

CONNELBUSH

And up and down, with rush and roar,
Trains crash with seven-leagued stride;
Ah me, this moaning human shore
Must have its iron tide.

But here from lonely Connelbush
All life has fled away,
And nought is heard but winds that rush
And sport with its decay.

No welcome at the door to wake
The silence into mirth;
No sound but that of winds that shake
The weeds upon the hearth.

Farewell, but as I turn, my thought
Perforce is backward set,
And shadows all this lonely cot
With mists of vain regret.

Alas for human dreams that leave,
Instead of after-glow,
Cold memories that pine and grieve,
And sadden as we go.

Till, battling with the years, at last
They sink into decay,
And lie a ruin in the past,
Like Connelbush to-day.

A VOICE IS IN THE WIND TO-DAY.

A VOICE is in the wind to-day,
And sweet its breath is blowing;
O, welcome summer wind I say,
From where the flowers are growing.

A VOICE IS IN THE WIND TO-DAY

I feel the smell of meadows sweet,
With many blossoms showing,
As if the touch of fairy feet,
Set all their beauty glowing.

I know each spot where violets peep,
I bless them in their growing;
But O their breath is sweet to keep,
When summer winds are blowing.

“What makes them smell so sweet to-day?
Say wind, and good betide thee;”
And the wind came like a child from play,
And laughed and stood beside me.

The wind said, “I am from the hill,
With scents of blossom laden;
But I, to make them sweeter still,
In passing kissed a maiden.”

THE SORROW OF THE SEA.

A DAY of fading light upon the sea;
Of sea-birds winging to their rocky caves;
And ever, with its monotone to me,
The sorrow of the waves.

They leap and lash among the rocks and sands,
White-lipped, as with a guilty secret tossed,
Forever feeling with their foamy hands
For something they have lost.

Far out, and swaying in a sweet unrest,
A boat or two against the light are seen,
Dipping their sides within the liquid breast
Of waters dark and green.

THE SORROW OF THE SEA

And farther still, where sea and sky have kissed,
There falls as if from heaven's own threshold, light
Upon faint hills that, half-enswathed in mist,
Wait for the coming night.

But still, though all this life and motion meet,
My thoughts are wingless and lie dead in me,
Or dimly stir to answer, at my feet,
The sorrow of the sea.

ONE STAR ALONE.

ONE star alone from the blue sky
Looks down upon the simple stream,
With such a quiet, loving eye,
That I perforce must dream.

And so I wish, if my rough brow
Should seam and furrow with the strife,
The star that leaps and kindles now
Might light my path of life.

That I, when weary with the fight,
And wishing for a rest at length,
Might look and draw from out its light
A comfort and a strength.

And gird my soul with stronger powers
To fight the lower thought and deed,
That agitate this life of ours
As winds will shake the reed.

But still in moods of calmer tone,
I feel a longing to retire,
And watch the broad world all alone,
And plod, but not aspire.

ONE STAR ALONE

For I have thought, and still I think,
'Tis wiser that our lives should be
Like this fair stream within its brink,
So quiet, so calm and free.

Or like that star above, which beams
For ever down in holy mirth,
Than wed the heart to idle dreams,
Whose goal is still the earth.

O let me spend my little hour
In all the calm that Nature gives—
Profuse in plenitude of dower
Where each mute being lives.

For in the hush of her sweet face,
The soul will burst its earth-forged bands,
And wing its flight to purer space
In other purer lands.

Therefore it comes that still I love
The dim, sweet twilight, and the light
That comes, like whispers, from above,
And shines on me to-night.

A SOUND IS IN MY EAR TO-DAY.

A SOUND is in my ear to-day,
And playful fancies with it throng;
It follows me and all the way
It haunts me like a snatch of song.

I know not what it all may mean,
I dimly ask myself, and say,
“Something that thou hast heard or seen,
In some forgotten summer day.

“ A summer day when paradise
Lay near to earth as near could be,
When all the hills were red with fire,
And heather humming with the bee.”

And it is this; an upland gleam
Of sunshine such as warms and thrills;
The tinkle of a quiet stream,
That broke the stillness of the hills.

THE LIFE - BOAT.

THE sea, as by some inner demon stung,
Hath burst its glassy prison, and on high
A thousand waves in black despair are flung
In foaming supplication to the sky.

They yawn with fangs half-hidden by the spray,
And hiss and roar with madness in their breath,
And, blind with hate, for ever seek their prey,
To drag it downward to their gulfs of death.

The winds are in high holiday; they shear
Their way through spray and cloud, and high and
strong
Put forth their mighty strength until they bear
The billows downward as they roar along.

Between the waves there seethes a mimic hell,
Gaping with foam-flecked maw to swallow all—
For who can quench such thirst? or weave a spell
Over the anger of their carnival?

Lo, how they toss, as if from hand to hand,
That ship far out where help seems all in vain,
And thin white faces turning to the land
Whose only hope is to despair again.

THE LIFE-BOAT

Their ship is but a plaything for the sea,
A speck for winds to buffet and to toss—
Who will put out! although his life should be
Within his hand, to fling away like dross?

