could bear  
The half-nude style of dressing there  
So common now to girl and dame !  
The waltz, too !— a still greater shame  
It was to see how girls can prance  
Unblushing through that wanton dance !  
Woe to the hand that ever would  
Its presence on *her* waist intrude !  
No—never in her life would she  
Admit of so much liberty ;  
She *always* was of men afraid,  
And hopes to live and die a maid !

Behold her now, a saint full-fledged,  
On social problems much engaged ;  
And seeming to be fairly grown  
The very Dorcas of our town,—  
So many garments old and new  
The needy to her bounty owe ;  
And then she visits all the sick—  
Was ever lady half so meek ?  
Condemns *Sir Walter*, quotes good *Boston*—  
Was ever lady half so Christian ?  
She lives in very pious hope  
To see the downfall of the Pope,  
And hopes his time will soon be up :  
She tells such interesting news  
'Bout Juggernaut and the Hindoos,  
With all that's done among the Jews,—

And then, with what a grace she coaxes  
Your mite to missionary boxes !

Alas ! that whispering tongues there be  
Who in all this mere "shamming" see—  
A well played part, that soon would end,  
Should fortune here a husband send.  
They've heard she paints—and 'tis well-known  
Her wealth of curls not all her own ;  
They fear she feeleth more at ease  
Before her glass than on her knees !  
They've seen her often, when at church,  
Like any sinner nod and lurch,  
However much the preacher there  
Might merit more attentive ear.  
'Twas but the other Sunday she  
Gave quite a shock to Mrs. T—;  
A psalm is given forth — our saint,  
Smelling of perfume and of paint,  
Turns up her book, when lo ! that rake  
*Don Juan*, carried by mistake !

Is't possible, mysterious fate !  
Behold her now in married state ;  
A swain who much admired her purse  
Proposed "for better or for worse"—  
She took him at his word, of course !

O Hymen, dread transforming god,  
What changes follow at thy nod !

The angel forms of Cupid's day  
Become much like to mortal clay ;  
Enchanting syrens learn to be  
Much in the curtain-lecture key ;  
Adored Clarindas wear the *trews*,  
And goddesses turn famous shrews !

But turn we to our saint :—O fie  
On mortal mutability !  
In one short month she came so graced,  
So high among the godly placed,  
Comes down to quite a different level,  
Where—where, in short, she plays the d—l ;  
Forgets her charities and prayers,  
For sick or naked never cares ;  
Is first each night to see the play,  
Tho' last to church on Sabbath day ;  
Talks scandal—reads each new romance,  
Nor thinks it any harm to dance !

So pirates, once their prize made fast,  
Give their true colours to the mast ;  
So butterflies, for aught I learn,  
To dirty grubs again return !

## MY FIRST RAILROAD RIDE.\*

OUR fare is paid—'tween fear and hope,  
We hear "Just to depart";  
Our seats are ta'en—the steam is up—  
And now we're on the start!

"Oh, fire and fury—how we go!  
Thou magic-working thing!  
What speed can match with thine? I trow  
The eagle on the wing,

"Resistless darting on her prey,  
Glides not more swift than thee,  
Untiring still, away, away,  
Upon thy journey free!

"Gramercy! how we're dashing on  
O'er moss and moor and mead!  
Methinks the Coursers of the Sun  
Would vainly match our speed!"

Thus spake our bard. A pause ensued:  
Some looked as on the rack;  
Some felt as if through air they rode  
On some swift storm-cloud's back!

---

\*The ride recorded in these verses was taken at a time when a railroad extending from Glasgow to Airdrie was the only such road then in all Scotland.

“ Our nag’s the boy ! ” one chap remarked,—  
“ Needs neither corn nor stall :  
No rest seeks he, however worked ;  
My troth ! but he beats all.

“ Tell me no more of Gilpin’s feat  
At Edmonton so gay,  
Nor yet of Johnny Cope’s retreat  
From Preston’s fatal fray !

“ Not swifter over field and fell  
Our horse and we could hie  
If demons after us did yell,  
And we for life did fly ! ”

Thus on we go. What ! can it be  
Old Airdrie ? By the powers,  
’Twas but the other minute we  
Left fair St. Mungo’s towers !

Whiss ! whiss ! goes forth a deaf’ning sound,  
Like breath of Polar whale ;  
Our Pegasus his goal has found  
And we the ground, all hale !



