APPENDIX.

I.—FUGITIVE VERSES AND VERSE WRITERS.

1800—1860.

Any of the local fugitive poetry of the earlier years of this period, that is really worth recalling now, touches for the most part on incidents connected with political questions, persons or circumstances, which bulked for the time being in the public eye. Items of a more permanent interest, such as that on "The Loss of the Oscar", "The Beauties of James' Street", "Poor Sanney's Address", "The Lament for Deaf Joe" (one of the characters which figure in the "Aberdeen Worthies"), "The Lament of the Whalers" (when long fixed in harbour by the falling of the pier); and the satirical verses "On the Magistrates of the city having purchased twenty copies of 'Peacock on Dancing'", though very curious are, with the exception of the last, rather poor specimens of verse making. The breaking down of the pier under stress of weather became a matter of such frequent occurrence that scarcely a winter passed without bringing into print some "new song" or poetical "lamentation", or failing these, of spurring some of the local wits to an effort like the following by Alexander Bannerman :—

Our pier can neither firmly stand,
Nor sober habits learn ;
For why? the stones that it compose,
Are all from *Dancing Cairn.*

Stones have their natural tendencies,
As well as mortal men ;
And thus our pier hastes to become
A *Dancing Cairn* again.

Again, the grotesquely comical idea of our "bailie bodies", in all their weight of wisdom, taking to the business of "the light fantastic toe", is the key-note of the last-mentioned skit, which opens thus :—

God prosper long our Lord Provost,
Town Clerk, an' Bailies a';
An' grant that in their *reelin' fits,*
Doup-scud they winna fa.

For they hae coff'd a score o' buiks,
On dancing ilka ane ;
Tho' folk in sober guise wad trow
Their dancin' days were dane.

Now bob for bob, an' loup for loup
Forenent the Cha'mer door ;
Grave Magistrates will rax their legs,
Fan their sederunt's o'er.

Ere twa three bouts, their win' will fag,
An' puffin' come instead ;
Nae wonder they'll be soon dane out,
For dancin's nae their trade.

The songs, too, that passed from mouth to mouth for a few days, while the public mind was hot over some local incident, were usually parodies more or less happy of some well-known song, in which less attention was paid to the composition itself than to making it jingle to the tune it was to be sung to. These were usually plentiful about election times, which were far more turbulent and troublesome then than now; for rarely could the return of an M.P. for town or county be made without some demonstration of opinion of a more or less riotous character. The "great unwashed", debarred from the exercise of political rights, and with no means of expressing an opinion beyond the show of what the more privileged call "dirty fists" at the hustings, could scarcely be expected to refrain from seeking some channel through which to exhibit their attitude to the candidates. Ferguson of Pitfour was long member for the county, and, among the lower orders, was probably as well hated a man as there was in the shire. He was the subject of many a song, more or less bitterly satirical; probably the best, being one which obtained considerable popularity towards the close of the century, and which, from our finding it in a MS. collection of verses by the Rev. John Skinner, is a likely product of his ready muse. It opens—

I sing the election 'twixt Skene and Pitfour,
My song shall be sweet tho' my subject be sour,
I'll tell you what Beauties and Barons were there,
And hitt you their character all to a hair,
Derry down, down, hey derry down.

And he does "hit them off", but the point of many of the allusions is lost now. Again, during a contested election which took place during the early years of the century, the rougher section of the people resolved to exhibit their antipathy to the Tory laird, by firing a house of questionable repute which stood at the juncture of Netherkirkgate and Dubbie Raw. "Salmon Meg", as the occupant of this mansion was popularly called, was a fine specimen of flesh and blood, and when the mob assailed her door with a blazing tar-barrel, she deemed it prudent to decamp by a back window, and take shelter in the kirkyard. This incident gave rise to a song, which we remember hearing, long after the event to which it related was forgotten. One of the verses and chorus ran:—

She sat on her creepie, and dreadin' nae harm,
Was thinkin' how a'thing wad gang at the term,
When a mob, wi' tar barrel, cam' down to the door,
An' play'd her the tune o' "Lochaber no more."
O, Stumpie, the lawyer; O, Stumpie, the laird!
They hae ta'en away Meggie, aside the kirkyard,
But haste ye back, Meggie, th' election is o'er,
Ye needna dread ill when ye hae a Pitfour.

What Kennedy (the annalist), the "Stumpie" of the chorus, had to do with it, we cannot tell.

About 1812, a Buchan ploughman penned a chronicle of Napoleon's expedition to Russia, which for genuine humour and lyrical manipulation of our nor'land doric, stands in the front rank of the fugitive verses of the period. It first appeared in print some twenty-five years ago, in the *Peterhead Sentinel*, with the following note prefixed:—"We have been

favoured by Mr. Gray of Broad Place, with a copy, in the handwriting of the late Rev. Mr. Cock, of Cruden, of the following song, dated 1812, by the late William Lillie, Inverugie". This William Lillie was the "young ploughman" mentioned in one of Skinner's letters to Burns, as having written "a song that I am vastly pleased with, to the tune of 'The Humours of Glen'".—

Twa Emperors ance had a bit o' a spree,
I wat na fat was the meanin' o't,
I believe they fell out 'cause they cud na agree,
Sae it maks na fat was the beginnin' o't.
The tane wis a gen'ral o' mickle renoun,
His name it was Nap, an' he wore the French croun,
He swore he wad eat's geese in Peterburg toun,
Quo Sandy, "Ye's ken o' the winnin' o't".

Nap touted his horn to gather his clan,
Till his wisan was sair wi' the winnin' o't;
He had four hunner thousan' men unner's comman',
Sae that was a gey beginnin' o't.
Noo Sandy was eery to see sic a thrang
O' guns, swards, an' halberts, a marchin' alang,
Sae he thocht it was time to be raisin' his gang
To help him a hitch to the thinnin' o't.

Quo he, "Neibour Nap, hear the counsel I gie,
For strife is na mous to be tiggin' wi't;
An' dinna be shakin' your pikestaff at me,
For fear ye be dung i' the riggin' wi't;
For tho' I'm nae weird at fire weapons ava,
Gin ye will come my gate ye may e'en get a blaw
Wi' some clod o' ice or weel grippit snaw-ba',
May lay ye a month i' yer biggin' wi't".

Quo Nappie, "Ne'er waste yer gweed counsel on me,
For I'm nae takin' tent to the reason o't,
Nor lightly my pikestaff—behad ye a wee,
I'll gar your lugs ring wi' the whizzin' o't;
An' think na tae fleg me wi' sic a fraca
About your hard ice an' weel-grippit snaw,
Am I sic a bairn's tae fleg at a ba'?
I care na a doit for a dizzen o't".

Noo Nap's set awa' wi' his sward tae the war,
Like a man wi' a scythe to the mowin' o't;
But they saddl't "Shank's mere" lang afore he cam' near,
And hain'd him the fash o' the drawin' o't.
He bravely pursu'd them frae hillock to howe,
Frae tounie to toun, an' frae knappie to knowe,
Till at last he arriv'd at the wa's o' Moscow,
Sair dung wi' the pechin' an' blawin' o't".

Quo he to his men, "Ye're baith hungry an' dry,
But ye're nae vera far frae the slackin' o't,
There's plenty o' brandy, an' biscuit forbye,
An' ye'll get it a' at the sackin o't".
The provost defenit the toun fat he dow—
Fat mair cud he dee?—syne up wi' a cow;
"Gin' I canna' keep it I'se leav't in a low—
Nae doubt ye'll mak' rich wi' the takin' o't".

Peer Nappie, half crazy, steed scratchin' his pow,
Till he near claw'd a hole i' the riggin' o't,
Tae see a' his brandy gae up in a low,
Fin he made himsel' seer o' the swiggin' o't.
He's half deid wi' hunger, his biscuits awa',
The frost nippit's niz, an' the drift 'gan tae blaw,
An' nae ae biel left to protect him ava',
Bat a cloister wi' holes i' the riggin' o't.

Fu faen wad he 'abeen till a taen himsel' hame,
But was wull o' a wyle for the deein' o't.
Syne "Hang me," quo he, "I've hit on a scheme,
An' I'll play them a match at the lee'in' o't."
He turned, wi' his fancy jist big wi' the lee,
To the general—fu ca' ye him? wantin' the ee',
An' cry'd, "I'm the conqueror, dinna ye see?
Your garrison's taen to the fleein' o't.

"Noo jist oot o' pity to lat ye alane,
For I ken ye're nae oot o' the needin' o't.
I'll saddle my mere an' shortly be gane,
Gif ye'll gae me strae for the feedin' o't."
Quo he, "I'm a sojer o' fourscore an' twa,
An' ne'er saw a conqueror beggin' for stra'.
In troth, ye may pasture your mere i' the sna',
An' there's plenty o' that for the beddin' o't.

"Gin ye reese the upshot, I'm fairly mistaen,
For a' that ye brag o' the winnin' o't;
I dar'say ye're thinkin' yer jobbie's neer deen,
Fan ye're only jist at the beginnin' o't."
He up, an' he queest sic a divot o' sna'—
The chiel' was half smor't, an' ran youlin' awa',
For blin' as he wis he could handle a ba',
An' he gae them their turn o' the rinnin' o't.

The roads war like roans, an' the waggons they brak,
An' the men an' the horse at the fa'in o't,
An' a rout o' wild Cossacks, like cats o' their back,
Ne'er missin' a claught at the clawin' o't;
An' Kutusoff, tae, the auld sneck-drawin' knave,
Made mony a gentleman fit for his grave;
The sna' fell'd the feck, an' the ice smat the lave,
He had sic a knack at the ba'in' o't.

Peer Nappie himsel' jist got aff wi' his life,
An' anither by dint o' the beggin o't;
Ilka bane o' him sare, an' weel tired o' the strife,
An' his heart like tae flit wi' the fleggin' o't,—
"I've tint a' my horse, I've tint a' my men,
I've run frae a carle near fourscore an' ten,
Wae worth me, gin I gae to yon toun again,
Gif I sud gae try the beggin' o't.

"I've ridden my mere till I've ridden her deid,
An' my hurdies hae tint a' the skinnin' o't;
I've stoitert an' fa'an till I've prann't a' my heid,
An' peel't a' my feet at the rinnin' o't,
An' syne tae get naething bat trible for pains,
An' be glad tae win aff wi' the skull roun' my brains,
Will scunner me aye at north country campains,
For the cost o't gaes by the winnin' o't."

Quo Sandy, "Frien' Nap, will ye noo tak' advice,
Though ye scorn't it at the beginnin' o't?
Bat aiblins yer stamack's nae freely sae nice,
Sin' ye pree'd a wee spice o' the rinnin o't,
Tak' warnin' frae this, gin ye be yer ain frien',
An' ne'er be again sic a gowk as ye've been,
Nor fancy it brave to rap heids wi' a stane,
An' think to come aff wi' the winnin' o't".

The credit of having written "The Twa Emperors" was at one time given to Hugh Allan, a weaver at Cumminstou, Monquhitter, and for some time "precentor" to the Episcopal congregation at Turriff. Hugh was well known as the author of the "Elegy on the Auld Kirk of Turriff"; and a sister of his, also a rhymer, wrote a good song—

I've wonnert sin' I kent mysel',
Fat ails the men fo'k a' at me—

both pieces being for long very popular in the district.

On subjects strictly local, we have a few excellent ballads and songs relative to the circumstances which led to the financial collapse of the corporation in 1817. The whole circumstances connected with that huge bungle were investigated by a committee of the House of Commons, a proceeding which gave the death-blow to the close-borough system. One of the best of these songs,—a lengthy one of 28 8-line stanzas,—is the Lament of John Home, the keeper of the Town-House, to his friend Symon Grant, thief-catcher and general policeman for the city and suburbs, on the prospect of losing their snug berths, with all the pickings and perquisites. Numerous allusions to well-known local characters abound in it, as the following excerpts will show :—

Sair, sair's my heart, O ! Symon, man ;
We're ruin'd clean an' a' that ;
Nae mair your wine and congo fine
Can I gie you, an' a' that,—
An' a' that, an' a' that,
Your partan taes, an' a' that,—
The chosen few, an' me an' you,
Maun shift our 'bodes, an' a' that.

The Clerk (1) said, "John", the ither day,
" Pack up your things, an' a' that ;
Baith me an' you, gin a' be true,
Maun leave this house, an' a' that,—
An' a' that, an' a' that,
An' C——d (2) ti, an' a' that,—
Ilk auld kind face, far frae this place,
They'll drive like sheep, an' a' that".

