

## THE BALLAD O' MAY WYLLIE.

BONNIE May Wyllie cam' oot o' the toun  
When the deein' sunlicht lay  
On the lang green howms o' the windin' Nith,  
An' on deep green wud an' brae.

It fell fu' saft on the auld castle wa'  
At the fit o' Sanquhar toun,  
As if blessin' the ruin, wi' unseen hands,  
That time had tummeled down.

It fell fu' saft on the Elwick wud,  
Where, sweet an' lood an' lang,  
The mavis sittin' a' by himsel'  
Was singin' his ain sweet sang.

He sang fu' lood an' he sang fu' sweet,  
An' his sang was unco fain,  
That he started anither in Mennock Glen,  
Wha answered him back again.

The licht lay sweet on howm an' brae,  
An' ilka thing was braw;  
But bonnie May Wyllie o' Sanquhar toun  
Was the bonniest o' them a'.

But where is she gaun when the gloamin' rests  
On the hill o' Knockenhair?  
Is she gaun to look at the De'il's Big Stane,  
Or juist to the Witches' Stair?

Wha sleeps, they say, by the Witches' Stair,  
Dreams mony a strange, sweet dream,  
When the mune comes up an' looks owre the trees,  
An' Crawick begins to gleam.

Then the fairies wha bide by the side o' the burn,  
Where the grass boos doon an' dips,  
Come into the licht, an' they smile to fin'  
The dew licht on their lips.

THE BALLAD O' MAY WYLLIE

But bonnie May Wyllie still hauds her way,  
Till she reaches the Laigh Wud En',  
Then she turns, an' licht as a fairy hersel',  
Gangs doon Crawick's bonnie glen.

O sweet is the glen in the simmer nicht,  
When ilka thing is still,  
Save Crawick wha's rowin' frae side to side,  
An' singin' his ain sweet fill.

The primroses an' violets,  
That were hid in the lang deep grass,  
Cam' oot an' noddit their bonnie heids  
To see May Wyllie pass.

The robin, thrang wi' his ain bit ways,  
Lookit up wi' his bricht, bricht ee,  
Then dookit his heid, an' wi' ae quick spring  
Cam' a wee bit nearer to see.

He lookit fu' wistfu'-like at her,  
An' his dark ee was bricht as a bead;  
An' nearer he cam' as he'd fain alicht  
On bonnie May Wyllie's heid.

An' she smiled to hersel' an' sang to hersel'  
Till she cam' to the Witches' Stair;  
Then she set her doon on the laighmost step,  
An' her dreams were sweet an' fair.

The mune cam' up wi' a lightsome grace,  
An' her beams fell saft an' sweet,  
An' ilka pool that they kissed became  
As bricht as a silver sheet.

An' the murmurs grew saft an' safter still,  
An' the win' could only stir,  
A primrose that bonnie May Wyllie had touched,  
It was looking up at her.

## A SINGER IN THE STREET.

A SINGER in the street to-day,  
He sings a song; and as I hear  
I dream and wander far away,  
And still his song is in my ear.

Snatches of dim forgotten things  
Are in it; such as throb and glow  
In nameless poets and their rhymes,  
For simple hearers long ago.

That was their art; they died unknown,  
Not caring, if they left behind  
A single snatch, a tender tone,  
To linger with their fellow kind.

And this they did, like birds that pipe,  
By lonely stream or misty hill,  
A chord or two, but full and ripe,  
Then seem forever to be still.

But not the notes that are so sweet,  
They live and shift as sunshine slips;  
Till here to-day within the street  
They rest upon a singer's lips.

## THE SANG THAT JENNY SINGS.

It is naething but a lilt,  
Yet its rinnin' in my heid;  
Just a lilt, an' that is a',  
O' an auld auld-warld screed.  
Yet it haunts me ben the hoose,  
An' it follows me ootby,  
The sang that Jenny sings,  
When she's milkin' the kye.

## THE SANG THAT JENNY SINGS

An' it's a' made oot o' nocht;  
Just a lad an' lassie fair,  
Doon beside a wee bit burn  
No' to meet ilk ither mair.  
An' they pu' the birk sae green,  
Wi' mony a weary sigh;  
That is a' that Jenny sings,  
When she's milkin' the kye.

Nae ane kens wha made the lilt,  
Deid the singer lang, langsyne,  
But a lassie sings his sang  
Wi' her heart in ilka line.  
An' I hear it ben the hoose,  
An' it follows me ootby,  
The sang that Jenny sings,  
When she's milkin' the kye.

## AT HOME.

HERE as I sit this summer day,  
On a seat at a door in a little town,  
Trains, about fifty yards away,  
With a rattle and roar rush up and down.

They carry to all the ends of the earth,  
The restless hearts that must ever roam;  
But happier they who were touched at birth,  
With the simple wish for their land at home.

Better by far is the homely speech,  
The street and the fields their boyhood knew;  
Than the hurry of feet, and the toil to reach  
The visions that vanish as visions do.

## SWEET JENNY BY THE SOLWAY SANDS.

SWEET Jenny by the Solway Sands,  
Fair Jenny by the Cree;  
This rose that once lay in thy hands,  
Still speaks and breathes of thee.

Again the spell my fancies weave  
Still shows thee standing there,  
While all the winds of summer leave  
A glory round thy hair.

The winds come from the Solway Sands,  
They touch thy gentle cheek,  
Then bear away to other lands  
The thoughts I fain would speak.

Ah! hope that comes, and hope that grows,  
With visions sweet to see;  
Thou paler sister of the rose,  
Thou lily not for me.

But I shall dream, and, in my dreams,  
Shall see thee standing there,  
The flowers beside thee and the beams  
Of summer in thy hair.

Sweet Jenny by the Solway Sands,  
Fair Jenny by the Cree,  
Ah! that this rose that left thy hands  
Is all I have of thee.

## I WAS ALONE WITH THE MASTER.

I WAS alone with the Master,  
I was weary and sick with pain,  
For the fight with the passions had left me  
With many a wound and stain.

I WAS ALONE WITH THE MASTER

And I bowed my head in the shadows,  
To wrestle and fight with despair,  
Till I knew by the light around me,  
That the Master Himself was there.

I felt His hand on my shoulder,  
As He whispered, "Speak to Me."  
But I said in my fear, "O, Master,  
How can I speak to Thee?"

"How can one that is mortal  
Look into those eyes of Thine?  
I of the earth and earthly,  
And Thou, Thyself, Divine."

Then methought His voice grew sweeter,  
And in richer music ran,  
"Stand up as a man to another,  
And speak as a man to man."

Then I rose with my burden of sorrow,  
And lifted my shame-struck eyes;  
And looked in the face of the Master  
That was tender and sweet and wise.

One hand was still on my shoulder,  
The other He put in mine;  
His voice was the voice of friendship,  
But the words He spoke were divine.

The words that were said can only  
Be known to the Master and me,  
When the dark hours come with their shadows,  
And the lights die out that I see.

## WHEN LIFE IS YOUNG.

WHEN life is young, and dreams are sweet,  
And golden light is in the sky,  
And Hope, with flowers about her feet,  
Smiles and is ever standing nigh,  
Then all the earth is very fair,  
And joy is dancing everywhere.

When life is cold, and all the skies  
Have lost their glory, and the light  
Dims as a taper's ere it dies,  
And ghostly shadows whisper night,  
Then Death may have within his call,  
Something far sweeter than them all.

## YARROW VALE.

No sounds are heard from Yarrow Vale,  
But summer sounds to-day;  
The Yarrow whispers forth his tale,  
And sweeps and glides away.

The sunshine falls, and through the leaves  
A dainty light doth pass,  
That, falling, like a fairy weaves  
Lithe shadows on the grass.

Against the sky the hills are thrown,  
They shimmer in the heat,  
Green footstools for the clouds whereon  
To set their fleecy feet.