## SELLARS AND HIS SHEARS.

(Patrick Sellars—one of the most notorious of the agents engaged in the celebrated Sutherlandshire “clearances”—having, at an agricultural dinner once attended by him, his health proposed by a nobleman present thereat, the following verses are an attempted interpretation of the thoughts that must have crowded on him, as he rose to express his thanks for the honour thus done him.)

HERE stand I before you, a man matched by few  
 For clearancing work in this land :  
 Thank heaven for laws that so wisely allow  
 The pursuit of a labour so grand !  
 Though a man of peace, true enough it is,  
 As his grace of Argyle declares,  
 That Ardtornish grey, scarce a year away,  
 Struck its flag to old Sellars' shears.\*

Yes, mine are shears which for many years,  
 Despite much resistance rude,  
 Have wrought more skaith to the clans, i' faith,  
 Than the Roman or Dane e'er could.  
 Wherever they dip into the “clip,”  
 'Tis all up with your mountaineers :  
 Like a mist they're gone, while I flourish on,—  
 Then hurrah for old Sellars' shears !

Yet, with all my skill, it was work up-hill  
 For a time, since, with one accord,  
 They refused to see why they cleared should be  
 To oblige even Sutherland's lord.

---

\*Spoken in allusion to Sellars' then recent purchase of an estate in Argyleshire—that on which stands the grand old Castle of Ardtornish, once the royal residence of the Lords of the Isles.

It was sad, no doubt, just to fire them out,—  
Still I kept heating well their ears  
Till the land's good Chief, to my great relief,  
Brought the sword to assist the shears.

Then were well-tilled lands turned to sheep-walks grand,  
And I often could dance with mirth  
At the sight so gay—my dear lambs at play  
Round a many extinguished hearth !  
'Mong the witless lairds of the Glens and Airds  
What a change in a few short years  
By my pluck was wrought—for their lands I bought !  
Such the might of old Sellars' shears !

The Celt talks of a prescriptive right  
To the land of his birth ! Ah, well,  
I love it, too, more than many do,  
As the Celt to his cost can tell !  
Sure a shire like this made a wilderness  
To make room for my fleecy cares  
Is enough to prove how this land I love,—  
Then hurrah for old Sellars' shears !

Long, long may all chiefs in a "clearing" mood  
Their reward in good rent-rolls reap :  
"Every man for himself" is a maxim good,  
One to which *I* at least will keep.  
Green, depeopled straths are the chosen paths  
Best befitting one's Cheviot dears ;  
Then blaze on, ye who can ;—the true Chief is the man  
Who gives scope to the crook and shears !

## AN EPISTLE TO A POETICAL FRIEND.

(Written from Liverpool, England, in 1848.)

With meikle shame to think that I  
Should have allowed your last to lie  
Unanswered two whole mouths well-nigh,  
    'Tis high time, Watty,  
That I fit response should try,  
    So here goes at you !

And how have *you* been all this while ?  
Proving the chartists all that's vile,  
Or smartly stirring Tory bile  
    With Free Trade speeches ?  
Or calmly basking in the smile  
    Of "Yorkshire witches ?"

Or, may it be that you have crossed  
The channel, joining that brave host  
Now crushing despot rule unblest  
    All Europe through —  
Thrones built on blood and bayonets, tossed  
    The devil to ?

Or have you been to Erin's strand,  
Cheering her gallant patriot band  
Now hoping for the hour at hand  
    She will once more  
'Mong Europe's nations take the stand  
    She held of yore ?

If so, friend Wat, I hope that you  
May quickly join the minstrels true  
Who, in *The Nation*, pitch into  
    John Bull's rough hide,—  
To end his base misrule, to do  
    Or die, their pride !

For me, my rhyming days are o'er ;—  
As well seek grapes in Labrador  
As Bardic visions by the shore  
    Of Mersey muddy ;  
'Mid traffic's wretched stir and stour  
    No minstrel should be.

Who would become the muse's pride  
Must learn to woo her as a bride,  
And never, never quit her side  
    At any cost ;  
Let meaner aims the heart divide,  
    And all is lost.

O for the days that once have been !  
O for the Aray's wildwood Glen,  
And thou, lost Harp ! to wake again  
    The echoes near me,  
And maidens bright and honest men  
    To charm and cheer me !