"Guid faith !" says I, "afore we dee't,
We'll hae bonnets aff, an' a' that ;
To leave the house whare I was fledged
An' feathered, man, an' a' that,—
An' a' that, an' a' that
Got up my banes, an' a' that,—
Wad be a thought I couldna bide :
In troth we manna fa' that".

Oh ! Symon, man, you've lang been famed
For catching thieves, an' a' that ;
Lord ! spread your claw, in D——er's ha' (3)
On that d——d crew an' a' that,—
An' a' that, an' a' that
Your H—r—'s, S—ll's (4) an' a' that,
O ! grant John Milne (5) a rope may fill
Wi' them, an' mair than a' that.

There's yon teem, hungry-looking brat (6),
That clashed an' sclaved, an' a' that,
Fan he was here the ither year,
A councillor, an' a' that,—
An' a' that, an' a' that,
O' our bits an' sups an' a' that,
He raised a sough, wi' Johnny Booth ; (7)
They'll baith get h—ll, an' a' that.

. . . . . .

There's Ritchie (8) ti, that warkhouse loon,
Sae sleekit, sly, an' a' that,
Wi' summoning an' poinding
He's done right weel, wi' a' that,—
An' a' that, an' a' that,
The taxes ti, an' a' that,—
Now viper-like, the hand does bite
That brought him up, an' a' that.

An' Rob the muckle lazy folp, (9)
Wi's brosy wame an' a' that ;
He was nae fed upo' deaf nits,
I ken that weel, an' a' that,—
An' a' that, an' a that,
The draps o' drink, an' a' that,—
We're at our will to tak' our fill,
Tho cham'er cats, an' a' that.

. . . . . .

Bit Bob's grown fat wi' draps o' drink,
The beggar's broth, an' a' that ;
O ! sair I wis that things may change,
Lat's roar again, an' a' that,—
An' a' that, an' a' that,
The pickings, man, an' a' that,—
Does weel wi' us, an' a' our kind,
An' keeps us snug, an' a' that.

. . . . . .

That saucy rascal, Geordie, ti, (10)
Wha cabb'd the wives, an' a' that,
That sowny butter brought to town,
Or scrimp o' weight, an' a' that.—
An' a' that, an' a' that,
The butter, man, an' a' that,—
It's a fattening thing, as weels the drink,
It helpit him, an' a' that.

. . . . . .

An' H—d—e (11), ti, for keepin' buiks,
Had wale o' pounds, an' a' that ;
An' yet I doubt they war to mak'
Fan the sang got up, an' a' that,—
An' a' that, an' a' that,
The want o' sleep, an' a' that,
In' makin' buiks to please the crew.
'S near H—d—e felled, an' a' that.

Buiks, Symon, man, are unco guid
To mak' a sham, an' a' that;
But that infernal, cursed crew
Cries "balance them," an' a' that.—
An' a' that, an' a' that,
The sortin' buiks, an' a' that,
It was a wark we cared na for,
An' latten's be, an' a that.

. . . . . .

In guid auld times, when days were cauld,
Wi' sleet an' sna, an' a' that,
The Council-board was aye weel stored
Wi' something nice, an' a' that,—
An' a' that, an' a' that,
Wi' sherry, port, an' a' that,—
Aft Bailies spak', wi' draps o' that,
Like Solomons, an' a' that.

. . . . . .

They're cracking now, o' statements true,
O' reading, 'counts, an a' that;
It's naething like our auld abstracts (12),
By whilk we happit a' that,—
An' a' that, an' a' that,
The town's accounts, an' a' that,
Our Bailies keepit wi' themsel',
For paper, pens, an' a' that.

. . . . . .

Then let us pray, for weel we may,
That things may change, an' a' that,
An' ilk ill thing frae Hadden's hame
Be far awa', an' a' that,—
An' a' that, an' a' that,
The guid auld path, an' a' that;
We yet may sing, till echoes ring,
Our Borough's *close*, for a' that.

(1) William Carnegie, principal town-clerk and joint clerk to the New Street Committee. He was appointed to the town-clerkship on the death of his father, who held that office, in 1806.
(2) Alexander Cadenhead, advocate, procurator-fiscal for the city, and agent before the courts.
(3) Dempster's Hotel, where "The Club" held its meetings.
(4) Mr. Harvey, and Mr. Still of Millden, members of "The Club".
(5) John Milne, the city hangman.
(6) Alexander Bannerman, secretary to "The Club", was a member of the Town Council for some years, and latterly M.P. for the city.
(7) Proprietor of the *Aberdeen Chronicle*.
(8) Richard Merchant, town's sergeant and collector of local taxes.
(9) Robert Cantly, town's sergeant. He attended to the Public Soup Kitchen, then in St. Mary's Chapel, and saw the disposal of the soup to the poor.
(10) George Shand, assistant to the Dean of Guild officer. He used to visit the markets in quest of light butter, &c.
(11) James Hardie, City Chamberlain. It was discovered that no cash-book had been kept by his predecessor in office. He had to make up statements in form for the Commissioners.
(12) ("Our auld abstracts.")—In the Parliamentary Report it is said "According to the uniform and immemorial practice of the borough, a statement purporting to be an abstract of the accounts of the Corporation, was exhibited and read to the burgesses at annual head courts at Michaelmas, for the avowed purpose of informing the inhabitants of the state of the town's affairs. But it appears from (Mr. Hardie's) evidence, that these statements, as long as he could remember, never did exhibit, and never were really intended to exhibit, a statement of the money affairs of the town. In each statement, from the year 1800 up to 1812, an account was entered of the Town's debts. Thus in 1810 the debt of the borough was stated to amount in whole to £6874 17s. 4d., while, in fact, the debt was about £140,000 or £150,000; and from 1813 to 1817 no account of debt whatever was entered in the annual statement as owing by the town".

WILLIAM ROBERTSON.

Few writers of equal merit have shown such an indifference to poetical fame as William Robertson, of Carnylie. Born at Gartly, near

Huntly, in 1785, and reared in a district rich in legendary and ballad lore, he acquired a love for vernacular poetry which he carried with him to the grave, and which to his honour he cultivated with no small success in his riper as well as in his earlier years. Like most sons of the Church in those days, after graduating at King's College in 1804, and studying theology at Edinburgh for the prescribed number of years, he settled in a parish school, and as dominie at Clatt did useful service in "teaching the young idea how to shoot" prior to his presentation to the kirk at Carmylie in 1816. His reputation as a poet, though confined for a time to the circle of his more immediate friends, was gradually widened and established through the many excellent songs and ballads which found their way into the repertory of the peasantry, and for long held a place there. His home-bred effusions passed from mouth to mouth, and soon became undistinguishable from the older anonymous productions which everybody could sing, but of which few knew the origin. Thus in 1823, when Alex. Laing published his "Thistle of Scotland", Mr. Robertson's ballad, the "Baron of Gartly", appeared in its pages for the first time—the editor referring it, in a long note, to the 16th century. He says—"This song possesses great merit in the composition, which seems very good for the age it has been wrote in. It bears every mark of being the work of the sixteenth century, owing to the reigning chimeras of spectres and wizards, . . . but the style is pretty open, and free from the turgid stiffness accompanying a great many of the ancient songs". The whole note (8 pages) is taken up with a diatribe against the Danish and Norwegian superstitions, an analysis of the poem, verse by verse, and the information that Gartly is a barony in an insulated part of Banffshire, in Strathbogie; that Lord Alexander Barclay, the last of the family, fell in 1445 at the battle of Arbroath, and the lands fell to the Earls of Huntly. Quite in keeping with all this budget of antiquarian lore, "Saunders" prints the ballad in ancient form, thus:—

'Twas in abut nicht's weerty hour,
Nae meen nor stars ga'e licht,
Quhan Gairtly's bauld an' beirly Baronne
Red hemward thro' the nicht.

All this while the author was not only alive but in the prime and vigour of his manhood. It was evident that Laing had taken down the ballad from the singing or recitation of some one in Aberdeenshire, for many of the words which are pure English in Robertson's original are translated into unmistakable Buchan. The antique form of spelling, which in itself is enough to make anyone acquainted with 16th century Scottish literature smile, is adopted as that which Laing thought was the form of that period.

Mr. Robertson entered on his duties as minister of Carmylie, in April, 1817, and in 1824 married Dorothea, a daughter of Rev. Dr. Trail, of Panbride, and continued in the quiet routine of his pastoral work there till his death in November, 1836, at the comparatively early age of 51.

In *Chambers's Journal* for June, 1835, a version of his "Sang o' the Starvin' Poet"—"written down by a country friend who had been long accustomed to sing it"—was laid before the public as an anonymous Scottish song—was transferred to Whitelaw's "Book of Scottish Song",

and as recently as October, 1884, appeared under the title of "The Waefu' Want o' Siller", as a probable production of Burns, in the columns of the *Free Press*. Dr. Shearer, of Huntly, established the real authorship of the song, and supplied the following version as copied by himself from Robertson's MSS :—

THE SANG O' THE STARVIN' POET.

Come, ragged brethren o' the Nine,
Join ilka honest, purseless callin',
The ways o' duddy doublets sing,
Whan gousty want gaunts o'er the hallin',
It's true we've nae great heart to sing,
Foushtit in aul' hair-moullie garret;
But aft there's ease in dolefu' croon,
Tho' little loan lie in the wallet.

O, the waefu' want o' siller!
Wearie fa' the want o' siller!
It maks nae fat be in yer pow,
Gin your pouch be scant o' siller.

It's nae your wit, it's nae your lear,
Tho' ye c'ud on Pegasus gallop;
That's naethin' gin yer breeks be auld,
An' hangin' in a tatter-wallop.
Ye'll nae get brose, nor bread, nor cheese,
Nor social drap to weet yer wizzen;
Nought cares the polished man o' wealth
Tho' wizzen, wame, an' a' gae gizzen.

O, the waefu' want o' siller! &c.

Fan lucky stars gae leave to sit
Roun' comfort's cozy cutchach beekin',
To set ye bye a creepy steel,
Baith rich and puir will aye be seekin'.
Fan left in care and fell mishap,
An' poortith hauds a' body gauntin',
There's unco few will speir your ail
Because the penny siller's wantin'.

O, the waefu', &c.

An' noo-a-days there's nae sic thing
As lovin' hearts o' nature's lythin',
There's unco few will leuk yer way,
Gin that the siller be na kythin'.
Fat is't, think ye, locks hands an' hearts?
It's neither beauty, wit, nor carriage;
But frae the cottage tae the ha'
It's siller aye that mak's the marriage.

O, the waefu', &c.

I've been in love out o'er the lugs
Like mony ither feels afore me,
Yet 'cause my mailen was but sma'
The saucy hizzie did abhor me.
Haill beuks I've writ, baith verse and prose,
An' mony a roozin' dedication;
Yet nae ane owned the puir bauch chiel,
An' noo there's nought but grim starvation.

O, the waefu', &c.

An' oh, but my ain speuls be sma',
My very nose as sharp's a filler ;
Cauld death will soon tak' me awa'—
Ohon ! ohon ! the want o' siller.

O, the waefu' want o' siller !
Wearie fa' the want o' siller !
It mak's nae fat be in yer pow,
Gin your pouch be scant o' siller.

Of twenty-three pieces—songs, epistles, and ballads—mostly written by Mr. Robertson between 1804 and 1835, Dr. Shearer has supplied us with a list of the titles and copies of two pieces, remarking, however, that "the gem of the whole is the poem called 'The Bauld Baron of Gartly'". The following is called a

SONG.

Frae Gartly Castle's auld grey wa',
Whare lords hae dwelt an' lairds an' a',
A shepherd, by that haunted ha',
Wi' your guid pleasure,
Wad mint his rustic pipe to blaw,
In doric measure.

Gin its wild notes war worth your care,
That birken pipe he wadna spare,
But try a landwart lay ance mair,
Tho' ilka thing,
Sae douff, sae dowie, an' sae bare
Forbid to sing.

It's right our care wi' sangs to mingle,
To help us thro' life's weary pingle,
Therefore my bit o' rhyme I'll jingle,
Maybe a sang,
To haud fowk shortshum roun' the ingle
Whan night's grow lang.