The lark has lost himself in mirth,  
He never looks around;  
But, half in heaven, pours down to earth  
An ecstasy of sound.

## YARROW VALE

The winds have laid them down to dream  
In hollows long and deep;  
As if they thought of Yarrow stream,  
And murmured in their sleep.

I, too, perforce, must take the tone  
And colour of the hour,  
And dream my day-dream all alone  
By Newark's Border Tower.

But not of feuds, or midnight wrong  
Done in the long ago,  
When hearts were rough and arms were strong  
For either friend or foe.

I only think how sweet to reap  
This day of sunny gleams;  
And hear the Yarrow, half-asleep,  
Make music to my dreams.

## THE ANGEL THAT SOWS THE FLOWERS.

At God's right hand the angels stand  
In the courts of Heaven above,  
They bow with folded wings ere they fly  
On their missions of pity and love.  
There are many who wait for His high commands,  
And each has his own full powers,  
But the sweetest of all the angels there  
Is the one who sows the flowers.

He stands the nearest unto God,  
He can almost touch His hand;  
His hair is golden, and his wings  
Are the whitest of all the band.



THE ANGEL THAT SOWS THE FLOWERS

But his brothers know not even his name  
As we on this earth know ours;  
They only know him in that high land  
As the one that sows the flowers.

When the winds of earth are soft and low,  
And the fields are moist with the rain,  
This angel bends his radiant head  
On wood and field and plain.  
Then his eyes look right into those of God  
While his wings he gently lowers;  
And this whisper is heard through the whole of heaven:  
"Is it time to sow the flowers?"

Then God said, touching his golden head,  
"Go down to the haunts of men;  
Let the flowers grow up like my love for them,  
By wood and stream and glen.  
Go down; and wherever thy feet shall stray  
The flowers will spring into birth,  
To teach the heart that is doubting still  
The love I have for the earth."

So the angel that sows the flowers came down  
With a deep rich light in his eyes,  
And the clouds took a softer look as they spread  
Their white wings over the skies.  
They wept sweet tears on the angel's head,  
Till around him, as he stood,  
A full green glory of birds and flowers  
Burst forth by meadow and wood.

They grew into life at the touch of his feet,  
Or wherever his wings were thrown;  
And their eyes grew wet with the purest of dews,  
And they turned and looked into his own.

THE ANGEL THAT SOWS THE FLOWERS

But sweetest of all the blossoms that grew  
In the soft spring winds to wave,  
Were those that smiled like an infant child,  
From grass that was over a grave.

And wherever the angel laid him down  
For a moment to rest his feet,  
A glory of blooms burst forth, till the wind  
With their very breath was sweet.  
And this is why, when you come to a spot  
Where the blossoms are thick and fair,  
You know the angel that sows the flowers  
Has lain for a moment there.

Through this earth of ours, on his mission of love,  
The angel went his way;  
And sunshine and song went along with him,  
Till the earth was glad and gay.  
Then he knelt him down with his hands on his breast,  
And turned his face to the skies,  
And as soft as dew in the hush of the night  
Rose the tears into his eyes.

“Farewell, my flowers, for my task is done,  
Till the time that I come again,  
I leave you to sway when the west winds play,  
And your thoughts in the hearts of men.  
So that, when you feel their incense steal  
From the wings of the dewy showers,  
They will think of the love of the Master above,  
Who sent me to sow the flowers.”

PIT HIM TO HIS BED.

HERE's wee Tam aside the fire,  
Soun' as soun' can be,  
Tangs across his wee fat legs,  
Heid upon his knee.  
Wauken, Tam; you'll burn your croon—  
Canna hear what's said—  
Mammy's unco wearit wean—  
Pit him to his bed.

Come his wa's on mammy's knee—  
What a heavy lump—  
Claes a' wat wi' makin' dams  
Roun' aboot the pump;  
Glaur frae very heid to fit  
Wi' rinnin', nicht an' main,  
Efter coudlin' paper boats  
Sailin' doon the drain.

Pit his buits upon the stule,  
See they're through the taes,  
Hing his stockin's owre the swey,  
But dinna heed his claes.  
I maun wash this very nicht—  
Od, the dirty loon,  
I wad skelp his doup if he  
Werena sleepin' soun'.

Here's a naked man at last  
Ready for a scrub,  
A' owre frae the heid to fit—  
Bring the washing tub.  
There noo he's as ticht an' clean  
As ony could desire,  
Rin an' fetch his red nicht goon,  
An' heat it at the fire.

PIT HIM TO HIS BED

Wauken, Tam, an' say your prayer—  
See, he screws his face,  
Mummies, "Now I lay me down—  
I beat big Jock a race."  
Losh me, what is this I hear  
Frae the heathen limb?  
But askin' sic a plague to pray  
Makes me waur than him.

Spread the blankets doon, I say,  
An' wheel the chair aboot,  
Here I'm comin' wi' a man  
Fairly fochten oot.  
There he's in amang the claes,  
Ye scarce can see his croon;  
Mammy's unco wearit wean  
Cuddles safe an' soun'.

BAULD ROBIN FORD.

BAULD Robin Ford, frae Glasgow toon,  
Cam' here an' spent a nicht wi' me;  
An' wow, he is an unco chield,  
An' fu' o' meikle fun an' glee.  
He tauld us stories till the tears  
Cam' rinnin' owre oor cheeks fu' clear;  
But aye I wussed atween each lauch,  
That Sandy Murdoch had been here.

He sang his ain bit cantie sangs,  
The lilt that tak' your heart along,  
An' what wi' ither things, I wat,  
Oor lungs were keepit unco thrang.

We sat an' smokit, knee to knee,  
 An' meikle we had baith to speir;  
 But aye I wussed, atween each puff,  
 That Sandy Murdoch had been here.

We crackit on until the nicht  
 Took thochts on giein' twal' a ca';  
 But what cared we about the clocks—  
 Let clocks, I say, gang to the wa'—  
 Come, Robin, crack anither joke,  
 Or spin some story, auld an' queer;  
 But, losh, I tell ye ance again,  
 I wish that Murdoch had been here.

O, Sandy is a sturdy chield,  
 Wi' honest face an' swarthy broo,  
 An' weel he woos the Nine that sit  
 Upon the hill that poets view.  
 I wuss him health an' strength to sing  
 Till he be fourscore years an' mair,  
 Wi' wreaths about his heid to hide  
 Time's fingers when they wan'er there.

So, Robin, let us fill oor pipes,  
 An' tak' anither hearty blaw,  
 But first let Sandy Murdoch ken  
 The wuss that's shared between us twa.  
 May aye his heart be hale an' green,  
 An' aye the Muse beside him gang,  
 To touch him when he lifts his heid  
 To strike the strings o' sturdy sang.

An', Robin, when ye gang awa',  
 To toil within the busy toon,  
 If, when your heart begins to loup,  
 An' cry oot, "Robin start an' croon,"



James Paterson, R.S.A., R.S.W.

Edinburgh

Then think upon the simmer light  
 That lies in Crawick's bonnie glen,  
 An' gie's a hame-spun, couthie lilt,  
 For weel it's worthy o't, ye ken.

Fareweel—an' maun we say fareweel?  
 I doot it—time, an' tide, an' trains,  
 They winna wait, do what ye may—  
 They only lauch at a' your pains.  
 Fareweel, but min' that saxty miles  
 Is nocht to gi'e ye ony fear;  
 An' so you'll surely come again,  
 But first send Sandy Murdoch here.