Though living in the humblest cot,  
If by the Muse neglected not,  
Princes might envy me my lot,  
    So blest—so free :

Let others in your cities rot—  
The hills for me !

But wheresoe'er I live or die,—  
Doom'd in forgotten grave to lie,  
Or, haply, up Parnassus high  
Thy steps attend,  
Believe me, till my latest sigh,  
Thy faithful friend.

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### ELEGIAC STANZAS.

(Occasioned by the death, at a very early age, of John Henry; the first-born son of Lord John Campbell, of Ardincaple, afterwards seventh Duke of Argyll.)

A SHADOW rests on Aray's strand,  
O'er all the West is wail and woe ;  
The heir to all MacCailean's land  
In death's relentless grasp lies low.  
O youth so loved, so gifted ! though  
The cruel grave has closed o'er thee,  
Long, by the Aray's murmuring flow,  
Shall flourish green thy memory.

Oft, as we watched thy life's bright morn,  
How fondly did we hope to see  
The statesmaa just—the warrior stern—  
A second "IAN RUDAH" in thee,—

The stoutest friend of liberty—  
The glory of the Campbell Clan !  
Alas that thus so soon should be  
That fond day-dream forever gone !

We well could see, without a sigh,  
The whirlwind in its mad career  
Uproot the dozed bēech-tree dry,  
The gloomy yew or hemlock sere ;  
But when the oak of promise rare  
Is torn untimely from its place,  
Who; seeing, would not wish that there  
The tempest had shown better grace ?

Yon stately Pile may well be grey,—  
Deserted—desclate, though long,  
From thee it hoped a better day—  
The flow of mirth, the voice of song,  
The charity that has no tongue,  
The ever-hospitable board ;  
And ladies fair and gallants young  
There proud to meet Dunaray's Lord.

Oh, death ! thou art a monster blind,  
Forever groping for thy prey ;  
And oft, by sad mischance, doth find  
The young when thou should'st get the grey—  
The thousands to whom life well may  
Be more a burden than a joy :  
Ah ! why flew not that welcome way  
The dart which did our hopes destroy ?

Farewell, illustrious youth, farewell !  
 Though deep and long be our regret,  
 And earthly thou hast surely well  
 Exchanged for heavenly coronet.  
 O be thy last long slumber sweet  
 By fair Cill-mhunná's halloved strand :  
 Our sun of promise bright is set !  
 A shadow hath come o'er the land !

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TO THE MORNING STAR.

FAIREST and rarest gem  
 Placed in Night's diadem !  
 Morn's happy usher ' who would not with joy'  
 Welcome thy presence bright,  
 Over yon distant height  
 Queenly resuming thy place in the sky ?

The dawn-loving lark now  
 Is stirring—and hark now  
 The joyful ado at thy coming she makes !  
 While, glad at thy showing  
 The darkness now going,  
 The amorous black-cock his harem awakes.

The elfin knights prancing,  
 The elfin maids dancing,  
 The witch at her cantrips, thou fill'st with dismay ;  
 Ghosts from thy presence fly,  
 Owlets no longer cry,—  
 Wand'rer benighted, now smile on thy way !

Star of the golden gleams,  
 Where dost thou hide thy beams  
 When the young Morr her fair eye-lids unclose ?  
 Charms such as her's to see  
 Well worth thy while might be  
 Exit less hasty thus from us to choose.

Lo, in the twilight grey  
 Vanish thy sisters gay ;  
 Soon must thou also be lost to my view !  
 Harbinger dutiful  
 Of the Dawn beautiful,  
 Now, till thy next glad returning, adieu !

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### A DREAMLAND DELIGHT.

ADDRESSED TO—————

Last night in my bachelor chamber lone  
 The sleep by me wooed seemed scarce begun,  
 When I dreamed a dream of the rarest bliss,  
 A vision such as I would not miss  
 For all that has ever yet been my share  
 Of joy in this waking world of care.

Seemed I throned 'mid the gods in Olympian light ?  
 Seemed I feasting with kings in some palace bright,  
 Where, of all the gay courtiers gathered there,  
 I of royalty's smiles had the amplest share ?  
 With the sceptre of power in my potent hand,  
 Did myself seem the chief of some far-famed land ?