Scotlan' ! my auld an' honour'd mither !
Guidwife o' howes, an' hills, an' heather,
Some o' thy sons their rhymes wad blether,
O' Scots phrase free ;
I'd rather wallup in a tether
Than lightly thee.

NANNIE.

(Tune—"*The Ewie wi' the Crookit Horn*".)
Frae a' the lasses roun' and roun',
Baith east and wast, an' up an' doun,
Baith i' the quintra an' the toun.
My Nannie bears the gree awa'.

For Nannie's sweet's the siller dewe,
Whan Phœbus leuks in ower the knowe,
Whan waukrife birdies in the howe
Gie warnin' 'at the night's awa'.

Her face is o' the rose's hue,
O, snod and tight's her wee bit mou',
An' syne her een's sae bonnie blue
'At they hae stown my heart awa'.

Whan first I saw her bonnie face
It pat me into sic a case
I cudna meeve a single space,
Mair than a stane inti' the wa'.

Wad fortune gie me claith to hap,
A hoosie to cast bye the drap,
An' meal an' milk to fill the cap,
She may tak' a' the lave awa'.

Sud siccan fortune be my lot,
An' then sud Nannie bless my cot,
I'd happy be as onie Scot,
'Tween John o' Groats an' Gallowa'.

Oh, wow! sae brawlie we wad gree,
We'd spen' the year in mirth an' glee;
Lat winter rave alang the lea,
Or whidder ower the hallan wa'.

Whan wraiths, lum height, the winnocks steek,
An' eery night puts on the cleek,
Right cozy at the cutchach cheek,
We'd sing the weary night awa'.

But should my Nannie lightlie me,
An' o' me cast a scornfu' e'e,
I wad lay doun my head an' dee,
An' frae this warl' haste awa'.

Sud onie cunnin', worthless chiel
Contrive my Nannie's charms to steal,
I wis the muckle horn'd diel
May rive the filthy tyke in twa.

O, Nannie's sweet's the daisy howe,
Whan Phœbus looks in ower the knowe
Whan a' the girse is wet wi' dewe,
An' leesome soughs the waterfa'.

Ere I for thee my love sall tine,
Twa meens intae the left sall shine,
An' fouk o' san' shall thrammels twine,
To bin the stirkie to the sta'.

Ere I for thee my love sall (drap),
The moon sall rest on yon hill tap;
An' Phœbus tired, sall tak' a nap,
Ahint the knowe a day or twa.

Though not the only contribution to our modern ballad literature that came from his pen, "The Bauld Baron of Gartly" is, so far as we are aware, the only one that has as yet got into type; and as we have no doubt of its being "the gem" of his whole collection, we close our paper with a more particular notice of it. After Laing's version it subsequently appeared in its true modern dress—the affected ancient spelling, whether so written by the author or not, being of no moment to those who can appreciate the genuine spirit of the elder minstrelsy which fires it from first to last. Few of our modern ballads, with the exception of "Sir

James the Rose", by Michael Bruce, equal it—none surpass it in passages of lyrico-dramatic presentation. The time and the man are thus introduced in the opening stanzas :--

'Twas at midnight's darkest hour,
Nae moon nor stars gave light,
When Gartley's bauld and burly Baronne,
Rode homeward through the night.

Sturdy was that Baronne's spear—
Deadly his battle brand;
Could nae man bide aneath the stroke
O' his uplifted hand.

Frae his war cap three feathers black
Nod o'er his dark brent brow;
Durst nae man speir where he them gat,
Or he had cause to rue.

His mail o' steel frae neck to heel,
Wi' witchin' spell was bound;
'Twas clasped sae fast, war's deadliest blast,
Could ne'er that Baronne wound.

Alike undaunted mid the conflicts of the field and the more awsome war of the elements, the Baron rode home, welcoming the lightning flash because it opened up the darkness, and the pealing thunder because it might awaken the warder on his castle wall to bid his lord welcome. Even the unearthly power of the kelpie, who challenged him in passing the "foaming ford", is unequal to his prowess, and had no power over the charmed life of the hero beloved of the weird sister. All this is told in a way so quaint and full of glamour that the growing conception in the reader's mind of the supernatural source of the Baron's power requires but the couplet

He crooned aft o'er unholy sangs
His journey to beguile,

to send one away in imagination to the famous school of Padua, in hopes of finding the "Bauld Baronne's" name among the initiated in "black art". The Baron, however, had not been there, but away at the war, and has now to learn from the sentinel on his "ain castle wa'", whom he has aroused by his three "bauld blasts", that

He had nae been ga'en a day, a day,
A month but only three,
When our lady married him, young Lesmore
O' the blythe and blinkin' e'e.

Revenge now filled the Baron's soul—revenge, speedy and sure, ere morning should dawn. He hies him to the weird sisters, whom he finds in the kirkyard at their "deevlish cantrips", and demands their promise of old to be made good now.

"Cast cantrips fell, work powerful spell
O' deadliest glamoury
To work them wae; this very night
I maun avenged be."

By an abrupt transition we are now introduced to the Lady and Young Lesmore within the castle, and here the dramatic art of the poem becomes subtle and telling.

"Fetch me my coat o' mail, lady,
My shield but and my spear,
Three times I heard a trumpet blaw,
And the third time it blew weir."

"In sooth, my lord, ye are too fond
To mix in battle stour;
It's but the wardman on my wall,
That sounds the midnight hour."

All the long night Lesmore gauntit,
The never a wink slept he;
"What ails this castle o' yours, lady,
It's rockin' like a tree?"

"The castle o' Gartley is bigget full stout,
Wi' towers baith high and small;
Tho' they rock to the winds o' night,
Nae fear that it will fall."

Lesmore startit to his elbow,
An angry man was he:
"I canna sleep in your castle, lady,
The reek is smorin' me."

"Lie still, lie still, my young Lesmore,
Dinna sae waukrife be;
It's but the smoke o' the burnin' hill-muir
The wind blaws in to thee."

"And wha's that auld gyre carlin,
Wi' a staff o' the dead man's bane,
That's knappin', knappin', thro' the ha',
But word speaks never nane?"

"Why sleep ye not, my dear Lesmore,
Alas! ye gar me weep;
It's but my silly bower woman
That's gangin' in her sleep."

"O, lady dear, my lady fair,
Would I to sleep were gane,
But I canna get sleep, I canna get peace,
For the groans o' dying men."

. . . . . .

The grey cock got up an' flappit his wings,
And loud and bold crew he;
The blythe morn glinted o'er the hill tap,
And the birds sang merrilie.

But that morn showed a fearful sight,
As ever man did see;
For the castle wa' was black as soot,
And the roof was the heavens hie.

"THE STABLIAD" AND NOTES ON *THE CENSOR* BARDLINGS.

From the time that Francis Douglas, in 1761, tried and failed to establish an *Aberdeen Magazine*, up to the end of the century periodical spurts in the same direction, more or less short-lived, were made by Shirrefs, Chalmers, and Burnett and Rettie. These magazines, so far as authorship was concerned, were not home productions, in the proper sense of the word, but in a great measure compilations, with a sprinkling of letters and poems from local writers, and a few notes of local news, which helped to give them a home flavour. Early in the present century (1805) a Mr. Gordon started a small periodical, *The Inquirer*, which, after running for 15 numbers, ceased, because of "the cabals formed to oppose and decry the merits of his well-meant endeavours to amuse and inform the public"; and a like fate speedily overtook *The Intruder*, a similar ephemera, conducted by Charles Winchester. The first decided hit in genuine, home-bred periodical literature in Aberdeen was made by a few young citizens in 1825, in the pages of *The Aberdeen Censor*. This little magazine, from first to last, was conducted with a raciness and business-like turn which very soon drew into the ranks of its contributors most of our townsmen who had a turn for literary work. At its first start, difficulties arose with the printers. Mr. Booth, of the *Chronicle*, though he apparently printed the first number, would have nothing to do with it—a circumstance which the writers never forgot when that newspaper was spoken about. So after getting Mr. Watt, of Montrose, to print Nos. 2—5, it finally landed in the hands of an Edinburgh firm, who printed it till the close.

William Ferguson, who apparently occupied the editorial chair, and took the lion's share of the work for some time, was the son of a druggist in the Gallowgate. After passing through the University, he became a licentiate of the Church—taught for many years the "Sailors' School" at Footdee, and occasionally officiated in the "Sailors' Kirk". He was a man of considerable ability, wrote prose or verse with equal ease, and possessed a sufficiency of that jaunty, satirical spirit which gave a spice to the effusions of the young magazine under his care. It was from his pen that the cutting criticism of "The Stabliad" came. That poem, one of the scarcest bits of local poetry published within the century, was written by John Cumming (the future D.D. of "prophetic" celebrity), and published with a few other items of verse in 1825. As far as one may safely pretend to understand this curiosity, it may be called an epic written in heroics—and we hope meant for a mock-heroic poem. It takes its name and subject from an escapade in which the author and a few fellow-students, mere youngsters, were engaged, in endeavouring to get a load of sand from the beach, to make the floor of a loft above a *stable* between Upperkirkgate and Barnett's Close, where they held a debating society, more comfortable and cleanly-like. The kind of fustian of which it is composed may be readily seen from the opening lines:—

> Of angry Will and simple Andrew Plain,
> Of Angler brave, and Scrapehard's dreary reign,

My muse would sing. O, great Apollo deign
To tune my lyre and harmonise my strain;
For who in heaven or earth but thou alone,
When fortune frowns, can wake the tuneful tone.
Be glad again, throw off the weeds of woe,
As o'er the mountains sweetly breathing blow
Those wished-for gales, the happy news that bear,
Of glorious triumph through the balmy air
To luckless chiefs? Come, first ye muses, say
Whence sprung this race? on what propitious day
The heroes meet? why, while others seek
For gold and other precious ore, the bleak,
The barren bents along the German strand,
And gloomy glens for sake of worthless sand,
Are traversed o'er? they come right well, I ween,
Great Will from Ind, the rest from Aberdeen,
That ancient place, which every mountaineer
Admires for language pure and truth sincere,
And shall do so.

Among the *dramatis personæ* we find Andrew Moir (who subsequently became lecturer at the Anatomical Theatre in St. Andrew Street, which was destroyed in a riot in 1831) as "Doctor"; P. Booth (who afterwards became minister of Inverlethen) as "Typhus"; and R. Johnston, as "Scrapehard". This piece of nonsense Ferguson attacked in *The Censor* as "the production of some boy—a collection of hackneyed, pointless, spiritless jargon", which in very truth it is. Cumming replied to the criticism in a poem, "The Minstrel to his Harp", which only made matters worse, for they printed it with a running commentary on every verse, which must have been gall and wormwood to the budding divine.

Among the genus poeticule of the time who found a handy asylum for their products in the pages of *The Censor*, Ferguson merits mention. One of his most successful pieces entitled "Friendship" shows considerable lyrical faculty and play of imagination. He taught for some time a school at Woodside,—married a factory girl there,—and soon after left for America.

Another contributor was John Jaffray, who graduated at Marischal College in 1821, and became a licentiate of the Church. Shortly after the Disruption he removed to Edinburgh, where he was appointed to the management of the schemes of the Free Church, the duties of which office he discharged with great energy and zeal for more than twelve years. He died at Edinburgh, 29th October, 1858. He was the most prolific and versatile of the writers to *The Censor*, and along with Ferguson exercised editorial functions in connection with it. He published a volume of poems at Edinburgh in 1850.

Alexander Milne Mowat was one of the best of the poetical tribe attached to *The Censor*. He was a lawyer, having served his apprenticeship from 1817-22 with the late Provost James Blaikie. This eminent legal firm began business in a shop next St. Andrew's Chapel in King Street, but afterwards occupied the larger premises in Broad Street, enter-

ing from No. 1 Longacre. "Sandy", as he was popularly called, was the son of James Mowat, partner in the firm of Milne, Mowat, & Co., clothiers and tailors. Baillie Milne, who was head of this firm, was godfather to the subject of our notice. Very early in life, "Sandy" gave indications of ability which augured well for his subsequent career, but being of a very social and happy temperament, his company was very much sought after by a group of merry sparks, reputedly fast, and whose waggery was long remembered in certain circles. Never of a strong constitution, his health began to give way in middle life, and he died at his father's residence in Skene Terrace, much regretted by a large circle of friends. His principal contribution to *The Censor* was a lengthy poem in parts, entitled "Reminiscences", which displays no small share of refinement, taste, and culture in so young a man.