#### EDINBURGH.

THOU city of my boyhood! Ere I dreamt  
 My footsteps yet would be upon thy streets  
 My thoughts were with thee, and thy name to me  
 Was as a spell to waken up the great  
 Who made thee great, and left behind the spell  
 To draw the pilgrim. In my heart I heard  
 The many voices speak that spoke to thee  
 In the far past, and all their echoes rang  
 From hill to hill of history. I became  
 Familiar with thy face though never seen,  
 And all my worship—as a lover dreams  
 And pictures to himself some dear, sweet face  
 To bend above his life—was sweeter thus.  
 Then, in the pauses of my daily toil,  
 In quiet moments when the village slept,  
 I was with thee; and in my nightly dreams  
 I walked the storied pavement of thy streets—  
 And now I am a citizen of thine.

## LARS ANDERSONICUS.

In September 1880, about a month before the poet left Kirkconnel for Edinburgh, to take up the duties of Sub-librarian in the University Library; his friend Mr Andrew Stewart, of Dundee, paid him a visit in his Dumfriesshire home. After a long ramble among the hills toward Wanlockhead, the two friends sat down beside a clear cool spring, to rest and smoke; and spent a sweet half-hour. The only sound that broke the stillness of this retreat was the mirth of the poet, cracking jokes, and perpetrating puns, upon his tired and jaded friend, as he lay limp and languid on the moss; and the poet finished up by deliberately composing and reciting this mock-heroic poem after the manner of Macaulay:—

THE great Lars Andersonicus,  
Who dwelleth in the South,  
Who hath the front of Grecian Jove  
And the heavy bearded mouth,  
He strode into his dwelling,  
That white-washed humble home  
That overlooks the Tiber,  
That rolls round seven-hilled Rome.  
And there he found a missive,  
Which, when he oped, did say—  
“Greetings, Lars Andersonicus,  
Taymanium comes your way.  
He comes as comes a victor,  
Who rides in triumph home,  
To pledge in red Falernian juice,  
The Romans and their Rome.  
So let the streets in gladness  
Put forth their best array,  
And let the Romans line each side  
Along the Appian way.”

The great Lars Andersonicus,  
A mighty oath he swore  
That he would greet Taymanium  
As he ne'er had been before;



So he donned his lordly toga,  
And with triumphant soul,  
Went forth with haughty royal stride  
Till he came to the Capitol.  
And then he cried, "O, Romans,  
Come hearken unto me,  
Greetings from great Taymanium  
To you and unto me.  
How shall we give him welcome,  
Who comes from far away?  
Step forth, thou clear-souled Capys,  
And let us hear thy say."

Forth stepped at once bold Capys;  
A light shone in his eye,  
And he swore by the gods that a Roman swears,  
As he raised his hand on high—  
"O, great Lars Andersonicus,  
Thus shall we greet thy friend,  
Let flags along the Sacred Way  
Be hung from end to end;  
And let the Vestal Virgins,  
Who watch the burning shrine,  
Twine a wreath of the glorious laurel  
From the hill of the Sacred Nine,  
And crown him like a victor  
Who for our Rome has bled,  
Then take him to the banquet,  
And let the wine be shed."

Then said Lars Andersonicus,  
"As thou say'st, so let it be."  
And he strode down the stairs of the Capitol  
With a heart that beat for glee.

O brave and high Taymanium,  
Right welcome shall ye be,

When ye sit beneath my roof-tree  
 And smoke a pipe with me.  
 Unto my whitewashed dwelling  
 What glory shall you lend,  
 The tribune of the people,  
 The dauntless "People's Friend."

Hurrah for the Roman matron  
 Who hath upon her knee  
 The sturdy brood that warms the heart  
 Of a Roman's wife to see.  
 Hurrah for her voice's music,  
 And her soft, dark, sparkling eye,  
 By the gods! if Andersonicus  
 Could get—get ——.

\* \* \* \* \*

Here the soaring wing of the poet seemed as if it had been shot through by some tender regret, and he came flop down to common earth, with all the fun knocked out of him, and no amount of persuasion on the part of his friend, would induce him to finish the stanza.

I WEARY TO-NIGHT, I WEARY.

I WEARY to-night, I weary,  
 I weary, I know not why,  
 And a sadness fills me slowly  
 As the twilight fills the sky.

I feel far down in my bosom  
 A shadow that haunts me still,  
 And strange and restless wishes,  
 That come and go at their will.

## I WEARY TO-NIGHT

I wander as clouds will wander,  
Ere the night and the storm come on;  
I start at the sound of gladness,  
And wish to be alone.

Then I think of a dream I cherished,  
Of a purpose that was crossed,  
And a far-off fading sweetness  
That my own dim life has lost.

A sweetness, as if of a vision  
Of a saint coming down from the skies,  
With her hands clasped over her bosom,  
And love in her dark, sweet eyes,

Of my life with its early promise,  
Which now to myself is seen,  
Like the covers of some old volume,  
With the title-page between.

So I weary, O, I weary,  
I weary, I know not why,  
And a sadness fills me slowly  
As the twilight fills the sky.

## THE NOONDAY REST.

At rest amid the flush of golden corn,  
When rest is short and sweet;  
At rest from toil begun at early morn  
By willing hands and feet.

Above, the sky, in all its wide expanse,  
Laughs with its deepest blue,  
And stray winds waking upward from their trance,  
Scarce stir a stalk or two.

## THE NOONDAY REST

How sweet such rest is to each working one!

That mother sitting there  
Suckles a tender babe but late begun  
This life so strange and fair.

And he, the father, looking down can feel  
A new strength in his arm,  
And life and toil in softer tones reveal  
A deeper sacred charm.

O weary ones that rise at labour's call!  
Toil on in hope and pain;  
A sure rest cometh when at evenfall  
Death stoops to reap his grain.

## THE HILLS AN' BURNS AT HAME.

Hoo cantie was I in my youth,  
Afore I ever thocht to range,  
Or leave my hame, an' be, in sooth,  
A weary pilgrim seeking change.  
O, little do we ken what turns  
Life sets afore us in oor track;  
An' noo, when life is wearin' dune,  
I fain wad turn an' wan'er back.

I want to see ance mair the hills  
Where every heicht an' howe is kent—  
The hills that I a laddie speiled,  
To spread the muir-burn on the bent.  
We saw Todholes tak' up the sign,  
The Knowe range answered back wi' pride,  
An' far across the Vale o' Nith  
The Cairn hills spread it far an' wide.



The Hills an' Burns at Hame

Hector Chalmers

THE HILLS AND BURNS AT HAME

I want to daun'er by the burns  
In which I paidled up an' doun,  
Or fished when, like a heaven on earth,  
Some glorious holiday cam' roun'.  
I want to see them ane an' a',  
To meet auld friends an' ha'e a crack,  
For noo, when life is wearin' dune,  
I fain wad turn an' wan'er back.

What need to tell that I have seen  
The Mississippi roll along;  
Have heard Niagara toss on high  
The thunder of his mighty song?  
Have seen Missouri, broad and deep,  
Roll worthy of its sounding name;  
Ah, still I fain wad wan'er back  
To see the wee bit burns at hame.

What though my home has been beside  
Huge mountains tumbled to the skies,  
That loomed far up amid the clouds  
To veil their heads from human eyes—  
Or where, like oceans, lakes spread out  
As wide as eye could range or see?  
But yet, when life is wearin' dune,  
The hills an' burns at hame for me!

Ay, we may wander far and wide  
When youth is high and hopes are fair,  
Nor cast one look behind to see  
The light of boyhood gleaming there.  
But press amid the throng, and join  
The rough, wild marching of our kind,  
Till, footsore with the weary way,  
We leave the ranks and lag behind.

## THE HILLS AND BURNS AT HAME

And then our dreams, that led us on,  
Take voice, and, in their murmurings,  
Whisper of other days and years,  
When life was rich with golden things.  
Then we in fancy see again  
The hills around our early home,  
And, as the vision grows, we feel  
No more the forward wish to roam.