Did I deem I was owned in the World's glad sight  
 A Hero unmatched in fair Freedom's fight ?  
 Or a Sage taught to bless and enrich mankind  
 With the wisdom and lore of a godlike mind ?  
 In the Temple of Fame was it mine to win  
 The most coveted place 'mong the bards therein ?  
 Did I seem in possession of stores untold  
 Of the brightest gems—of the purest gold ?  
 Did some daughter of Beauty, with hand of snow,  
 Wake the harp to some strain of the long ago ?  
 Was I charmed by the tones of some seraph Choir ?  
 Seemed I list'ning the Angel of Love's own lyre,  
 As anear him were joined, in the Land of Bliss,  
 The fond-hearted whose loves had been cross'd in *this* ?  
 In my Highland home did I seem to stray  
 With some well-loved Ben in my near survey  
 When its peak with the sun is in glory crowned,  
 And the rocks to the cries of the Chase resound ?  
 Seem'd my bark o'er the breast of the blue Lochfyne  
 Bounding fearless and fleet, as in days longsyne,  
 When a swelling sail and a heaving sea  
 Were a joy to my little bark and me ?

No, not from such things, my fair questioner, grew  
 The delight which that dream o'er my spirit threw ;  
 Just list, and you'll own there was cause enow.

Methought I was sitting, at gloaming's hour,  
 Inside of some cool, cosy garden bower ;  
 A maiden of beauty supremely bright  
 Sat near me—her eyes full of love's own light.  
 Brief time passed we there when, sans further sign,

I told how I loved her and wished her mine ;  
 Nor was it long till she sighed, " I'm thine ;"  
 And just as in ecstasy I pressed  
 Her yielding form to my beating breast—  
 A prelude sweet to a very shower  
 Of kisses laid all her fair face o'er—  
 I awoke.—My fair friend, if that joy of joys  
 It ever may mine be to realize,  
 You only can say, since the darling eli  
 Of that dream of mine was *-your own sweet self !*

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### LINES

WRITTEN ON THE BANKS OF THE DEE, NEAR CHESTER.

SHAKE off, my soul, each earth-born care !  
 A glimpse of paradise is here !  
     Scene like this to see  
     Wakes a doubt in me  
 How a curse can be on a world so fair ?

Here—the blackbird sings like some spirit blest,  
 There—the skylark springs from her secret nest,  
     And in heaven away  
     Pours so sweet a lay  
 As might envy wake in a seraph's breast.

Let those who list far distant go  
 To gaze on scenes of sterner shew ;  
     Enough for me  
     Is the joy to be  
 Where the winding Dee delights to flow,

Ye bards, let fancy wander free ;  
 Think what earth's fairest spot should be ;  
     Then hither stray  
     In flowery May  
 And view the gay reality !

May 24th, 1841.

### THE DINGLE.

A SCENE ON THE BANKS OF THE MERSEY, ENGLAND.

I've been 'mid scenes where horn and hound  
 Make hills and valleys ring all,  
 But ne'er in such a fairy bound  
 As thine, delightful Dingle !

Here sweetest bloom the " stars of earth ;"  
 Here woodland minstrels mingle  
 Notes such as only could have birth  
 In Eden—or the Dingle.

Here ever-verdant shrub and spray  
 The richest odours fling all  
 On Zephyr's wings, while on his way  
 Flow'r-kissing in the Dingle.

Here sunny slopes invite the view ;  
 Here, bowers where fond hearts tingle ;  
 There, glides the Mersey, calmly blue,  
 Proud to reflect the Dingle !

Ye bachelors, come here, and then  
 I dare ye to live single ;  
 How can ye, where such nymphs are seen  
 As love to haunt the Dingle ?

## SONNET.

## THE PRIMROSE.

Of all the gems that Earth's green bosom grace  
 Give me the Primrose, May-dew-drinking flower,  
 That loves not gay parterre nor gaudy bower,  
 But gives its beauty to each desert place.  
 So Innocence, rare guest in Palaces,  
 Blooms in yon cleft upon the bleak hill-side !  
 So sweet content, unknown to Wealth and Pride,  
 With rustic Toil her quiet dwelling has.  
 Loved flow'r ! thy term of life is brief, but thou  
 Enjoy'st it in the Seasons' golden age,  
 When the wood-minstrels chaunt on every bough,  
 And larks to Heaven make vocal pilgrimage ;  
 I well may deem, of all things fair below,  
*Thy* praise doth most their thrilling songs engage.