Last, but not least, among these bardlings was JOHN FERRES, the son of an Aberdeen mason or quarrier. John, who was serving his apprenticeship with Mr. J. R. Grant, advocate, was not only a likeable, but one of the best liked young men of the whole literary coterie. He was a madcap fellow, full of fun and frolic, and always ready to assist in any practical joke. Ere *The Censor* was well afloat, he was trying the gullibility of the editor, and succeeded by getting "Simon Beverly"—a sketch of life in one of the *uninhabited* islands in the West Indies—inserted in No. 3. He soon, however, became a regular contributor, his poetical "Letters from Pannanich and Ballater" being particularly racy and full of local allusions and gossip. He could not, however, resist practical joking; for, after Alexander Daniel, a brother advocate and a smart writer, palmed off a piece of plagiarism on the editor, he joined him and some others in a similar trick, which ended in Allan Cunningham's story, "The Yorkshire Alehouse", being accepted and printed in No. 9 as a new and original contribution. They then posted *The Censor* as a pirate, on the churchyard gate, the Cross, and on the Town and County Bank door. Ferres, however, tamed down, entered wedlock with a Miss Fraser, and latterly, owing to weak health, emigrated with wife and family to Australia. He died there about 1860.

JOHN OGILVIE.

AT the time that J. Pennycook Brown was contributing some of his most finished productions to the *Aberdeen Magazine*, and was in a sense the poet of that slashing periodical, another writer of quite a different stamp was finding pleasant recreation in throwing off various "Imitations of Horace" in Scottish verse—pawky, sly, and humorous. This was JOHN OGILVIE—the future LL.D., and eminent lexicographer. This genial, kind-hearted, scholarly man lived and moved in a circle of friends as devoted and attached as it ever fell to the lot of anyone to gather around him; and although a well-known figure to the majority of his townsmen, nevertheless, outside a certain radius of acquaintanceship, none ever dreamed that under the serious outer aspect of the man there was a rich, deep vein of mirth and humour which made him the life of any company he felt at home in. Born in 1797, under circumstances which,

as a general rule, preclude the hope of anything other than a life of hard physical toil—his father was a crofter in Marnoch,—young John, after a single quarter at the parish school of Ordiquhill, was early taken to assist him, and be reared in all probability to fill a similar place in our laborious agricultural life. While on the verge of manhood, however, an accident occurred to him, which, resulting in the loss of a leg, totally unfitted him to follow the calling of his honest, hard-working father. From his youth up he had been noted for his insatiable thirst for knowledge, and all his spare time was given to reading. His acquirements he turned to account by taking up a small subscription school, and thus earned a frugal livelihood, at the same time continually adding to his stock of knowledge. He made considerable progress unaided in mathematics, and on the advice of his cousin Dr. Cruickshank began the study of Latin with the view of competing for a bursary—his great ambition being a classical education. In little over a year he was ready, entered the competition, and came out high in the list of bursars; that is, high in merit—for then the money prize was small, though quite sufficient to cover all the college charges, for they were also small. After obtaining his degree in arts, he laid himself out mostly for private teaching, but very soon had the good fortune to obtain the Mastership in Mathematics at Gordon's Hospital, a post which he held with great credit for almost thirty years. Being now a sort of settled in life, the natural bent of his mind began to manifest itself in literature as a recreation. Even after he had achieved the wide celebrity which his editorial work under the Messrs. Blackie & Son, of Glasgow, brought him, especially after the publication of "The Imperial Dictionary", it was said of him by one who knew him well that in such work "The Doctor was counteracting the natural bent of his mind, which set strongly in the direction of poetry". He had no sooner got comfortably settled in Gordon's Hospital than this natural bent began, as we have said, to manifest itself in songs, which were handed about in manuscript among his friends, and were much and justly appreciated. Almost as a matter of course, the mutual attraction which exists between spirits smit with the literary itch soon bound him head and heart to the brilliant little coterie of young men who started the *Aberdeen Magazine* in 1831, and whose facile pens threw off in that short-lived periodical, a variety of matter, critical, political, educational, and literary, more spirited and dashing, more full of the fire and flash of "Old Ebony", than anything ever issued from the provincial press either before or since. When we say that Dr. Lillie, Professor Blackie, J. Hill Burton, and Dr. Joseph Robertson not only made their *début* in its pages, but were the leading spirits that inspired it from first to last, we have said enough to show that it was no weakling. To this provincial "Maga", then, either in prose or verse, but mostly in verse, John Ogilvie was from its commencement a regular contributor; and it is to the series of "Imitations of Horace" which there appeared that we now draw our readers' attention. In all there are ten of them, the greater part of which are in broad Scotch, and partake pretty much of the practical wisdom, shrewd observation, and terse lyrical grace of the great master he sought to imitate. Being throughout life almost a worshipper of Burns (indeed, it was often said of him that, had Burns's

works been completely lost, he could have, from memory, restored, the greater part of them), we find Ogilvie's style much resembling that of the immortal bard. He, nevertheless, draws so entirely from his own resources, from the scenes and incidents of rural life, so familiar to him in his younger days, and seasons the whole with that work-a-day philosophy so immanent in life, so absent in books, that his imitations have more originality about them than many poems which make a bolder claim.

HORACE, EPODE II., BOOK V.

The man is blest wha never toils
For warld's walth, nor courts the smiles
O' fortune sae unsteady ;
Wha lives upon a sma' bit farm,
An' keeps himsel' baith snug an' warm,
Like his auld luckie daddy ;
He does na' fear the ocean's swell,
For boat nor smack has he ;
The warlike trumpet's direfu' yell
Ne'er gies his mind a jee.

Nae pawky, sleekit, lawyer loun
E'er gets frae him a single croun
To creesh his greedy loof :
He scorns to fawn upo' the greet,
An' gape an' glow'r at empty state,
Like ony silly coof.
In spring he rises i' the morn,
An' hauds the pleugh himsel' ;
Then saws his pickle bear an' corn,
An' plants his leeks an' kail.

Whyles, on a bonny simmer e'en,
He lays him down upo' the green,
His weary banes to ease ;
Or underneath a sturdy aik,
Whase leafy branches o'er him shake,
Fawn'd by the murm'ring breeze.
The birdies round him warble sweet,
The flowers their charms disclose ;
A burn rins wimplin' at his feet,
Inviting soft repose.

In nowt an' sheep he taks delight,
An' 'tis to him a blithsome sight
To see them feedin' near him ;
An' when the sun has speel'd the sky,
He ca's them to a shelter nigh,
Whare heat can never steer them.
When Autumn i' the waving fields
Sets up his yellow tap,
The heuk wi' might an' main he wields,
An' quickly shears his crap :

An' O ! it maks him fidgin' fain
To get his corn, unskaith'd by rain,
A' snugly i' the yard.
Then Johnny Frost, that rascal snell,
May come whene'er he likes himsel',
He'll fin' him weel prepared.

His neebors then assembling a',
He hauds a jovial nicht—
They drink till cocks begin to craw,
An' dance wi' a' their micht.

When snaw begins to fill the dyke,
He taks the hill wi' gun an' tyke,
To hunt the tim'rous hare ;
Or sets a trap to catch the fox,
That frae the roost steals hens an' cocks,
A dizzen whyles an' mair.
The hoody craws an' greedy gleeds
He catches wi' a woody,
An' gars them suffer for their deeds,
Sae vengefu', base, an' bloody.

His wordy wife, a hizzie douce,
Hauds a' thing tight about the house
An' kindly tents the chiller ;
A fouth o' butter an' o' cheese
She maks, her ain guidman to please,
An' gain a penny siller.
When he comes hame at e'en, he fins
His supper warm an' tasty ;
A bleezin' fire to beek his shins
An' smiles that mak' him blest ay.

The todlin' weans come rinnin' a'
To big about their ain dadda,
An' raise a strife for kisses ;
Then some are set upon his knee,
And others round him sit wi' glee
Bright sparklin' i' their faces.
The auld fouk's hearts are like to crack,
Wi' downright joy an' pleasure,
Blest wi' their bairns they never lack
A rich an' happy treasure.

Wha wadna wish for sic a life,
Sae far remov'd frae sturt an' strife,
Sae fu' o' tranquil sweets ?
Is there a heart that wadna' warm
At siccan scenes, or feel a charm
In rural calm retreats ?
Let fortune's sons delight to view
Their walth and honours swelling,
A bliss their bosoms never knew,
Frequents the lowly dwelling.

During the latter portion of his working life many signs of failing health began to manifest themselves, prominent among which was his partial loss of eyesight. After his retirement this so increased that for many years he was almost blind. An application was made by some of his friends for a pension to him from the Civil List, but it came to nothing —happily it was not required ; for the old man passed away in circumstances of complete comfort, 21st November, 1867, leaving behind him few survivors of the talented *literati* of the *Aberdeen Magazine*.

ALEXANDER GORDON.

Few men, at least in recent years, with the same poetical gift as

manifested itself in ALEXANDER GORDON, have displayed less care than he did for the notoriety of public recognition, for not only did he never collect into book form the many products of his muse, but the easy indifference he displayed about them once they were written, has made the task of now collecting them almost an impossibility. His early life did much to engender in him those habits of "de'il-may-care" *abandon* which marked his riper years, and debarred the possibility for him of that culture which, had it fallen to his lot, would have probably raised him to the front ranks of our northern minstrels. As it is, his efforts were for the most part fugitive and desultory, with no higher ambition, if he even possessed that, than seeing them from time to time in the Poets' Corner of the local newspapers, or of enjoying the boisterous laughter of the village clodpoles, as they guffaw'd over his latest lampoon. Indeed, had it not been for the painstaking care of an enthusiastic lover of all that belongs to our local minstrelsy (Mr. W. P. Smith), who has long been engaged in collecting Gordon's poems, the very name of the man would soon have fallen into the oblivion which overtakes all who so bury their talent.

Alexander Gordon, better known in his poetical days by the *nom-de-plume* "The Planter", was born in Aberdeen on Sunday, 11th October, 1811. He was educated at Gordon's Hospital; went from thence to learn the shoemaking trade, but very soon exchanged that for the less laborious and more congenial work of a clerk at Grandholm Works. Here he began to dabble in verse-making, but, unfortunately, his muse taking a satirical turn, a piece from his pen which appeared in a scurrilous sheet, "The Aberdeen Shaver", cost him his situation. From Aberdeen he went to Dundee, and shortly afterwards enlisted in the 78th Highlanders. After a short service in that regiment, he appears to have joined the auxiliary forces known as the British Legion, which in August, 1835, under Sir De Lacy Evans, began operations in Spain against the Carlist insurrectionists. In after years he used to give an account of how he obtained his discharge from the 78th Highlanders by shamming insanity, embellishing his story with graphic details of his treatment and experiences among lunatics, his examination before the officers, with samples of the talk he used to uphold his assumed madness, and telling how, when he did get his discharge and was outside the barracks gate, he slapped his hand on his pocket, laughed at them, and said "I'm safe noo; there's nae madness in me!" This must be taken, we need hardly add, with a considerable grain of salt, seeing that he must have enlisted again almost immediately after, if he did not in reality volunteer into active service in Spain. The "Planter" was an excellent hand at "drawing the long bow"—indeed, with a few gaping rustics as an audience, his volubility rose with his vivid imagination to such wonderful heights that he held them, with a charm powerful as the "Ancient Mariner", in breathless astonishment over the wonderful adventures and daring exploits of his life. Nobody enjoyed that sort of thing more than he did himself, but the worst of it is that now there is difficulty in drawing the line between fact and fiction in the accounts which contemporaries give of him. To the same region of Munchausenisms we relegate his stories of trial and imprisonment for conspiracy, his connection with the Glasgow cotton spinners, &c., &c., and pass on to the period when he returned home, on

the disbandment of the auxiliaries at the close of the Carlist War, when he entered the service of a Mr. Shepherd, then planting the Hill of Kinellar. This kind of work was congenial to him, and both at Cluny and Monymusk districts he found sufficient to do as planter and shoemaker to make his life fairly comfortable. The sights and sounds of nature, the varying aspects of the changing year, the inflow of young life into tree and shrub, stirred and rekindled his muse, who sang as she had never sung before, and boded well, for many years, to make up the leeway of neglect in his past life. It was then that he began to send verses to the Aberdeen newspapers—the earliest in the collection now before us, dated "9th February, 1847", being the following :—

THE FAIRIES' CIRCLE.