An' will I turn an' wan'er back  
To where my life began, an' see  
Ance mair the frien's that I wad like  
To ha'e around me when I dee?  
For oh, I weary an' grow fain,  
Though I am gettin' auld an' lame,  
To see auld places ance again  
Beside the burns an' hills at hame.

## THE LANDLORD'S BEST.

*A Humorous Reading.*

A STRAPPIN', sonsie, weel-matched pair  
Were Jock Macree an' Maggie Blair,  
An' mony wusses, said an' thinkit,  
They had that nicht when they were linkit.  
An' on that day they baith were kirkit,  
The lasses sat fu' gleg an' smirkit;  
Though there was that upon their faces  
That fain wad swappit Maggie places.  
An' Jock looked unco gran' beside  
His bonnie, blushin', weel-faured bride,  
Whom he had vowed to love an' cherish—  
Alas! that siccan vows should perish—

THE LANDLORD'S BEST

For twenty times, an' twenty mair,  
When he was courtin' Maggie Blair,  
He swore, without ae chance o' blinkin',  
Ance Maggie his he'd stop the drinkin'.

For Jock—although I grieve to tell—  
When left owre muckle to himsel',  
Was jist a wee thing apt, if ony,  
O' gettin' fuddled wi' a crony;  
Could sing oor auld Scots sangs until  
The tears cam' happin' at their will.  
An' then the ither gill gaed roun',  
Until they felt it tak' their croun;  
Then nocht wad ser' them after that  
But "Willie brewed a peck o' maut,"  
And Jock wad rise to lead their singin',  
Till a' the hoose an' streets were ringin',  
"We are na fou we're no' that fou,"  
Then stagger hame to prove it true.

But a' sic wark cam' to a stan'  
When he took Maggie by the han';  
The whisky stoup an' dissipation  
Were noo for him a puir temptation.  
Nae mair at nicht, when sprees were on,  
An' a' the "Blue Bell" windows shone,  
Was Jock's voice heard amid the thrang  
Clear ringin' in an auld Scots sang,  
In place o' a' sic rant and noise  
He noo had calm domestic joys,  
Sat wi' his pipe in lordly pride,  
A monarch by his ain fireside.  
An' Maggie, tidy, neat, an' braw,  
The very life an' soul o' a',  
Beside him knittin' unco thrang,  
An' happy as the day was lang;



THE LANDLORD'S BEST

For she was ane that couldna sit  
An idle moment, but wad knit.

Alas! in spite o' a' love's pleadin',  
Jock left his sweet domestic Eden,  
For by degrees he slippit doon  
To see some neebors in the toon.  
Then ane wad cry—"Come, Jock, what's wrang?  
It's ages since I heard a sang.  
Come in, come in, an' ha'e a gill—  
A single glass can do nae ill;  
Maggie, though she may look fu' sour,  
Can surely spare ye for an hour."  
Jock thocht on Maggie a' her lane,  
The vows he made no' lang since gane;  
Shook his rouch heid—"I've in the pin,  
I canna gang," and then—gaed in.

That nicht Jock sang—"We are na fou,"  
Alas! he sang what wasna true.  
An' sae it cam' that mair an' mair  
The forenichts saw his empty chair;  
An' Maggie, unco wae to see't,  
Took mony a lang an' lanely greet,  
But ne'er gied Jock a bitter word,  
For a' the stories that she heard.  
He still was kin', although, by token,  
The vows he ance made a' were broken.  
Neebors cam' in to settle matters,  
An' Maggie listened to their clatters.  
Said ane, "Noo, Maggie, un'erstan'  
It's time ye took the upper han',  
Rage at him, whether late or sune,  
An' cast up a' the ills he's dune;  
My fegs, if I were in your place  
I'd set my mark upon his face.

THE LANDLORD'S BEST

Let my gudeman play siccan pranks,  
He kens what he wad get for thanks.  
The deaf side o' his head wad hear't,  
An' weel I ken for that he's fear't."  
Ithers spoke oot wi' bold assertion,  
An' a' to ae gran' en'—coercion.  
But Maggie loot them say their say,  
An', when they a' had gane away,  
After anither spell o' grievin',  
Sat doon, an' yokit to her weavin'.

Mony a sair, sair heart was hers  
To see Jock on the road that errs;  
The red upon her bonnie cheek  
Grew less, although she wadna speak.  
The glances o' her bonnie een  
Hadna the licht that ance was seen.  
O, Jock, man, look at their saft pleadin',  
An' turn back to your ain sweet Eden.  
In vain; Jock noo was far astray  
Frae Eden an' its happy day;  
Was oftener at the "Blue Bell" Inn  
Makin' his weekly wages spin;  
Singin', as only he could do—  
"We are na fou," an' gettin' fou.

A neebor, wha had seen for lang  
That things wi' her had a' gane wrang,  
Cam' in, an', when the twa were sittin'  
(Maggie as usual wi' her knittin'),  
Said, "Maggie, hear me for a wee,  
But dinna tak' it ill frae me.  
I ken that Jock, yer ain gudeman,  
Against ye never raised a han',  
But we maun mak' him stop the drinkin',  
An' here's the ootcome o' my thinkin'."

THE LANDLORD'S BEST

Fu' lang the twa were at their crack,  
An' mony a face did Maggie mak'.  
"Na, na, I couldna ha'e the face  
To do that: 'twad be oot o' place.  
Yet I wad work wi' a' my micht  
To keep Jock trig an' douce an' richt."  
"Then do but this," her neebor said,  
"An' I could maist lay doon my head  
He'd sooner jump owre Corsencon  
Than look the road the "Blue Bell's" on.  
The landlord will tak' up the plan,  
An' try to help us a' he can.  
Jist think; it's only ae half hour,  
An' after that Jock's in your power—  
A sober, decent man, the pride  
O' you an' a' the kintra side."  
Maggie thocht lang, an' deep, an' sair:  
"If I thocht Jock wad drink nae mair—  
I'll do't, I'll do't though a' the folk  
Should speak; it's for the gude o' Jock."  
"Aweel," her neebor said, "I'll pit  
The landlord up to what's on fit,  
An' let it be next Friday nicht,  
An' gudesake see ye do it richt."

The Friday nicht cam' duly roun',  
An' folk were busy in the toon,  
The "Blue Bell" was as thrang's a fair,  
An' Jock, ye needna doot, was there—  
The gill stoup had gane roun' to settle  
A' qualms an' pit him into fettle.  
An' there he sat—a happy man—  
A glass o' whisky in his han',  
For he had just sat doon frae singin'  
"We are na fou," an' a' was ringin';

THE LANDLORD'S BEST

When, bang! the door gaed wi' a clash,  
 An' in cam' Maggie wi' a dash,  
 Raxed oot her han', drew in a chair,  
 An' richt forenent him plumpit square;  
 Cried, "You that's nearest touch that bell."  
 An', when the landlord cam' himsel',  
 She gied her orders wi' the rest—  
 "A gill, an' see it's o' your best."  
 The drink cam' ben: she filled her gless,  
 No half, but to the brim nae less,  
 Then, haudin't up wi' smirkin' pride,  
 She lookit owre at Jock an' cried—  
 "Here's to ye, Jock, my man, ye see  
 What's gude for you is gude for me,  
 Here's to ye"—an' wi' that she drew  
 The gless up to her bonnie mou',  
 Cocked up her finger, drank it a',  
 Then gied her sonsie face a thraw.  
 "That's gude," cried Maggie; "to my min',  
 When ance it's owre, it's unco fine.  
 Nae wunner men drink, for, my sang,  
 Sic glesses warm the road they gang;  
 I'll ha'e anither—gude be thankit,"—  
 Then filled a second glass an' drank it.  
 But Jock! He sat upon the chair  
 The very picture o' despair;  
 His mooth fell doon, an' wide he gapit,  
 Though no' a single word he shapit.  
 The glass o' whisky in his han'  
 Cowpit, an' owre the table ran.  
 He glowred at Maggie, rubbed his een,  
 Then glowred again. What could it mean?  
 An' was that Maggie—surely no'?  
 An' yet it strack him like a blow.  
 He sat strecht up, as though his back  
 Had been o' airn, but never spak'.