## SONNET.

## TO A ROBIN SINGING ON A NOVEMBER MORNING.

EMBLEM of Hope ! thou minstrel sweet, that sings  
 When eild and sadness fall upon the year,  
 And Winter tramples on the leaflet sere,  
 And flowers are not—I marvel what thus brings  
 Joy to thy heart. Dost thou in memory stray  
 To the bright May-time, when on wanton wings  
 Thy fond mate thou hast courted ?—when the spray  
 Is musical as Heaven's own bowers, and springs  
 The skylark from the gowan'd sward to chaunt  
 Her matin song ? Sweet bird ! it so must be ;—

Of present pleasures little canst thou vaunt,  
 Yet is thy lot an envied one to me  
 To whom reflection much of sorrow brings,—  
 Whose memory is a snake that my sad heart oft stings.

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SONNET.

Addressed to J. Ferguson, of Carlyle, on reading his "Shadow of the Pyramid"—a volume of Sonnets descriptive of a tour through Egypt and the Holy Land.

BARD of the lay that tells of Egypt's land,  
 Who would not own the magic of thy rhyme?  
 Palace and pyramid and temple grand—  
 Titanic structures fastened for all time—  
 Gracefully conjured up at thy command,  
 I gaze enraptured on their forms sublime.  
 I see the chosen Chief, whose wondrous wand  
 Awed and confounded prince and priest and seer,  
 O'er the Red Sea, majestic, stretch his hand—  
 The foes of God and Israel pressing near:  
 The waves once more divide—God's chosen band  
 Walk safely through, while Egypt's hosts are drowned:  
 Thy song is as if, 'mid the desert sand,  
 The harp inspired of Miriam thou had'st found!

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DISENCHANTED.

So thou hast "changed thy mind!" What then?  
 A common thing in woman-kind  
 To wonder at were quite as vain  
 As wondering that the wind  
 Can vary. If the minstrel sings,  
 'Tis for the balm that music brings.

No, false one, if I now repine,  
    'Tis *not* that others bend the knee  
In welcome homage at the shrine  
    Once sacred unto me :  
I grieve that I could ever bow  
Where all who list may worship now !

And this is she I once could deem  
    A being less of earth than heaven—  
One who could all perfection claim—  
    The veil at last is riven,  
And lo, revealed, to my dismay,  
An image of most common clay !

Good-bye, fair fickle one, good-bye !  
    A little while of bitter thought  
And I may learn to wonder why  
    Thy love I ever sought,  
Yea, thankful be that to thy pride  
I yet may owe a worthier bride.

The stricken deer may seek the shade  
    'Mid scenes where beauty is not sold :  
My heart shall yet to joy be wed—  
    My love-tale shall be told—  
And thou, if still remembered, be  
One of the common crowd to me.

## TARLOCHAN'S ADVICE TO HIS SON.

(PARAPHRASED FROM THE GAELIC.)

ONE advice I would give you, my son, in this strain—  
 It may serve when a-wooing you go :  
 Be not daunted too much by a seeming disdain,—  
 With deceit to the truthful your soul never stain,—  
 If you wear it at all, wear but lightly Love's chain,—  
 It may save you a many heigho !

Should you meet "a fine girl," be you sure she is so  
 Not alone in her figure and face  
 Ere you give her your heart, or, too late, you may know  
 Yourself helplessly fooled, like a bird in the bough  
 Neatn the spell of some snake in the grass.

Beneath a bright landscape the earthquake may sleep,—  
 In the rosebud a canker may be, —  
 The river where calmest is always most deep,  
 And balmy the breeze that may oftentimes sweep  
 O'er a rock-bosomed, ship-wrecking sea.

Then seek you in woman the charms of the mind,  
 Those charms that with youth will not die ;  
 No graces or gifts of the Circean kind  
 Must allure your young heart, or, right soon, you may find  
 You have built on the ice—you have trusted the wind—  
 You have made your whole lifetime a sigh !

## A LAST FOND FAREWELL.

As some beacon-light, far throwing  
Through a night of starless skies  
Its blest rays, the seaman showing  
Where his wished-for haven lies,

Loved one ! thus, when shadows dreary  
All around my pathway lay,  
Came thy gentle smiles to cheer me,  
Chasing all the gloom away ;

Shewing that, however lowering  
My life's sky might sometimes prove,  
I could aye find refuge sure in  
The calm haven of thy love.