In Paradise, Monymusk.

Do you love to roam through the forest glade,
Where the sunbeams faintly creep ?
Where the fir and the pine throw a gloomy shade,
And the dew-charged birches weep ?
Then come, I will show you a lovely spot,
Enamell'd with shrubs and flowers,
Where no sound is heard but the cushat's note,
And enraptur'd we gaze till we've almost forgot
We are banish'd from Eden's bowers.

Yet here is a place which knows no spring,
Here no flow'rs nor grass will grow ;
And a circle of beech trees their shadows fling
O'er their name-carv'd trunks below.
'Twas here that at even, the aged tell,
A woodman, weary and worn,
Sat down to rest, and in slumber fell,
Till awoke by the tinkling sound of a bell
And the blast of a tiny horn.

In the green hillside was an opening made,
And forth came a fairy train ;
On the wither'd leaves fell their pattering tread
With a rustling sound like rain.
And he saw from the throng the queen advance,
And spell-bind brook and rill—
When the fairies joined in their moonlight dance,
All nature was hushed in a silent trance,
And the rushing Don stood still.

O'er the low red fire, that lonesome night,
His wife his absence mourn'd ;
She looked from the door in the grey daylight,
But the woodman ne'er returned.
They search hill and hollow, and come to the place
Where they saw that the woodman had been—
A wild look of terror o'erspread every face,
While his wife sank down with a cry of distress,
For last night was the Hallowmas E'en.

They waited till that-day-year came round,
When the moon rose o'er the hill,
And here by the side of this circle they found
The woodman sitting still.

He turned, and a look of surprise he cast
On his wife and his altered child ;
He wondered the daylight had faded so fast,
But when told that a twelvemonth round had past,
He never again once smiled.

Now here you may wander at eve undismayed,
For afar, to some Highland vale,
They've raised their green banners and trembling fled
From the sound of the Sabbath bell.
No unholy sound will meet your ear,
No unhallowed form your eye,
But the murmuring rush of the river near,
Or the dusky form of the startled deer,
As he glides, like a shadow, by.

While undoubtedly at his best in singing such scenes as the above, or in the higher play of imagination which characterises some of the stanzas of "The Storm King" and the "Song of the Merry-Dancers"—although both these are very unequal throughout—he could yet descend to sing with equal grace the most homely subjects, as the following, dated "18th August, 1847," will show :—

THE THRUMMY MITTEN.

I canna thole your foreign glove ;
I like our ain auld hamely knitten ;
There's nane like what my granny wove—
My thick and cosy thrummy mitten.

For when the year grows cauld and auld,
And Boreas snaw and sleet is spittin',
I hap my fingers frae the cauld
Within my thick and thrummy mitten.

Or when I gang the neeps to pu',
And snaw wraiths on the tap are sittin',
I wadna' ken weel how to do
Without my couthie, thrummy mitten.

The guidman when he taks a walk—
His staff into his hand is fittin'—
Cries, "Guidwife, rax up to the bauk
And hand me down my thrummy mitten."

In winter, when I yoke the plough,
My fingers would by frost be bitten—
I find a faithfu' friend in you,
My cosh and cosy thrummy mitten.

The weeist callant in the house
Will rive his claes or lose a button ;
He cares na' though they should hang loose,
If he gets on the thrummy mitten.

When driftin' snaws choke barn and byre,
And to the stack there's scarcely gettin',
We would na' get a spunk of fire
Without the cauld-proof thrummy mitten.

When round the ingle in a raw,
Wi' supper pack'd till nearly splittin',
We ne'er forgot to dry or thaw
The wet or frozen thrummy mitten.

Foremost among his writings at this period are a small series of poems which he called "The Language of the Leaves", of which the following is an example :—

THE ASH.

A tie, while home has power to charm,
Will bind both old and young to me—
Beside the lowly cot and farm,
Is ever found the old ash tree.

My hoary trunk seems like a friend,
Well known from childhoods sunny hours;
My leaf-clad arm did all defend
From scorching heat and passing showers.

At noon beneath my cooling shade,
The thoughtful matron sits and weaves;
At evening oft the love-sick maid
Sits listening to my whispering leaves.

The absent one, for whom she mourns,
In dreams when fancy wanders free,
Back to his native land returns,
And meets her 'neath the well-known tree.

I bring e'en feelings of delight
When doors and windows are made fast,
In hearkening on a wintry night,
My branches crackling in the blast.

I've lived to see that happy band
Sent from their homes when poor and old ;
And by the ruthless spoiler's hand,
Their roof-tree crushed, their hearts made cold.

In summer when the twilight falls,
How changed and cheerless is the scene!
Rank weeds wave o'er the crumbling walls,
No smoke curls o'er my foliage green.

Still though their ruined walls below,
My moss-grown arms are o'er them spread ;
My leaves, like cherished hopes below,
Are last to come and first to fade.

Almost all the poems from 1847 to 1860—and Mr. Smith has succeeded in gathering together over forty of them—bear marks of his close observation of nature, of the conscious joy he had in her companionship, of his quick response to her varied beauties. Unfortunately, many of them were never revised after being thrown off, and prosaic lines now and again mar verses richly veined with the genuine poetic ore.

For some thirteen or fourteen years Gordon continued in the quiet seclusion of rural life, and under all the varying aspects which seasons and circumstances brought round to him, to woo the muse with remarkable success. He had got married about 1846, at Monymusk, removed to Ordhead, Cluny, in 1849, and tenanted a small croft at Laggan, in that parish, in 1856, but, as his family grew up, he removed to Inverurie, where he followed the occupation of shoemaker. The means of livelihood which this afforded him was somewhat pinched, no doubt, a fact

which occasionally gave him opportunity of indulging in freaks which showed the eccentricity of his character. One of these, which a valued correspondent in the royal burgh who knew him well, related to us, will illustrate what we mean. He was standing in this gentleman's shop one Saturday night, when a customer entered asking for change for a one pound note. "A pound note!" exclaimed Gordon, with eager curiosity. "Oh, lat me see it, it's lang, lang sin' I saw ane". The note was handed to him; he handled it lovingly, gazed at it longingly, gently rubbed it between his fingers, and with a sigh and a mournful shake of the head, handed the rarity back to its owner. No doubt pound notes were scarce with the "Planter" at Inverurie, and, as years rolled on, the probability of his becoming acquainted with them grew less and less. He was a keen politician of the Radical type, and occupied a good deal of his time over the local and Imperial questions then agoing—a kind of occupation not conducive to the accumulation of pound notes. His lyrical faculty, too, seems to have degenerated after he left Cluny, for we have seen nothing very noteworthy from his pen except "The Phantom's Chase", appended to a legend of Aberdeenshire which he contributed to the columns of the *Herald and Weekly Free Press*, a short time before his death, and even it was written and had appeared in print, we believe, under a different title many years before. The mention of this piece recalls to us another versified legend—the best of its kind he ever wrote—written and printed in 1850, the hero of which is that terrible master of the "black art", the "Wizard Laird of Skene". The story is, or was, one of the most popular benorth the Hill of Fare, and used to be told with bated breath, and with an eerie feeling that the troubled spirit of the laird might be near ready to resent the mere mention of his name. In a spirit of reckless bravado he declared that he would drive over the Loch of Skene after one night's frost. The night the feat was to be performed he prepared himself for the ordeal with unnameable spells. At grey daylight the coach was ordered, the coachman threatened with something awful if he should speak a word or look behind him, and away they went over the film of ice which covered the loch. As they reached the further bank the terrified Jehu cast one glance behind, when a raven went plump into the loch, and the hind wheels of the carriage sank through the ice. The laird had performed his feat, and a strange tale was added to the folk-lore of the countryside. Gordon's version of this legend has the weird ring about it so enjoyable in telling such a story. He ends by telling how

When the winter nichts grow lang and cauld,
Strange tales are yet about him tauld;
And the halflin or herd, be they e'er so bauld,
Grow airgh when they hear o' Skene.

The bairns around the fire close creep,
And aft to the door and lum-head peep,
The big ha' Bible at han' they aye keep,
To fend aff the Laird o' Skene.

If ony ane chances to girn or greet,
Or dorty miss to strive wi' her meat;
They are soon set doon by the auld wife's threat—
To send for the Laird o' Skene.

The place where he cross'd is weel kent yet,
Though you search wi' a gun, or drag wi' a net,
The fient a fowl or a fish you'll get,
In the track o' the Laird o' Skene.

It would seem that, when removed from the inspiring influences of daily contact with Nature, he had gone back to his early love of satire, and dissipated his energies on a variety of squibs which he got printed in broadsheet form for local circulation. In many of these the literary cunning which adorned his best verses was yet visible, though sometimes in connection with subjects which to him should have been beneath the inspiring point. Among the best of these are "Duncan and Bob" and "Reginald's Address to his Hearers", written on the revival movements headed by Duncan Mathieson, Reginald Radcliffe, and the "Bridgate Butcher". The former of these opens:—

Ye sleek sons of Wickliffe, who hold by the State!
Ye stern sons of Calvin, who trust all to fate!
Leave your auld-warld notions, and mount hob-an'-nob
In the new Canaan railway wi' Duncan an' Bob.

Now the Christian who crawls wi' a load on his back
Of original sin, like a cloth-vendor's pack,
Finds *rest for the weary* when joined with the mob
Who go bawling and squalling wi' Duncan and Bob.

. . . . . .

All drinkers and vendors o' spirits and ale
Are packed up together, directed to h—l;
But lift up the skirts o' Hypocrisy's robe,
You will find the same spirit moves Duncan and Bob.

In verses like these, full of acrid smartness and a lyrical movement which could not fail to carry readers swimmingly along, he found ready vent for the expression of whatever phase of opinion or feeling possessed him for the time being; yet we cannot help thinking that the notoriety which such writings bring is not only exceedingly shortlived, but is at its best detrimental to true genius. At all events, Gordon never again rose to his former level, but fell in succeeding years to the writing, and more regrettable still, to printing such twaddle as "The Portstown Ploughing Match". In fact, poesy left him as he turned more and more to satire and polemics. He had a well-hung tongue, considerable power of retort, and with these managed to gain a kind of reputation with a class for political controversial prowess. Unfortunately this quality, conjoined to the general impression which his own account of his life-career gave currency to, made him too often appear to occupy in the public eye the place of a character rather than that of the man of genius he was. For genius of the right sort he unquestionably possessed. His muse was one of many moods. We have already seen how he interpreted the language spoken to his soul by the forest trees about Cluny and Monymusk. We have seen how low she could descend in squib and wishy-washy chroniclings of countryside cacklings. We have yet to see how she could sound the patriotic trumpet with note clear and bold, or wail in the minor key when tender recollections touched the chords of human sympathy. Some of the verses of "Scotland's Defences", though perhaps rather too full of what

is miscalled the national spirit, are just the sort of thing to keep alive that "guid opinion of ourselves", which is so necessary to a nation's freedom and independence :—

Should the right-crushing despot or spoiling invader
Come to conquer the land of the thistle and heather,
They will find us array'd on our ramparts around us,
Where our foes always left us as free as they found us.

. . . . . .

We have sworn that our country shall never surrender
While one man is left with an arm to defend her ;
That our hands will not fail, and our hearts will not weary
Till the dove kills the eagle and plunders her eyrie.

Patriotism, wherever found, was never unappreciated by him—he claimed no monopoly of the holy emotion for his own loved country, as witness his "Ney's Last Address", in which that hero's love of country is emphasised perhaps more than it deserved. The tender part of Gordon's nature is nowhere better shown than in the lines on his mother's grave, where he evidently speaks from his heart :—

I often seek the burial ground
  At eve, unseen, to drop a tear
Upon yon lowly grassy mound,
  Where lies the one I held most dear.

. . . . . .

Hers was a love knew no decay,
  To her I owed all next to heaven ;
When reft of every human stay,
  Her tears, her all, were freely given.

. . . . . .

And if one humble boon I crave,
  Oh, call it not a vain desire—
Affection lingers round the grave,
  Death cannot quench its hallow'd fire.

To lay me, when I sink to rest—
  Where life began, there let it end—
Upon my mother's mouldering breast,
  My first and truest earthly friend.