THE LANDLORD'S BEST

"I wuss," cried Maggie, "I could sing,  
But gi'e that bell anither ring.  
Talkin's dry wark, an'—let me see—  
Half mutchkin? Ay, bring that to me,  
I'll pay my way as lang's I'm able"—  
An' banged a shillin' on the table.

Then Jock rose up wi' furious speed,  
His een maist startin' frae his heid,  
Sprang back, an' sent the coupit chair  
Wi' ae kick richt across the flair,  
Then, fu' o' shame, an' rage an' doot,  
Hung doon his heid and boltit oot.

For days Jock gaed aboot like ane  
Whase very heid is on the spin,  
While, noo an' then upon his face,  
A puzzled look wad tak' its place.  
Then he would stop an' scart his croon,  
Hotch up his shou'der an' look roun',  
Cry, as he gi'ed anither claw—  
"I canna un'erstan't ava!  
Three gills an' no' a preen the waur,  
Far less has garred me tak' the glaur.  
It coves the gowan, an' the mair  
I think the mair I rive my hair."

But aye the upshot o' his thinkin'  
Was, "What if Maggie tak's to drinkin' ?  
Maggie sae trig an' nice an' braw,  
Nae wife like her amang them a',  
An' tidy? Ye nicht tak', fu' fain,  
Your dinner aff the clean hearthstane.  
O, Jock, O, Jock, your a' to blame,  
But this ae nicht when I get hame

THE LANDLORD'S BEST

I'll pit my thinkin' into action,  
An' wi' her try to mak' a paction."

That nicht Jock sat, an' sat fu' lang,  
Till Maggie thocht some thing was wrang,  
For ae half-hour he never spoke,  
Nor raxed his pipe doon for a smoke,  
But aye he gi'ed anither shift,  
Till Maggie catched at last his drift,  
An' wi' a woman's tact an' wit,  
Resolved to draw him oot a bit:—  
"John I'm gaun doon the toon to see  
Some frien's o' mine an' crack awee;  
I'll no' be lang—rax me my shoon—  
An' dinna let the fire gang doon.  
I maist forgot, if I should meet  
Auld frien's o' yours upon the street,  
And should they stop and speer at me,  
I'll say ye're weel—and should I see  
The landlord ——"

Here Jock started up,  
Got Maggie's twa hands in his grup—  
"Maggie, sit doon an' hear me speak  
What I've been thinkin' a' this week,  
For God's sake let us stop this drink,  
An' never mair on whisky think.  
I'm ready ony time to sign  
The pledge, if your name gangs wi' mine."

Then Maggie hung her heid to screen  
The joy that danced within her een.  
But yet half-feared owre sunc to strike—  
"It's hard to gi'e up what I like,  
But if I thocht ye wad be true,  
An' swear to a' ye've said the noo,

THE LANDLORD'S BEST

I micht be coaxed to answer 'yes,'  
An' seal't this moment wi' a kiss."

"I swear," quo' Jock, "an' there's my han',  
O, Maggie, I'm a happy man,  
But if ye kened what awfu' doots  
I had since"—Maggie whispered, "Hoots!  
Let byganes be—they bring but grief,  
For noo we've turned anither leaf,  
An' there's your kiss—"

What mair was needin',  
To draw Jock back again to Eden?

Lang after that, ae nicht when Jock  
Was half-way through a glorious smoke,  
A puzzled look spread o'er his face,  
An', layin' his pipe upon the brace,  
He turned to Maggie, wha was sittin'  
As usual busy wi' her knittin',  
An' said, "Noo, Maggie, tell me richt,  
Hoo did ye stan' the drink that nicht?  
To me 'twad been an unco test—  
Hale three gills o' the landlord's best!"

"Aweel," quo' Maggie, "I've been thinkin',  
That since we baith ha'e stoppit drinkin',  
I'll own't—for noo it disna matter—  
IT WAS HIS BEST, JOHN—IT WAS WATER."

ERRATIC MUSINGS.

ALONE. For Jack has gone away,  
To hide his head in proofs and letters;  
And left me here to spend the day  
Inside, like many of my betters.

Outside the gusts of wind and rain  
 And whirling leaves are something frightful;  
 And, for a fellow who would fain  
 Go out, the prospect's not delightful.

Just at the window, where I sit,  
 I see a row of trees that mutter,  
 "You can't get out to stroll a bit—  
 You're better far behind the shutter."  
 I hear their speech, and, full of wrath  
 To see my wished-for projects stranding,  
 Leap up, then take a sudden path  
 To where I see the bookcase standing.

Insult on insult! Let me note,  
 Why, hang it! at the first stray venture,  
 Is Jerome's "Three Men in a Boat"—  
 I cannot make a fourth and enter.  
 What use to read in silly books,  
 Of skies with not a cloud remaining,  
 Of waving grass and shady nooks,  
 When all the time you hear it raining?

I'll try another. Worse and worse—  
 "Familiar Wild Flowers," in five volumes,  
 Enough to make a poet curse  
 In classic style "gods, men, and columns."  
 The very title conjures up  
 Sweet glens and hills all clad with heather,  
 And tiny glades where fairies sup,  
 And trip their minuets together!

The fairies! Are they still alive,  
 Those tender, little, sportive creatures,  
 Who in sweet flowers were wont to dive,  
 Or show from thence their happy features?



ERRATIC MUSINGS

Or when the moon hung broad and low,  
And when the dew was at its sweetest,  
Danced, all their little hearts aglow,  
To see which one would do it neatest.

Alas! I own with many a sigh  
This iron time's a bad adviser.  
The world has flung its playthings by—  
But, tell me, is it any wiser?  
Gone all those tender little things,  
And in their place are lots of knowledge,  
But knowledge has its frets and stings,  
And wonder dies when sent to college.

I wish they would come back again,  
Those merry, green-clad Lilliputians;  
That something else were in our brain  
Than scientific dry confusions;  
That all the world would go to sleep  
And dream again of early childhood,  
Of fairies, flowers, and things that steep  
Their lives in dew within the wildwood.

But vain such wish. This planet reels  
To some great purpose deep within it;  
And we have only faith in wheels,  
That roar and crash their mile a minute.  
Nay more, we have outdone the girth  
Puck talked about; above and under  
We belt a whisper round the earth  
And smile if any one should wonder.

If we do this, yet think it slow,  
The future must be still more braving;  
And with the wand of Prospero  
Compel far greater by its waving.

But I forget my present theme,  
 Which was, I think, of books and weather,  
 Somehow I dreamt, and, in that dream,  
 As usual jumbled things together.

Well, here I have another row—  
 I thought so, just the usual novels;  
 And here's a set that tell you how  
 Men rose to palaces from hovels.  
 Of course these books are kindly put,  
 And may be read as well as others;  
 But give me Thoreau's Walden hut,  
 And take your palace with its bothers.

Here, travels into distant lands—  
 Their very titles bring up pictures  
 Of rolling plains, and swarthy bands  
 Intent on predatory strictures.  
 I see them gay in paint and plume,  
 You call it picturesque and striking;  
 It may be all that you presume,  
 But—well, it does not suit my liking.

And yet there was—there was a time  
 Long years ago (I need not mention  
 How many) ere I thought of rhyme,  
 Or bored the muse with my attention.  
 I felt my head and bosom glow  
 With visions of the noble savage,  
 Made dreadful arrows for a bow,  
 And stalked about to slay or ravage.

My speech—to suit the life I led—  
 Was full of a'! the Red Man's phrases,  
 I spoke of gory scalps, and led  
 A band of braves through hidden places.