Wherefore, thou delightful vision,  
Was thy stay so very brief ?  
Woe's me that a joy elysian  
Should so sudden change to grief !

Parted now, for ever parted—  
Malice well has played her part,—  
I, the lorn and broken-hearted,  
Thou—I ask not what thou art.

Still, within my heart adoring  
Lives thine image, ever fair ;  
Like a rose in winter flow'ring,  
Blooms my love amid despair.

Fare thee well ! yon heaving ocean  
Farther soon shall us divide ;  
Still, till death shall end its motion,  
Thou shalt be my heart's fond bride !



## THE CAPTURED BIRD.

## A FABLE.

A GIRL once caught in a well-set snare  
A song-bird sweet of plumage rare,  
Close caged him, yet still such kind care had he  
That he could not well wish for a life more free ;  
Though sometimes seen with his bars at strife,  
His was, on the whole, a pleasant life.

When his mistress had kept this bird so long  
That forgot seemed the haunts that first heard his song,  
Came a change which he ill could brook to see --  
The more fond he grew the less kind seemed she !  
He had been so long her imprisoned slave,  
So grateful for every crumb she gave,  
That it seemed, be his dole however small,  
He could not but choose to live still in thrall.  
But not thus, from his native joys exiled,  
Can a bird to its cage be reconciled ;  
The string that is played on too long may break,  
And a yoke, tho' of gold, soon must tire the neck.  
O no,—it is not from all joy exiled  
That a bird brought up in the forest wild  
Can be to such bondage reconciled,—  
A truth which his jailor, fair ingrate !  
Found out ere long, yet all too late.

One day she open'd his cage in play,  
With a "Go, vain thing, if thou wilt, away !"  
Never dreaming her captive one inch would stray.

The fond bird heard the insulting word,  
And his native pride was within him stirred ;  
So he flapped his wings, to her wond'ring view,  
And away, and away, fast and far he flew !  
It was *then* that the grief of his mistress proved  
That the bird she lost was a bird beloved ;  
He returned to his bower in the forest green,  
And her captive caged never more was seen !

MORAL—Love is the bird, ye maidens bright,  
Of which the minstrel sings ;  
Then, never may you, with caprice light,  
Or seeming scorn, or wanton slight,  
Forget that he has wings.

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### HAPPINESS.

SAY, where dwelleth happiness—Where ?  
With the peasant in yon low-roofed cot ?  
So sages and statesmen declare,  
Yet the peasant knows *there* she dwells *not*.

Is her home then in palaces grand,  
Proud Royalty's favourite guest ?  
With the gay and the great of the land,  
Does she dwell 'mid the dance and the feast ?

Alas ! 'neath the coronet there  
Oft hid is a dark aching brow ;  
Oft the purple but hides in its glare  
The choice victims of care and of woe.

Does she dwell with the famous in song ?  
 Most of all *there* the search would be vain,  
 Since the strains that our raptures prolong  
 Are oft poured from a bosom of pain !

With the Learned and the Wise surely she  
 Makes herself no rare guest, one would deem ;  
 Lo, the fool, as he passes, may see  
 She abides not with any of them !

Is she found where the wine-cup is drained  
 'Mid laughter and revelry high ?  
 Her presence is there only feigned—  
 Her true self such scenes ne'er comes nigh.

A heart wholly freed from sin's stain,  
 A soul with its maker at peace,  
 There only content can remain,  
 There only true happiness is.

## JEANIE'S NEW ALBUM.

### A PREFATORY RHYME.

FRIENDSHIP'S gift so fair to see,  
 What can I say worthy thee ?  
 Thou'rt a tablet far too fair  
 For aught else than fancies rare—  
 Tablet where, in sequence bright,  
 Rare gems of thought shall yet have place,  
 As, one by one, the stars at night  
 Come out adorning heaven's face.