Towards the close of his days he expressed a desire to see his verses collected, but, as we have already said, the careless habits of his best years had placed an almost insuperable barrier between him and the realisation of that desire. In private life he bore the character of a kind, social, genial-hearted man, full of varied talk—his wide reading and yet wider experience being ever at his finger ends to illustrate or enforce whatever subject or point might turn up in the course of friendly conversation. He died on the 4th February, 1873, and, though many years have passed from then till now, we look forward with considerable pleasure to the time that a selection from his poems will place him more prominently and permanently in the public eye than he has hitherto been.

THE "LINTIE" AND OTHER POETS.

1840—1860.

In spite of the strictures which have been passed on "The Aberdeenshire Lintie," on the score of its exclusiveness—(it omitted Imlah and others),

and its want of biographical notices—it is on the whole a very excellent and representative collection of the fugitive verse of the period, containing in its 104 pages the best that had then been written by twenty contemporary versifiers of more than average merit. The more important of these, or rather we should say, those who collected and published their works in book form, we have noticed in their proper place, and it now remains for us to supply biographical notes and additional illustrations to the writers of the more properly named "fugitive verse" who found an asylum for their waifs in that now scarce little volume.

Foremost among these is the man who helped to launch it, who wrote the preface, three of its poems, and filled in the "Dinna Forget" to complete its last page—WILLIAM BREWSTER, as bright, cheery, and genial a man as ever strung the stanzas of a lilt together. William was born at Backburn, parish of Gartly, 25th December, 1820—was duly initiated into the mystery of letters and the Shorter Catechism at a dame's school, and when of age to work, got winter sessions at the parish school, and attended cattle during the other portion of the year. He began to rhyme at an early age, and, while yet in his teens, achieved no small parochial notoriety by satirising the Presbytery of Strathbogie in a string of pithy, singable verses. Many of the younger parishioners enjoyed his ballad—but the majority shook their heads, and said, "it was a pity to see a laddie sae weel conneckit yoke to write rhymes against the Lord's anointet". The "laddie", however, persisted in his songs, and gradually acquired considerable facility in versification. He learned the trade of granite polisher, got married in 1840, and took up house in Aberdeen. He was an exceptionally fine penman, and was for some years clerk in the City Police Office in Aberdeen, from whence he went to Elgin in connection with the police there. He latterly returned to Aberdeen and resumed his own trade, at which he is still working, having been for the last eighteen years in the employment of the Messrs. Wright, at the Royal Granite Works, John Street.

Although he has never collected his writings, his pen has been a very busy one, and the outpourings of his muse, written mostly for the ear of his home circle, has on various occasions unexpectedly brought him hearty recognition from quarters he never dreamed of. Robert Chambers and others have spoken very favourably of William Brewster's gift of song—but nothing could allure him out of the quiet contentment of his humble life—publicity being almost dreaded by him. Besides his verses in the "Lintie", we have seen a number of pieces, out of which we select the following as probably his highest reach :—

Why stand ye lingering in the light,
On life's chill cheerless waste ?
Without your shadow falling there
It's dark enough at best.
The wail of sorrow-sadden'd hearts
Forbids your standing still ;
So, if you cannot lend a hand,
Make room for those who will !

Why stand ye lingering in the light,
As if the work was through ?
In dingy courts and crowded lanes
There's much remains to do.

A channel there must yet be dug
For truth's pure silvery rill;
So, if you cannot lend a hand,
Make room for those who will!

Why stand ye lingering in the light?
Take up the sword and spear,
A mighty battle's yet to fight,
The conflict's drawing near,
When truth o'er error must prevail,
And earth's dark corners fill;
So, if you cannot lend a hand,
Make room for those who will!

Why stand ye lingering in the light?
Go seek those dismal dens,
Where squalid wretchedness and rags,
In tattered misery reigns.
A kindly word may warm the heart
That cheerless want keeps chill;
So, if you cannot lend a hand,
Make room for those who will!

Why stand ye lingering in the light?
Be doing while it's day!
Go, tell the pampered sons of wealth
They're only made of clay;
Go, tell them though a man be poor
He may be upright still;
Or, if you cannot lend a hand,
Make room for those who will!

Why stand ye lingering in the light?
While health and strength are given,
Work on with heart and soul and mind,
The high behest of heaven.
Go tell the *deepest* sunk in sin,
There's mercy for them still;
Or, if you cannot lend a hand,
Make room for those who will!

A poet by fits and starts, just as the humour strikes him—and most of his friends regret that it does not strike him more frequently—WILLIAM CARNIE has written some of the best vernacular songs of his time, "Tam Teuchit's Reflections amang the Stooks", "There's aye some Water whaur the Stirkie Droons", and "My Neighbour the Miller", being samples of his muse which will keep his name green with lovers of Scottish song while Scotchmen are able to sing them. Mr. Carnie is a true son of Bon-Accord, having been born in the Green, where his father kept a stabling, in November, 1824. While yet a lad he was sent as an apprentice to an engraver in the Netherkirkgate, whose workshop was quite a "howf" for all geniuses of the singing and poetical order,—Thom, Denham, and other worthies being frequent visitors. Here young Carnie caught the musical and literary taste, the former of which has since made him famous over all Scotland. With a persistence in his nature which has helped to make him the man he is, he never turned away from difficulties till he had conquered them, and never put his hand to any kind

of work but his heart and soul went into it also. He soon became known as a musical critic of more than ordinary acumen, and an adept in the art of phonography. These acquirements he matured while acting as inspector of poor and precentor at Banchory-Devenick,—and, in 1852, after being a short time on *The North of Scotland Gazette*, he was appointed sub-editor and reporter on the *Aberdeen Herald* newspaper. Here the fine congenial elements of his nature found an ample and a fitting field for their expansion. His love for, and enthusiasm in, his work knew no no bounds. In 1854 he inaugurated by a lecture, illustrated by a choir of 1000 voices, the Psalmody reform movement, which subsequently revolutionised the service of sacred song over the greater part of Scotland, while in after years his musical publications, particularly the "Northern Psalter", have obtained a popularity co-extensive with Presbyterianism at the very least. While the whole of his working day, and often a part of the night, were devoted to the routine of newspaper work and music, Mr. Carnie started a class for instruction in shorthand in Grant's School, Back Wynd, and during a whole summer had over 100 pupils under his tuition by six o'clock in the morning! His versatility is great; as a dramatic critic he has for long held the foremost place in the north, while as an interpreter of humorous Scotch song he is well known in private life to have very few equals. In 1861 he was appointed treasurer to the Infirmary and Lunatic Asylum, and, though the onerous duties connected with fevers, figures, and funds engross most of his attention now, he still finds leisure to have an occasional canter on his deft-footed Pegasus Though we have mentioned Scottish song as his *forte*, he has wooed the muses in many moods and many forms—serious, pathetic, and humorous. The "poetical addresses" which in the old theatre, Marischal Street, were wont to open and close the season, or were spoken on the benefit nights of some of the more important players, were many of them from his pen; but these for the most part were of temporary interest. The two songs which follow are not only good examples of his lyrical skill, but are in every way fit companions to "Tam Teuchet" and "The Stirkie":—

I'll sing a sang to thee, Tom,
Though far frae me and hame;
For leal thochts come o' thee, Tom,
At the whisper o' thy name.
The waves may beat, the winds may blaw,
The Simmer bloom and Winter snaw,
But morn or nicht sall brak nor fa',
That yer nae dear to me, Tom.

'Tis years, O langsome years, Tom,
Since last I saw your face;
And sometimes I hae fears, Tom,
Anither fills my place.
But hap what will, or come what may,
I'll ne'er forget or blame the day
I promised to be thine for aye—
For thine I hope to be, Tom.

Ye'll read this simple sang, Tom,
In yer hame across the sea;
And ye'll ken I'm thinkin' lang, Tom,
To look again on thee:—

To hear yer kindly voice ance mair,
To hear ye praise my face and hair,
To hear ye say that nane shall share
Yer heart and hame, but me, Tom.

On quite a different key, but equally happy in its jocose descriptiveness, is "My Neighbour the Miller."

My neighbour the Miller has muscle and girth,
His foot taks the grun like the dunt o' a hammer;
His laugh soons like music, leal soul-heezin' mirth,
His word comes fair-furth-th'-gait, nae halt or stammer.
A chip o' langsyne, he prefers grog to wine,
An oxter-pouch lined weel wi' honest won siller,
Frae Fittie to Fife, I wad lay ye my life—
There's nae truer man than my neighbour the Miller.

When the mill wheel is silent, the water at rest,
My frien' fills his pipe, treasured joy, to content him;
Sits 'neath his ain fig tree, like saint pure and blest,
At peace wi' the warl, pleased wi' what Fate hath sent him.
When at Market or Fair, ye'll fin' nane trusted mair;
In the Kirk he's a power as a ne'er failing pillar,
To anger full slow—kind to age, want or woe—
There's a big human heart in my neighbour the Miller.

He's fond o' a crony to join in a rubber,
Can share a safe tumbler, and loes a bit sang;
Tho' still at his table-heid wise-like and sober—
Yet under his shadow nicht never grows lang.
Roun his blythesome fireside—tender father and guide;
His wife, happy helpmate, he's aye bringin' till her;
While seed time and rain gladden ploo-land and plain,
He hopes and looks heaven-ward, my neighbour the Miller.

It is not generally known that the author of "The Father's Lullaby", (Lintie p. 19), and other pieces which appeared in the *Herald's* columns under the signature, "Ian Rathrobert"—was the friend and intimate of William Thom—John Forbes-Robertson, the now well-known London art-critic, and author of "The Great Painters of Christendom". He was born in Aberdeen, where his father was a merchant, 30th January, 1822, was educated at the Grammar School and Marischal College, and while still a student became a kind of sub-editor on the *Constitutional* newspaper—the bent of his mind lying towards musical and dramatic criticism. In 1844 he went up to London, and assiduously wrought himself into notice as an art-critic of great keenness, breadth, and culture. During his time he has been connected with most of the London journals in which art has been a feature—and has been for many years one of the principal writers in "The Art Journal", besides having achieved considerable reputation as a lecturer. Apart, however, from his special subject, he has woo'd the muses in his spare hours very successfully, and is known to his friends as an enthusiast in ballad literature, and as possessed of a mind richly stored with the traditionary song and ballad lore of his native north. Love, war, and domestic affection have been the leading themes of his verse, and in each he has touched the lyre with considerable mastery. Anent his one contribution to the "Lintie", it is interest-

ing to note that the subject of the "Lullaby" is now the eminent actor and painter, Johnston Forbes-Robertson, who has more than fulfilled his father's forecast of his fate. The following is from one of the tenderest of Mr. Forbes-Robertson's recent ballads :—

A lady lives by a wood-fringed lake,
Far away in Mona ;
And, oh ! for that dear lady's sake,
I would fain a verslet make,
Which she might sing, though she would not take
Me for her love in Mona.

For I am old and she is young,
Far away in Mona ;
And all that poets ever sung
Of witching face and silvery tongue
Are her's, the loveliest maid among
The beautiful of Mona.

I came to her sick and oppressed,
Far away in Mona ;
She took me in and gave me rest,
Sang all the songs I loved the best,
Smiled in my face and made me blest—
This gentle maid of Mona.

The green-sward slopes to the watery brink,
Far away in Mona,
Where white swans sail and song-birds drink,
Where bloom the lily, rose, and pink,
And all the flowers which one can think,
Near this still lake in Mona.

And up amidst the foliaged green,
Far away in Mona,
The window'd bower of my love is seen,
Mantled in ivy, as ye may ween,
The home where my lady reigns as queen
Of hearts that beat in Mona.

I marked her once at her lattice height,
Far away in Mona—
And she waved me such a sweet "good night"—
'Twas less a hand than a waft of light
From a heavenly vision pure and white—
Holy the ground in Mona !

. . . . . .

Oh ! be a swan on your own bright lake,
Far away in Mona ;
And make me your shadow for love's dear sake,
And then you'll kiss me from morning's break,
Till shades of evening overtake,
And hap us both in Mona.

. . . . . .

But the world will say, I must not speak,
Far away in Mona,
A word of love, or dare to seek
The pressure of your hand or cheek,
Far less the lips which angels meek
Might long to kiss in Mona.

William Hurry was born in 1807, and bred to the occupation of a gardener at Aboyne Gardens, where most of his subsequent life has been spent. He was for some years gardener at Banchory Lodge, and while there began to send poetical communications to the *Aberdeen Herald*. He removed to Aboyne in 1853, under engagement with the Marquis of Huntly; and, with the exception of occasional visits to his lordship's establishment at Peterborough, in England, has spent his whole life on Deeside. He retired from active service some years ago, when he got a nice little cottage from his lordship, rent free, and is treated more as a friend of the noble family than an old servant.