My face was painted red and blue;  
 All this of course was very shocking,  
 It lasted for a year or two,  
 And then I changed to "Leather-Stocking."

I put my bow and arrows past,  
 With feelings that I scarce could stifle,  
 But I grew half resigned at last,  
 When I had in their place a rifle.  
 I made it from a grand design,  
 A weapon of my own creation;  
 A little rough, but it was mine,  
 And shot well—in imagination.

I had my "happy hunting ground,"  
 A strip of wood, where, free from neighbours,  
 I strove for weeks within its bound  
 To mimic all that Trapper's labours.  
 I had my trophies rich and rare,  
 I hid them like some needy squatter;  
 But how they came, and what they were,  
 I cannot tell, nor does it matter.

For this, and many another mood  
 That came and took up steady lodgment,  
 I blame not Cooper, as I should,  
 Though looking back with sober judgment.  
 He filled my head and heart with men  
 Who had the open sky for cover;  
 The woods lay open to their ken,  
 And Nature—each was still her lover.

They laid their ear to mother earth,  
 They heard her great heart soundly beating;  
 The forests, thousand-voiced in mirth,  
 Waved their green arms and gave them greeting.

ERRATIC MUSINGS

They took that mood each season brings,  
And stood so close to Nature's being  
That she—she showed them deeper things,  
And they grew wiser by the seeing.

A sort of pagan life I grant,  
But still it was a life worth living;  
Each day but brought its simple want,  
And little that might cause misgiving.  
The scent of woods was all around;  
They lay down not exactly wealthy;  
But rose up strong of limb and sound,  
Firm hand, keen eye, and very healthy.

Now, this was finer far, you see,  
Than being cooped in roaring cities,  
Where each one lets the other be,  
And hurries on and no one pities.  
I sometimes think in all the strife,  
Our likes and dislikes, as at present,  
A strong dash of a wilder life  
Would be considered not unpleasant.

In vain. The world must have its way  
To mould and build each constitution;  
And so with us. No good can stay  
The silent wheels of evolution.  
There is no change but change. We grow  
From each to each, and slowly linking  
Ourselves to what it brings, though slow  
Reach higher planes of life and thinking.

But I have wandered from the track—  
A trick with bards whom thought immerses—  
But now I ought to hurry back  
And lift the thread of former verses.

ERRATIC MUSINGS

Digression is a fearful thing,  
One always ought to keep the highway;  
But somehow poets when they sing  
Are always sure to take a bye-way.

Books? That was it, and books that told  
Of men now sunk, as sinks a taper  
When night is closing round—but hold,  
There's sunshine falling on the paper.  
Thank heaven! At last the cloudy wall  
Is past; and now for one hour's walking,  
And just as well, for, after all,  
I may have bored you with my talking.

EDZELL WOODS.

THE trees that shadow Alton Hall  
Are sweet by night and day;  
The silver gleams that slip and change  
Along the rushing Tay,  
They come and go like winds, but still,  
Though each and all be rare,  
I turn my face to Edzell woods,  
Because my love is there.

O, Edzell woods are deep and green,  
And very sweet to me;  
The summer light lies golden bright  
On all the fields I see.  
Thy winds that wander by me speak  
Of yet a sweeter air—  
I turn my face to Edzell woods,  
Because my love is there.

EDZELL WOODS

She moves in happy, household ways,  
With gracious touch of hands;  
Her eyes are full of quiet love,  
And all its sweet commands.  
Then what to me is all I see,  
Though Alton Hall be fair,  
I turn my face to Edzell woods,  
Because my love is there.

SING A SANG TO THE BAIRNS.

O, MITHER, sing a sang to the bairns,  
When the nicht-fa' gathers them in;  
Wee Jamie oot at his elbows an' knees,  
An' Rab half-wat to the skin;  
Tam skelpin' aboot wi' his buits flung aff,  
An' loupin' wi' a' his nicht—  
O, mither, sing a sang to the bairns  
Ere they cuddle doon for the nicht.

O, croon them a lilt as they hunker roun'  
The fire fu' o' daffin' an' glee—  
When Jenny, wi' her wee doll in her lap,  
Lays her heid against your knee.  
She will lilt the same to her ain bit weans,  
When your heid is aneath the swaird,  
An' ye sleep fu' soun' wi' your kith an' kin,  
Where they lie in the auld kirkyaird.

An' Rab, an' Jamie, an' steerin' Tam,  
When they a' grow up to be men,  
They will wan'er to a' the airts o' the win'  
To fecht for their bread an' to fen'.

## SING A SANG TO THE BAIRNS

But aye in their heart, though the faught be sair,  
An' the warl' is no' lookin' richt,  
They will hear the lilts that ye sang langsyne  
Ere they cuddled doon for the nicht.

They are a' roun' your knee, an' their mirth an' glee  
Is unco sweet to hear,  
An' your heart fills up wi' a mither's pride  
As you turn to hide the tear.  
There are rough ways yet for their feet to gang,  
But, noo, let a' be bricht;  
Then sing them a lilt o' the sangs they like  
Ere they cuddle doon for the nicht.

## NO ROOM FOR THE POET.

Is there any room for the poet  
In this nineteenth century time—  
Room for the poet for singing  
His thoughts and his fancies in rhyme?

What could be heard of his music,  
Were it ever so noble and sweet,  
In the hurry of life and its battle,  
And the tramp and clangour of feet?

He has fallen on days that are evil,  
He that would harp on the strings,  
For the earth has grown harder and duller  
To the sound of the songs that he sings.

It hears, instead of the cadence  
That rises and sinks and falls,  
Like the love-notes, heard in the woodland,  
Of some lonely bird that calls;

## NO ROOM FOR THE POET

It hears the ring of the railway,  
The moan of the wind on the wire,  
The groan of the torture of monsters  
In the coils of the pythons of fire;

It sees the twining and twisting  
Of belts that glisten about  
The circle of wheel and of pulley  
Like the coils of serpents drawn out.

The ocean itself held downward,  
As a steed is held by the hand,  
To foam and divide into pathways,  
As a share turns the furrow on land.

It shakes as if smitten with terror,  
It is black with the terrible breath  
Of the things that men hammer and fashion  
To be lords of the kingdom of death.

It is naught then, this harping and piping,  
If it sounds it can only be heard  
As one hears in the lull of the tempest  
The lone low cry of a bird.

There is no room for the poet  
In this nineteenth century time,  
For the earth has grown up into manhood,  
And has turned its back upon rhyme.

## LIFE IN THE VILLAGE.

I STAND and look down on the village,  
With its little simple street,  
The summer winds come upward,  
They stir the grass at my feet.



I watch the restless children,  
They rush about at their play,  
And my heart stirs up with a sadness;  
So full of life are they.

Their mothers are busy with duties  
That the household has in store,  
And old men, dreaming of boyhood,  
They sit in the sun at the door.

Their eyes are misty with thinking,  
As the eyes of old men be,  
When they hear in the hush of the twilight  
The moan of the coming sea.

It is all so strange, but stranger  
Life ebbing to come again;  
For I stand in the old green churchyard  
With my feet on the dust of men.

### A DREAMER'S PARADISE.

*“Forget the snorting steam and piston stroke,  
Forget the spreading of the hideous town.”*  
—THE EARTHLY PARADISE.

YES, William Morris, it were well  
To listen to your quiet teaching,  
And for a few weeks breathe the spell  
That rises from your placid preaching.  
This endless hurry up and down  
Is getting quite a serious question;  
And what with worry and the town,  
We lose our livers and digestion.

A DREAMER'S PARADISE

What happy times were long ago,  
When people free from all dejection  
Lived at their ease, nor made a show,  
Nor bored themselves with introspection;  
But took life as it came, and thought  
That even winter could be sunny;  
Who did not care a single jot  
For racing after fame or money.