Book of beauty, let me shew  
What should grace thy page of snow,  
What the themes on which may turn  
"Thoughts that breathe and words that burn."  
Friendly wishes "short and sweet"  
Here may find admittance meet :  
Here may bard and artist be  
Found, in friendly rivalry,  
Painting, each in his own way,  
Now Old England's landscapes gay,  
Now the scenes less gay than grand  
Of thy own loved native land.  
Patriots struggling for the right  
Here, in verse, may win the fight ;  
Tyrants who the world would thrall  
Here in verse unpitied fall,—  
Here, too, may the bondsman's wrong  
Find a fitting voice in song ;  
Here the moralist may teach,  
Here the lover may beseech,  
To the idol of his heart

Doing homage like a true man ;  
Never pleases minstrel art

More than when the theme is woman,—  
Woman—pearl of priceless worth !  
Nature's purest, fairest birth !  
Woman—to whose grace is given  
To make Earth almost a Heaven !  
But for woman's smile I wis  
Earth her sweetest smiles would miss ;  
And even this poor lay I sing  
Were poorer still, but that it has

The inspiration following  
The wish to win fair Jeanie's praise.

Never in this book be penned  
Aught that virtue may offend :  
Let the knave in friendship's guise  
Elsewhere vent his flatteries ;  
Dullards, pray keep distance wide ;  
Hands off, all ye slaves of pride !  
Wits whose pens are dipt in gall,  
Misanthropes and sceptics all,  
Aught that ye might have to spare her,  
Least of all would Jeanie care for.

Types of infancy ere yet  
Thought has its impression set  
On the brow that may be found  
Yet with the proud laurel crowned,—  
Joyful as a mother may  
Watch the dawn of reason's ray  
Growing into perfect day,  
Thus may thy fair mistress see  
All that she could wish in thee  
Growing, till thy glowing pages  
Prove thee all her heart presages.

## VERSES.

ADDRESSED TO A FAIR FRIEND ON HER BIRTHDAY.

Some love the Springtime's promise bright,  
Some Summer's fuller joys ;  
Some most in Autumn's charms delight,  
But Winter most I prize :

For thou in winter had thy birth—  
Thou whose fair hand to own  
I'd count a gift of rarer worth  
Than any kingly crown.

'Tis true no scent of flowers nor hymn  
Of forest songsters free,  
Nor aught of beauty marks the time  
Of thy nativity,—

Yet, in thy presence dear, to me  
'Tis summer all the while ;  
Yea, more than all its charms I see  
In thy love-lighted smile.

Scarce didst thou reach thy teens, sweet one,  
When it was plain to see  
That Beauty meant her chosen throne  
Thy loving face to be.

And now that thou'rt a woman grown,  
He'd be of sumphs the rarest  
Who would not with me freely own  
Thee of earth's fair the fairest !

All honour then to that blest day  
 That on this earth first found thee !  
 May ever thus its advent gay  
 Find loving friends around thee.

May all thy life, beloved one, be  
 A life of perfect bliss ;  
 And my reward for this brief lay  
 Be now—a birthday kiss !

Nov. 23rd, 1845.

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TO MY FATHER, ON HIS EMIGRATING  
 TO AMERICA.

SAFE be thy passage o'er the deep,  
 My sire, to that far soil  
 Where they who sow may hope to reap  
 The fruitage of their toil.

Scotland has been a stepdame base  
 To men like thee too long—  
 Men who, though leaving her, confess  
 Their love for her still strong.

A spirit fearless, ever prone  
 To bravely say thy say  
 'Gainst evil in high places when  
 Thy silence best would pay,—

Too kind a man, in grab or greed  
To ever take much stock,—  
Too good and upright e'er to need  
Hypocrisy's vile cloak,—

Too strong in thy integrity  
Into the mart to bring  
Thy conscience, though it were to be  
The favourite of a king,—

Thou didst mid toil and trouble keen  
Stand ever in thy place  
A living libel on the mean,  
A terror to the base,—

A rock that meets the rushing waste  
Of waves with silent scorn,—  
A tree that yields not to the blast  
Till by the roots uptorn.

Let others trace their pedigree  
To princes if they can,  
More proud am I to spring from thee,  
Thou poor but honest man !



## THE MINSTREL TO HIS HARP.

I'VE learned to look on fame as  
A breath of passing air ;  
Thy favours, fickle fortune,  
Were never much my care ;  
The crown poetic never  
May on my brow be set,  
But, O, my rustic wild harp,  
I love thee, love thee yet !

To beauty's smile is given  
My worship now no more ;  
From home and kindred driven,  
Sad thoughts are all my store ;  
Yet sweeter than the blossoms  
Of summer to the bee,  
Than fountain to the desert,  
Is my wild harp to me.