His musings, mostly of a reflective turn, indicate a mind full of wisdom, drawn from the field of his own experiences, as well as from that wider field which all may meet in the world of books. Not that his was particularly wide read; but what he did read he absorbed and made his own by constant rumination. Out of his repertory of poems, ballads, and songs, we select the following as preserving traces of by-gone life which we are unwilling to lose:—

THOUGHTS O' THE PAST.

Oh, lives there ane forby mysel', o' a' the merry corps,
Wha at the Printfield and Auchmull held mony a stirring splore
Wi' bools, at kipe an' ring, and eke wi' shinny at the ba',
When we wan out frae Mackay's squeel, held in the Printfield Raw?

Ye'll min' how the auld squeel was put on the Lancasterian plan,
How ilka class roun' iron rings in circles close wad stan';
The monitor aye at our lug, wi' his lang pointing stick,
It aft fell on our thoughtless pows wi' mony a thumpin' lick.

Ye'll min' when we our versions wrote, nae Lexicon had we,
To help us wi' Erasmus' tales, that vexed ilk curious e'e;
But Mackay, wi' his specks upo' his snuffy Roman beak,
Translated screeds o' Horace Odes, and made auld Homer speak.

Ye'll min' when Spring, wi' kindly han', clothed Nature a' in green,
How we in squads gaed to the woods, wi' glow'rin', prying een,
To harry nests o' ilka kin' and rive our bits o' duds,
For whilk, whan we gaed hame at e'en, we were weel paid wi' thuds.

Ye'll min' o' a' our haunts, frae Sclattie doon to Hadagain,
O' Middlefield, an' Scatterburn, an' Charley Gourlay's stane,
O' Warrack's Brig, an' Corsie's Close, and on the Quarry Brae;
The D——l's Den, where, seekin' nests, we daundered mony a day.

Ye'll min' upo' Feel Willie Milne, an' Jock o' Waggaley,
O' Greedy Ann, an' Daft Jane Carr, an' Annie Yeats the sly;
Ye'll min' o' auld Jock Tough, wha won at ancient Hadagain,
And Moorican, wha cloored our croons wi' mony a weel-flung stane.

Ye'll min' upo' the twa gean trees that stood close side by side,
That spread themsel's by Woodside House in a' their stately pride,
How we, wi' trembling han's wad pu' the tempting, pendant fruit,
But left aye twa-three loons below, to keep a sharp look out.

Ye'll min' o' auld Kilgour the laird, wha gae us mony a chase
Up thro' the Parks to Hadagain, in wild and furious race;
Our caps and bonnets aft he took, and ruggit at our lugs,
And whiles his staff upo' our backs wad fa' in thun'erin' thuds.

O, lives there aue whose heart responds to this my hame-o'er lay,
Whose thoughts rin back to former times, to scenes lang pass'd away?
Comes there a gush o' pleasure dancing through your full heart's core,
As we bring back to your min's eye the merry days o' yore?

Or is your min' wi' warl's care and trouble sair engrossed?
Or hae ye thro' life's kittle dance wi' sorrow aft been cross'd?
Or is your heart sae seared that life nae pleasure has to gie?
Then oh, I fear this lay o' mine may not licht up your e'e.

If it has been your lot to bask beneath Dame Fortune's smile,
My lay may drive away from you ennui for a while;
May make you muse upo' the days that noo are fled and gone,
"When we were laddies at the squeel," upo' the Banks o' Don.

George Gibb was born at Gordons Mills in 1826. After leaving school he went as a worker to Stoneywood Paper Mills, and it was while there that some of his effusions met the eye of James Adam, Editor of the *Aberdeen Herald* who with his wonted spirit soon obtained for him other employment of a less laborious and more remunerative order with the Great North Railway Co. He held various appointments in connection with the Railway, both north and south of Aberdeen, but meeting with an accident to his foot at Alloa, had to resign his situation, and in 1882 settled down at Stoneywood Paper Mills once again. He died there after some months ailing, 3rd January, 1884, and was buried in St. Machar Churchyard.

His published effusions were not many, but for the most part they were genuine inspirations. The opening piece in the "Lintie," "My Mither Tongue," is a fine example of that melodious swing in his muse, which first attracted public attention, and the following, among the last things he touched up, though decidedly in the minor key, shows that through all the vicissitudes of life, his hand had lost none of its cunning:—

THE GLOAMIN' O' LIFE.

When oor sicht waxes dim an' our strength dees awa',
When our haffits outrival the new driven snaw,
When heart-worn an' weary wi' a cauld warld's strife,
We wad fain seek repose in the gloamin' o' life.
In our journey through life, frae we first see the licht
'Till the hour that our sin-laden soul tak's its flicht,
We hae mony heart scauds an' vexations to dree,
But we feel their stings best when auld age dims our e'e.

In the gloamin' o' life, when we're feckless an' frail
We maun cower 'neath misfortunes we ance could repel;
E'en our braw titled gentles, knichts, princes, and peers
Grow peevish an' fret 'neath the burden o' years.
But how aft do we spy amang life's lowly train
The hoary auld gutcher o' three score an' ten,
Wha, tho' rack'd wi' rheumatics an' doited wi' eild,
Yet maun struggle an' fecht for a bannock and beild.

In the gloamin' o' life, when cauld poortith's oor fa',
We maun strive 'gainst oor strength to drive want frae our ha',
Until Nature rebels, syne wi' hearts fu' o' grief,
We maun jog to the mools under parish relief.

Tho' we aft hae the will, we fa' short o' the power
To provide in our youth for life's sad, closing hour—
Dry precepts o' prudence to puir folks are vain ;
They are thrifty, guid kens, who hae naething to spen'.

In the gloamin' o' life, ere our memory tyne
A' its time-hallow'd treasures—the gift o' langsyne—
Our care-fettered fancy breaks wild frae its chain
To revel 'mang dreams o' the days that are gane.
The sun-frichten'd starnies blink bonnie an' bricht
Whan the warl' is hush'd 'mid the darkness o' nicht
So fairer an' brichter our childhood appears
Whan viewed down the lang, gloomy vista o' years.

In the gloamin o' life we gang seldom astray,
For our passions subside as our senses decay ;
An' pleasure's gay phantoms nae mair we pursue,
For the shore o' Eternity looms in our view.
Tho' sick o' this warl' we aften are laith
To resign our auld frames to the clutches o' Death ;
But to ken there's a warl' whaur blessings are rife
Is a balm to our souls in the gloamin' o' life.

Largely endowed with the poetic gift, but more largely possessed by the scientific spirit, the "A. Wilson" who contributed a few lyrics to the pages of the "Lintie", and published in the *Herald* a number of verses illustrative of "The Theory of Song Writing", has since then become known as ALEXANDER STEPHEN WILSON, author of "The Unity of Matter, 1855"; "A Creed of To-Morrow, 1872"; "The Botany of Three Historical Records, 1878"; "A Bushel of Corn, 1883"; and "Songs and Poems, 1884". Mr. Wilson was born in the parish of Rayne, and reared to the profession of a land surveyor and civil engineer. His whole life, apart from that devoted to the pursuit of his regular business, has been dedicated to the services of science and song, and his contributions to both have been of a remarkably high order. His earlier musings, apart from their inherent lyrical sweetness, give little indication of the subtle power, sweep, and suggestiveness of his more matured poems. The philosophic cast of his mind—earnest if sceptical—logically exacting if sentimental—may repel readers who are accustomed to find their enjoyment in those authors whose beauties lie on the surface; but to all who think as well as read, and think while they read "A Creed of To-Morrow", and "Songs and Poems", will reveal a mind of no ordinary grasp and fecundity. For a number of years Mr. Wilson has lived at North Kinmundy, New Machar, and though retired from the active duties of life, is still a diligent and devoted student. The following is "the syren song" from his exquisitely fine poem "Lyra and Scione":—

LYRA AND SCIONE.

Then Lyra sang a siren song of pure enticing love,
And promised me a crown of all the ecstasies of fame,
If I would worship her and all the goddesses remove
That e'er should strive to steal my heart and sacrifice my name.

'I will bring to thee,' she whispered, 'all that makes the rose a rose ;
I will bring thee sweeter stars than ever pierced the trysting skies ;
I will bring thee Springs and Summers which no other bosom knows ;
I will show thee every hope around forsaken love that dies.

'O'er thy spirit will I pour of every rapture, every bliss,
Every burning tear of sorrow, every thrill of deep delight;
Every hope and every sadness shall be thine if thou wilt kiss
The lips that evermore will smile to cheer thy loving sight.

'To thee the world shall be no world of pleasure sought for gold;
And truth for thee shall not be truth without a crown of joy;
And unto thee the secrets of the shadows shall be told,
For the love my love shall bring thee will thy rosy hours employ.

'I will tune thy harp to sing the songs that love forbids to die,
The songs which know no other art but art the gods inspire;
will teach thy lips to sing that only passions pure can vie
With the pleasures of the passions struck from heaven's divinest fire.

'There are no madnesses of joy like loving true and pure,
And therefore let thy song like ether bathe the glowing heart;
My love for thee, thy love for me, around us will allure
The choral joys which bid the cold impurities depart.

'If thou wilt sing the songs I teach, for thee unsetting days
Shall crowd with spreading sunshine where the coming years are born,
And the heart of love shall burn with bliss that listens to thy lays,
Where pulses purified shall brand impurity with scorn.

'Thy heart untrodden by the years with love shall still be young,
The haunt of warm emotions which experience cannot chill;
The blossems shall be blossoms on the cheeks where they have sprung,
And the daughters of the dawn have charms to captivate thee still.

'The mark that thou art mine shall be when round thee I shall bring
The fairest, purest maidens in the light of loving eyes,
That thou shalt more enchanted be to hear their graces sing
Than with the descant of the sage and wisdom of the wise.

'For service in my fane thou shalt be mantled with their smiles,
Their love shall be a robe wherein thy soul shall be arrayed,
And thy quivering joy shall feed a flame to chant their witching wiles,
Fitter purchase for divine reward than ever saint hath paid.'

Archibald Inglis Watson, one of the few remaining contributors to the celebrated "Whistle Binkie" collection of songs, was a ready writer of verse in his younger years. He was born at Portsoy, 12th October, 1818, and received his earliest instruction from a grandmother to whose care he had been consigned. His mother married a second time, came to Aberdeen, and young Archie was sent to learn the tailor trade. The bankruptcy of his master relieved him from a calling which he abhorred, so, remaining at home, he assisted his father who kept a second-hand goods' shop. In 1837 he started small books and periodical selling on his own account, and continued at that business (with a break of some years when he wrought as collator to Mr. Edmond, book-binder) from then till now. He was a poetical contributor to the *Aberdeen Shaver*, *Lloyd's Penny Times*, *Bradshaw's Journal*, and other newspapers, and contributed the following song, probably one of his best, to "Whistle Binkie":—

THE FLOWER O' DONSIDE.

Oh! ken ye sweet Chirsty, the flower o' Donside,
She's fair as the morning, and modest beside;
Sae sweet and sae sylphlike—the delicate flower
Is like her soft beauty, in summer's fair hour.
When the dim mists o' eve curtain Don's pleasant vale,
I'll pour in her chaste ear my love-burthen'd tale;
As we stray by the river's soft silvery tide
I'll fondly caress the sweet Flower o' Donside!
Oh! ken ye sweet Chirsty, &c.

There are moments of bliss when we feel the pure joy
And transport of loving, without grief's alloy,
Such moments as brighten sad life's weary way,
When o'er the brown heath-flower at gloaming I stray,
And the light arm that links in my own makes me feel
A thrill of delight, which I cannot reveal—
May Heaven grant me this, whate'er else may betide,
To twine with my fate the sweet Flower o' Donside.
Oh! ken ye sweet Chirsty, &c.