Sweet-lettered ease—ah, yes! for then  
One could sit down and write epistles,  
And give full freedom to the pen,  
And stick them full of puns and bristles.  
Or anything to raise a laugh,  
To fill out column after column,  
And breaking now and then from chaff,  
To show just that you could be solemn.

And fancy what sweet walks were theirs  
By wood and stream, and onward faring,  
Their talk would be of home affairs,  
And criticisms kind and sparing.  
They had not then our thirst for news,  
Nor cared to burn the midnight taper;  
They never sprang up to peruse  
The columns of the daily paper.

“Mine be a cot beside a rill,”  
Where books would be my only lodgers;  
(The first line's from another quill,  
So kindly put it down to Rogers).  
“Beside a rill”—the rill itself  
Would still its grassy banks be flouting,  
With here and there a rocky shelf,  
Suggestive of successful trouting.

Yes! that would be a pleasant thing—  
A cot, a rill, and, near, a garden,  
Where flowers could grow and blackbirds sing,  
And I could smoke my pet "church-warden."  
And, smoking, watch the spiral rings  
Go up, and in my dreaming fashion  
Philosophise on human things,  
And lead a life of quiet passion.

I sometimes think—but never mind,  
I'm open to your admonitions,  
This daily rubbing with one's kind,  
It does not sweeten dispositions.  
And so I think the wiser men  
Were those who took to rocky portals,  
And, hermit-like, from human ken  
Lived, keeping little touch with mortals.

And as for books; well, let me see,  
I'd have nice sets of those old fellows,  
Who, true to Nature, frank and free,  
Spoke out, and were not over zealous  
To change their desks to pulpits, so  
As to put in a gentler pleader,  
Nor ended tales of mirth or woe  
With fitting moral for the reader.

Ah, how unlike our present age;  
Its rush and fret and toil incessant,  
And certain novels all the rage,  
Whose purpose is not very pleasant.  
The page is sickly, and a stain  
Rests on the leaves to those who read them;  
Far better to go back again  
To those old fellows, for we need them.

A DREAMER'S PARADISE

The winds of heaven blow fresh and fair  
Within and all about their stories;  
They laughed (a gift that's getting rare),  
And humour lent its ready chorus.  
A healthy laughter-loving set,  
They left this spinning planet wiser,  
In books that keep their spirit yet,  
As gold has value for the miser.

*Mais en evant*; the cot and rill,  
My dreams and all my other wishes,  
Are with me still to fly at will,  
Like worthy Sancho Panza's dishes,  
Whose doctor stood his friend, you see,  
His ills and stomach aches to banish;  
Fate takes the doctor's place with me,  
She speaks, and all my dreamings vanish.

Well, well; so be it, after all  
We do not lose so much enjoyment;  
And building castles great and small  
Is certainly a nice employment.  
And though our dreams may come to mock,  
Accept the good they bring or leave us,  
And this will keep the piston stroke  
From having any sound to grieve us.

“DREW THE WRONG LEVER!”

THIS was what the pointsman said,  
With both hands at his throbbing head:—

“I drew the wrong lever standing here  
And the danger signals stood at clear;

“DREW THE WRONG LEVER”

“But before I could draw it back again  
On came the fast express, and then—

“There came a roar and a crash that shook  
This cabin-floor, but I could not look

“At the wreck, for I knew the dead would peer  
With strange dull eyes at their murderer here.”

“Drew the wrong lever?” “Yes, I say!  
Go, tell my wife, and—take me away!”

That was what the pointsman said,  
With both hands at his throbbing head.

O ye of this nineteenth century time,  
Who hold low dividends as a crime,

Listen. So long as a twelve-hours' strain  
Rests like a load of lead on the brain,

With its ringing of bells and rolling of wheels,  
Drawing of levers until one feels

The hands grow numb with a nerveless touch,  
And the handles shake and slip in the clutch,

So long will ye have pointsmen to say—  
“Drew the wrong lever! take me away!”

FAITH ARMING THE CHRISTIAN WARRIOR.

A Picture, by Sir Noël Paton, R.S.A., LL.D.

“Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.”—Ephesians vi.13.

“ARM! for the foe is near,” and as she spake  
A glory clung around her brow, and made  
A radiance of her hair, while in her eyes  
The perfect faith of love and trust was seen  
Like sunlight in a lake when all the winds  
Have laid themselves to sleep among the hills.

"Arm!" and she knelt, and round his loins she drew  
 A mystic belt and, as its jewelled clasp  
 Tightened, the warrior felt a sudden strength  
 Shoot through his limbs, and all the blood begin  
 To rush along each vein, till every nerve  
 And sinew felt its force. As, at the thought  
 Of mighty conflicts waged and evils crushed,  
 He drew himself to fullest height, and turned  
 A high stern face and eager eyes to where  
 The smoke of battle mixed with sullen flame  
 Rose waving in the wind, as if some god  
 Robed in black clouds had taken wings of fire  
 And waited for the fight. On his young cheek  
 Fell the wild glow of that dread battle-fire,  
 And, waving downward, ran a long thin edge  
 Of crimson over gleaming shoulder plates,  
 And curves of deftly fashioned steel, until  
 He stood as in a sudden light, and cried:  
 "The storm of peril nears, and I must go."

And, pausing, she, a hand upon the hilt,  
 Looked upward to him, and her eyes grew sweet  
 With that high love whose birth is not of earth  
 But from above—with that deep trust in Him  
 Who came and dwelt with men and made Himself  
 The Word to gather spirits. In his face  
 She looked but for a moment, then her voice  
 Came still and low, yet steadfast with that strength  
 Which cannot fail, she knowing Him, and all  
 The glory flashing on her inner soul.  
 "Thou goest forth to fight, but hast thou thought  
 Not for one hour this battle is, nor lasts  
 A summer afternoon, whose coming eve  
 Will bid thee sheathe thy sword and lay aside  
 The garb of steel and gleaming helm, to take  
 Thy rest among the shadows, or to dream

Of lighter things that, rising in thy heart,  
 May clog the soul's grand purpose, till thou grow'st  
 Yet weaker, and that moment comes in which,  
 Thine armour off, the foe slips in, and thou,  
 Half springing up, art slain? But wilt thou hear  
 Before thou goest what thou hast to fight  
 Amid the flame of battle seen afar?"

And he, still keeping his keen eyes upon  
 The smoking drift of battle mixed with fire  
 And clang of strange dread voices, made reply:  
 "Yea, let me hear what foes I may expect  
 To rush against me in the fight—to fall;  
 For lo, my fingers clinging to the hilt  
 Of this sharp sword thou girdest on, I feel  
 A purpose touch my soul as if with fire  
 Caught from the heart of Him who names Himself  
 The God of Battles, and I do not fear.  
 Speak, yea, and as thou speakest—know I wait."

Then, as she drew the belt to firmer clasp  
 About him, lo, she spake, and all her tones  
 Took higher range, and sounded as a voice  
 A saint hears when his thoughts are up in heaven.  
 "Thou goest forth to hurl thyself against  
 The ranks of Error, and stern Doubt that stands  
 With visor down, and all from helm to heel  
 Harnessed in serpent scales, and deadly lance  
 In rest for every comer. He will be  
 A stubborn foeman, for they fight to death  
 Who test the ring of truth. But other foes  
 Will come against thee mightier far than he;  
 And Ignorance, who wallows in gross aims,  
 Will only lift his head to see thee pass  
 And sneer a scornful greeting. All that springs  
 From the dark depths within thy kind; the sins

Of blood and inclination; the desires  
 That never seek to lift themselves above  
 The level of the eyes—a thousand such,  
 That lurk like tigers by half-hidden springs  
 To seize their panting victim. These will come  
 And prowl with fierce malignant eyes to catch  
 A gap within thy mail at which to launch  
 Their arrows tipped with poison; and thy blood,  
 Stung with the venom, will rise up and war  
 Against thee, till thou wagest with thyself  
 An inner battle with no potency left  
 To quell such conflict. Woe to him who wars  
 And cannot win; for all the outward foes  
 I spoke of can be fought and smitten down;  
 But when thou fightest with thyself, then comes  
 The great death-wrestle of the soul, in which  
 Thou must at once be victor or go down.  
 Say, wilt thou still go forth and, knowing all,  
 Stand in the evil day beheld afar,  
 Nor, fighting, quail to come against thyself?"