Apart from his own contributions to our song literature, William Carnie has done no small service in preserving at least one item of sterling worth from falling into oblivion. We refer to the only song now extant from the pen of a talented occupant of a Scottish pulpit—the Rev. James Greig, Chapel of Garioch. Mr. Greig was born at the farm of Hillocks, parish of Newhills, in 1811, and after the preliminary course at the parish school, entered the University at King's College, supporting himself while there by private teaching. During his studies at the Divinity Hall, and for some time after, he kept a boarding-house for students attending the college classes, but on being appointed to the mastership of the parish school at Keith-hall he removed thither in June, 1839. The refined and gentlemanly bearing and intense love for learning which he carried with him soon made a marked impression on the manners and character of his scholars, and many students who ultimately distinguished themselves at the University had to thank the painstaking, scholarly schoolmaster of Keith-hall for the initial impulse to their success. After travelling on the Continent in 1841 as tutor to the son of an Ayrshire laird, he returned to Keith-hall, and soon after (in August, 1843) was ordained to the parish of Chapel of Garioch, the first minister who filled the place of one "gone out" at the Disruption. For sixteen years he laboured among his people there, who loved and appreciated him very much. To his accomplishments as a scholar, he added that of musician, was a skilled violinist, and known amongst his friends as a writer of excellent songs. The love of music together with kindred tastes made William Carnie a frequent and welcome visitor to the manse, and the manuscript of the song we give below—a gem of its kind—was discovered by him on the back of an old letter, and soon found its way into the *Herald* where it won great and worthy admiration. Mr. Greig died 4th August, 1859, at the early age of 48 years.

THE BLINKIN' O'T.

O, it wasna her daddy's lairdly kin,
It wasna her siller—the clinkin' o't;
It wasna her minny's welcome in;
'Twas her ain blue e'e—the blinkin' o't.

The blinkin' o't, the blinkin' o't.
O weary fa' the blinkin' o't;
My heart and a', she's stown awa'
Wi' the lythesome, blythesome blinkin' o't.

It wasna the licht o' her snawy broo,
Nor her gowden hair—the dinkin' o't;
Her dimplet cheek, nor her cherry mou',
Nor her braw, braw gown—the prinkin' o't.
'Twas a' her e'e—the blinkin' o't,
O weary fa' the blinkin' o't;
Nae a' her charms could work such harms,
As the lythesome, blythesome blinkin' o't.

A' day I dream o' its witchin' gleam,
A' nicht I wauk wi' thinkin' o't;
A-field, at hame, wi' sib or frem'd,
I'm glamour't wi' the blinkin' o't.
The blinkin' o't, the blinkin' o't,
O weary fa' the blinkin' o't;
My peace is deen, my wits are gane,
Wi' the lythesome, blythesome, blinkin' o't.

Fanever I teach, fanever I preach,
I'm dottled as gin I'd been drinkin' o't;
Fanever I sing or play a spring,
The burden's aye—the blinkin' o't.
The blinkin' o't, the blinkin' o't,
O weary fa' the blinkin' o't;
I'm feart fu' aft I'll gang clean daft
Wi' the lythesome, blythesome blinkin' o't.

'Tween hopes and fears, 'tween joys and tears,
My heart is at the sinkin' o't;
I'd better dee at ance than dree
The pain I thole frae the blinkin' o't.
The blinkin' o't, the blinkin' o't,
O weary fa' the blinkin' o't;
I'm sad, I'm sair, I'm in despair,
Wi' the lythesome, blythesome, blinkin' o't.

But oh, gin she wad smile on me,
And gie Mess John the linkin' o't,
Nae wardle's care should ever mair
Torment me wi' the jinkin' o't.
O! then I'd bless the blinkin' o't,
The smilin', wilin' blinkin' o't;
An' cheerfu' live, or happy dee,
I' the lythesome, blythesome, blinkin' o't.

The above will no doubt recal to many readers a verse of an old north country song, attributed to "Geddes, the priest," and which runs:—

Her inly glance I'll ne'er forget,
The dear, the lovely blinkin' o't
Has pierc'd me thro' an' thro' the heart,
An' plagues me wi' the prinkin' o't.
I try'd to sing, I try'd to pray,
I try'd to drown't wi' drinkin' o't,
I try'd wi' toil to driv't away,
But ne'er can sleep for thinkin' o't.

From the manse to the loom is a wide stride, but the genius of poesy has as frequently found her votaries exercised over their "diaper" and "dowlas" as over their divinity. From the host of fugitive poets of the period we have selected one from the cloth, and now turn for a moment to ROBERT CHALMERS, the last of our handloom weaver poets. He was born at Stonehaven, 25th December, 1834, removed with his parents to Aberdeen, and was put to the weaving trade while a mere lad. He wrought for many years at a large weaving factory in Forbes Street, belonging to Richards & Co., Broadford Works, and though practically a man of little education, evinced a talent for versifying and a love of poetry rarely found in one whose upbringing and surroundings were as hard as stern necessity could frame. Careless of his rhymings,—few of them remain now;—but the following, scribbled on a piece of waste paper, unpruned, undressed, with all the faults of a first draught, will show the character of his song-craft. After a lingering illness he died, 15th Oct., 1870, in the 36th year of his age:—

Whare wad ye hae my heart to be
But in my Katie's keepin',
Wha sweetly whisper'd love to me,
An' waked my soul a-sleepin'?
And aye sinsyne her very name
Sets a' my bosom thrillin';
Gie me but her, an' wantin' fame,
To live content I'm willin'.

I canna, in my humble way,
Fin' words enough to praise her;
An', court my muse howe'er I may,
I ne'er sae high can raise her.
My limpin' line, it never gives
Richt justice to my notion;
But here, within my breast, she lives
In ilka fond emotion.

Some fools may woo for sake o' gear,
And think *that* tie endearin';
A virtuous heart's the jewel to wear,
An's ne'er the waur o' wearin'.
She's been sae kind, sae leal to me,
I'll cease to lo'e her—never,
Till heartless Death loups in atween 's,
An' only then we'll sever.

A man of great talent, scholarship, eccentricity and wit, the late JOHN RAMSAY, A.M., added to his many accomplishments that of occasional poet,—and while some may well remember the bitterness of his satire, many more have fond remembrances of the tenderness, sweetness, and pathos which characterise for the most part such of his musings as "My Grave", and "My Good Old Aunt". Descended, on the mother's side, from an old county family, John, though born in London (18th September, 1799), was reared and spent the greater part of his life in Aberdeen. Educated at the Grammar School and King's College, he graduated in 1817,—filled various situations as tutor in gentlemen's families,—was successively private secretary to Joseph Hume, Esq., M.P.,

a teacher at Gordon's Hospital, and editor of the *Aberdeen Journal*. For many years, after his retirement from active work, he took a great interest in local matters, particularly those of an antiquarian kind; and was widely known and highly respected among a number of friends who appreciated the fund of anecdote and odd sallies of wit which were wont to give his conversation an indescribable charm. He died in June, 1870, and his devoted friend, Alexander Walker, Esq., F.S.A., Scot., issued in the following year, a charming selection from his literary remains. To the graceful and sympathetic memoir prefixed thereto, we are indebted for the above particulars.

As a poet, Mr. Ramsay never committed himself to publication, (having been disuaded from doing so by some friends whose judgment he preferred to his own in such matters), but in the corners of newspapers, magazines, and similar ephemera, his musings, mostly under the signature "Sigma", "*S.*", or sometimes "R.", found their way to the public. His oft-quoted poem, "My Grave", appeared under the first-named signature, in the *Aberdeen Herald*, 19th January, 1833. The following extracts from "My Good Old Aunt", will show the character of Mr. Ramsay's muse in its best mood:—

MY GOOD OLD AUNT.

Ah! never, never, can my heart forget
My good Old Aunt—I was her infant pet!
Methinks I see her in her sober trim—
So clean—so tidy, but by no means prim—
That pointed backward to the olden time
When she, and many gone, were in their prime.
Her decent head-dress of transparent lace
A simple ribbon fastened to its place;
Beneath the chin it formed a little knot,
Above her brow there bound it to the spot
A tiny brooch of sparkling garnet stone;
Her chastened taste permitted that alone
To deck her forehead, where the "almond tree"
Usurped the place where auburn used to be!
Around her neck, as pure as summer dawn,
Was thrown a kerchief of unsullied lawn.

. . . . . .

And when, at walks, I toddled in her hand
To daisied mead, or sea-begirting sand,
With ceaseless converse we beguiled the way:
Then from her side I oft would scour away,
To cull some pretty weed or shining shell
Where ocean's mimic murmurs seemed to dwell.
And she would smile to mark my childish glee,
When fleeing from the fast-pursuing sea;
And, when I bilked the drenching of the spray,
Her feeble cheer would join my shrill huzza!
Much would I prattle of the passing sail,
When scudding fast before the favouring gale.
Much of the finny tenants of the wave,
Much of the "sinking sands," and "mermaid's cave;"
Much of the hidden treasures of the deep,
Where many crews of gallant sailors sleep
The sleep that needs nor couch nor downy pillow!
Nor constant lulling of the rolling billow!—

And when the Sabbath brought its heavenly calm,
With chime of bell, and voice of simple psalm,
How pleased was I to seek the house of prayer,
My hand in hers ! With what a solemn air—
Precocious mannikin !—I took my seat !
Far was the flooring from my dangling feet,
Unwelcome neighbours of the muslin gown
Of buckram spinster, whose forbidding frown
And jerking jog, and eye as fierce as cat's,
Denounced both marriage and its plaguy brats !
But *my* old maid would draw me to her side,
With shoes and all, and looked so gratified
When I would note the text in holy book,
From which the man of God his counsel took,
And still would help her fading sight to trace
Th' appointed service to its proper place.

. . . . . .

And when, with coming years, I laid aside
The child—the boy—for the gay stripling's pride,
And stepp'd abroad in all the confidence
Of what I deemed my own matured sense,
Careless of counsel—of success secure—
In hope, so rich !—in caution, very poor !
With what delight she viewed my ripening years—
Myself the centre of her hopes and fears !
At length, I helped to lay her reverend head
Gently upon her last and lowly bed.
Still to her grave my pensive steps I bend,
To bless my early venerable friend !
Ah ! often 'midst the tumults of the strife
Of joys and sorrows in my after life,
Would I bethink me of my good old maid,
And e'en would fancy that her friendly shade
(If such permission to the saints were given)
Might steal a moment from the bliss of heaven
To touch my heart !—Did not the contrite tear—
My better thoughts—bespeak her presence near ?

Among the fugitive song-writers of this period none rank higher than Dr. Patrick Buchan, the eldest son of Peter Buchan, the celebrated ballad collector. Patrick was born at Peterhead in 1814, was educated at Marischal College, and entered the medical profession. After a voyage or two to Greenland, and a short spell as medical practitioner in a country district, he went to Glasgow and entered into trade as a West India merchant. While there he began to develop those literary tastes and talents which had shown themselves from time to time during his early years,—edited various works relating to Scottish song, and contributed pretty freely to current periodical literature. Many of his songs had appeared in the earlier series of "Whistle Binkie", and found their way into other popular collections, and he was soon recognised as a song-writer of rare faculty, equally at home, in humorous or pathetic subjects. On his retirement from business he lived at Orchardhill, Stonehaven, and died there on 25th May, 1881. In 1873 he published anonymously two poems, "The Guidman o' Inglismill", and "The Fairy Bride". The former is a story in "broad Buchans" of a drunken farmer's bewitchment,

notable mostly for a couple of excellent songs woven into it, "Watt o' the Hill", and "Tipperty's Jean".

The following example of his muse for raciness, and compact pawkie humour, looks as if it had dropped out of "The Tea Table Miscellany":—

Air—"*Muirland Willie*".

Watt o' the Hill cam' doun the brae,
Trigly buskit frae tap to tae,
Ridin' fu' crouse on his dappled grey—
  Watty wis fidgin' fain;
"An', aye", quo' he, "whate'er betide,
Some canty bit lass I'll mak' my bride,
For winter is comin'—my bed's o'er wide—
  I'll lie nae mair my lane".

Wattie gaed hoddlin' to the mill,
"Here's routh", quo he, "to woo at will,
Jenny an' Meg an' Bess an' Lill,
  Tibbie an' Kate an' Jane.
Lasses,—I'm here a wooer to woo,
Will ane o' ye come an' be my doo?
I've siller an' lan' an' mony a coo—
  I'm tired o' lyin' my lane".

The lasses skirled a loud "tee-hee!"
But ilka ane cried, "Wull ye tak' me?"
Better an auld man's dawtie be,
  Wi' walth o' gear, than nane.
"Wattie", quo' they, "just steek yer een,
Grip wha ye like, she'll ne'er compleen;
Better a cutty than wantin' a speen—
  Ye'se lie nae mair yer lane".