And he, with fearless eyes still turned to where  
 The smoke of carnage drifted, as the mist  
 Unfolds itself and creeps along the hill,  
 Made answer, and his voice rose calm and high,  
 And sounded like a sudden trumpet call  
 When men are waiting for it with their hearts  
 Hushed at the front of battle coming on:—

"Yea, I go forth to fight, and will not fear;  
 For having donned this armour forged of God,  
 And this keen sword within my hand to smite  
 The foes that compass me, I do not fear.  
 For, as I look between me and the flame,  
 I see a vision of a hill whereon  
 Temples and statues glisten, and around



## FAITH ARMING THE CHRISTIAN WARRIOR

A throng of haughty forms whose eyes are keen  
With hate and wonder. In the midst is one  
Who towers above them with his hands upraised.  
In pitying admonition. On his brow  
The west has woven a crown of light. He speaks,  
And all who hear are mute, although his voice  
Is as word-lightning smiting down their gods.  
He stands alone and in his Master's name  
Hurls forth the gospel of the cross, and strikes  
Error to right and left without one fear;  
For who shall fear who knows he speaks the truth?  
The strength that made him thus is strength for all,  
And so I shrink not from the life-long fight,  
Nor death whose touch will only make me stoop  
To enter through the gateway of the grave,  
That I may wear upon my brow the wreath  
Whose leaves are burst in heaven."

With that he seized  
The golden shield, and, striking one strong arm  
Throughout its clasps, upraised it. As he stood  
The glory glowing round the head of Faith  
Shone also on his brow and face, and made  
A light as of a victor. And he went.

## GRASMERE.

FROM hill-encircled Windermere,  
And all through happy Ambleside,  
Where every nook and spot were dear,  
A gentle Spirit was my guide.

He put his hand within my own,  
I felt his footsteps keep with mine;

GRASMERE

He spoke and in his voice's tone  
Were whispers that were half-divine.  
He spoke of one—an early friend—  
Who led me into perfect calm,  
And brought me to that noble end  
Where all this earth is like a psalm.  
He showed me wisdom in the touch  
Of mute things which we daily pass;  
I blushed with shame to find how much  
Was in a single blade of grass.  
He took me to the grand old hills  
That bare their foreheads to the sky;  
We wandered by the singing rills  
And felt their inmost melody.  
And when he found that I could see  
In his own light, stream, hill, and glen,  
He touched my breast and said to me,  
“Now share thy love for these with men.”  
Then walked I forth in quiet wise,  
Communing as I went along,  
Nor heard, far off, the breakers rise  
And dash on rocks of other song.  
But as I wandered on, and youth  
Shot the full pulses into play,  
Alas! I lost the higher truth,  
And bent the knee to other sway.  
Then faded from the hills a calm,  
A splendour from the sunset's gleam;  
A simple note from some grand psalm  
Was heard no more within the stream.  
I could not look behind the flower,  
Nor see deft fingers weaving there

GRASMERE

The name of that mysterious power  
That breathes in earth and sky and air.

I lost that music, soft and clear,  
The inner harmony of things  
Which sea and sky and winds can hear,  
And know that it divinely sings.

I lost that love of calm, the bliss  
Of quiet things that cannot fail,  
And, in my heart, instead of this,  
Were ever echoes of the rail.

I heard on either side the clang  
Of engines clad in smoke and glare—  
The rush of wheels, the wires that sang  
And quivered in the heedless air.

What wonder that within this strife,  
Along this narrow land of steam,  
I could not keep my double life,  
But lost, alas! my higher dream;

That daily dimming with the years,  
And fading from beyond my reach,  
I saw through mists of hidden tears  
Its dying sunset without speech:

That only in some gleams of calm  
I heard, as from a distant hill,  
An echo of the Master's psalm,  
A sound of that old worship still.

And now the Master came again;  
He put his hand within my own;  
He spoke: his voice was one of pain,  
And there was sadness in its tone.

He laid his finger on my heart,  
And at its touch the pulses stood—

- “ Ah, thou and I are far apart,  
For thou hast fever in thy blood.
- “ It beats not as of old when wed  
To that sweet calm of early prime;  
Thou strugglest, with no lights ahead,  
And in the currents of thy time.
- “ I feel the throb of wilder deeds,  
Of thoughts that, like the knights of old,  
Strike the hung shields of all the creeds,  
Lay lance in rest and, over bold,
- “ Fight, only to be overcome;  
And, stricken, hear their death-doom knelled,  
And know each bitter wound was from  
The splinters of the lance they held.
- “ All this has been, and may be still;  
But in thy vain and blinded dream  
Was there no meaning in the hill,  
No liquid glory in the stream?
- “ No converse with the humbler things  
To soothe thee into quiet rest,  
When nature, like a mother, sings  
And lays thee kindly to her breast? ”
- “ Yea, master, ” thus I made reply,  
“ I come, for having stood without  
The pale of thy sweet worship, I  
Am stronger, having had my doubt.
- “ For like to him who still will yearn  
The face of some old friend to see,  
So from false lights that sank I turn  
And joy to find no change in thee.
- “ And thus am I like one who sees  
Some instruments he fain would try;

GRASMERE

He runs his fingers o'er the keys  
To waken some old melody.

“ But finding as he touches still  
That all are mute save only one,  
He strikes that chord with simple skill,  
And wonders why it keeps its tone.

“ Thus in my heart, though mute and dim,  
Was still that worship of the past,  
To waken into one grand hymn  
When lifted up and touched at last.

“ And thou once more art by my side;  
I fling the storms of youth away,  
And turn my back upon that pride  
Which led my eager feet astray.

“ I catch the visions of those years;  
They yet are mine. My bosom fills,  
And in my heart are joys and tears  
Like lights and shadows on the hills.

“ And that new meaning—ever old—  
Again is on the waving tree;  
It breathes from sunset's dying gold,  
And touches everything I see.

“ What joy for me to walk once more  
And hear thy gentle footsteps fall,  
To pass with thee through Nature's door,  
And see the Father of us all.

“ To know and feel in some dim wise,  
That is not clear to mortal ken,  
The calm yet splendid destinies  
The ages slowly shape for men;

“ And, best of all, to understand  
That death, who makes this life to cease,

GRASMERE

But takes that other by the hand,  
And leads it into perfect peace:

“To know the purpose of the leaves  
That come with spring to clothe the trees,  
And why the grass in silence weaves  
A deeper green on graves like these.”

For now we stood among the dead,  
And each green mound beside my feet  
Seemed unto some high purpose wed,  
And that high purpose, as was meet,

Mingled with everything I saw,  
Stream, lake, and tree, and distant hill;  
The sunshine had a tender law  
It was a pleasure to fulfil.

And ever, as the truth of this  
Grew up within me, I could hear  
The Spirit whisper words of bliss  
And comfort in my eager ear.

His hand was firmer on my own,  
His voice grew sweet and sweeter still;  
A something in its very tone  
Made stronger all my weaker will.

It ceased, like summer winds that pass,  
And I was left alone to stand,  
Watching the sunshine on the grass,  
And yearning for that Spirit's hand.

The Rothay sang; there came to me  
One murmur of its gentlest wave;  
The sunshine fell on grass and tree,  
And at my feet was Wordsworth's grave.