“Out with the life-boat! Willing hands are here,
Stout muscles, ay, and stouter hearts to fight,
Give way, give way, and with a voice of cheer,
We must save lives before the fall of night.”

Between them and the ship that staggers on,
The waves like liquid phalanxes of steel
Rise up to bar their way with hiss and moan,
Till the staunch life-boat shakes from deck to keel.

But still she cleaves her way through stormy rifts;
In front the swooping sea-gulls show her path,
Until she seems a speck that sinks and lifts
Amid a thousand howling gulfs of wrath.

And those who stand in horror on the shore,
Watching the hell of shaking darkness there,
Hear their hearts throb an answer to its roar,
Now touching hope and now again despair.

Will they come back? The moments lengthen out,
Until they seem like hours to those who wait.
At last that far-off speck has put about;
But who can say what yet shall be its fate?

The storm, as if unconscious of defeat,
Re-marshals all its seething ranks of waves,
And, led by shrieking winds with foam-hid feet,
Swoops on the staunch true hearts, and roars and
raves.

But battling still with every wave that strives
To bear them back with rushing surge and sweep,
They gain the shore at last with human lives
Wrenched from the white teeth of the tigerish deep.

THE LIFE-BOAT

Brave hearts beneath rough bosoms! Well we knew
How ye would rise to God and Christ's own plan,
And stand heroic in the tasks ye do.
Grand is the sea, but grander still is man!

WILD FLOWERS FROM ALLOWAY AND DOON.

No book to-night; but let me sit
And watch the firelight change and flit,
And let me think of other lays
Than those that shake our modern days.
Outside, the tread of passing feet
Along the unsympathetic street
Is naught to me; I sit and hear
Far other music in my ear,
That, keeping perfect time and tune,
Whispers of Alloway and Doon.

The scent of withered flowers has brought
A fresher atmosphere of thought,
In which I make a realm, and see
A fairer world unfold to me;
For grew they not upon that spot
Of sacred soil that loses naught
Of sanctity by all the years
That come and pass like human fears?
They grew beneath the light of June,
And blossomed on the banks of Doon.

The waving woods are rich with green,
And sweet the Doon flows on between;
The winds tread light upon the grass,
That shakes with joy to feel them pass;

The sky, in its expanse of blue,
 Has but a single cloud or two;
 The lark, in raptures clear and long,
 Shakes out his little soul in song,
 But far above his notes, I hear
 Another song within my ear
 Rich, soft, and sweet, and deep by turns—
 The quick, wild passion-throbs of Burns.

Ah! were it not that he has flung
 A sunshine by the songs he sung
 On fields and woods of "Bonnie Doon,"
 These simple flowers had been a boon
 Less dear to me; but since they grew
 On sacred spots which once he knew,
 They breathe, though crushed and shorn of bloom,
 To-night within this lonely room,
 Such perfumes, that to me prolong
 The passionate sweetness of his song.
 The glory of an early death
 Was his; and the immortal wreath
 Was wrought round brows that had not felt
 The furrows that are roughly dealt
 To age; nor had the heart grown cold
 With haunting fears that, taking hold,
 Cast shadows downward from their wing,
 Until we doubt the songs we sing.
 But his was lighter doom of pain,
 To pass in youth, and to remain
 For ever fair and fresh and young,
 Encircled by the youth he sung.

And so to me these simple flowers
 Have sent through all my dreaming hours
 His songs again, which, when a boy,
 Made day and night a double joy.

Nor did they sink and die away
 When manhood came with sterner day,
 But still amid the jar and strife,
 The rush and clang of railway life,
 They rose up, and at all their words
 I felt my spirit's inner chords
 Thrill with their old sweet touch, as now,
 Though middle manhood shades my brow;
 For though I hear the tread of feet
 Along the unsympathetic street,
 And all the city's din to-night,
 My heart warms with that old delight,
 In which I sit and, dreaming, hear
 Singing to all the inner ear,
 Rich, clear, and soft, and sweet by turns,
 The deep, wild passion-throbs of Burns.

A BLACKBIRD'S NEST.

(In the month of May, 1884, might be seen, at the Forth Bridge Works, South Queensferry, a blackbird sitting on her nest, which was built on an elevated projecting beam in the engineering shed, in close proximity to the driving-shed, and immediately above a powerful steam-engine.)

SHE sits upon her nest all day,
 Secure amid the toiling din
 Of serpent belts that coil and play,
 And, moaning, ever twist and spin.
 What cares she for the noise and whirr
 Of clanking hammers sounding near?
 A mother's heart has lifted her
 Beyond a single touch of fear.
 Beneath her, throbbing anvils shout,
 And lift their voice with ringing peal,
 While engines groan and toss about
 Their tentacles of gleaming steel.

A BLACKBIRD'S NEST

Around her, plates of metal, smote
And beat upon by clutch and strain,
Take shape beneath the grasp of thought—
The mute Napoleon of the brain.

She careth in nowisè for this,
But, as an anxious mother should,
Dreams of a certain coming bliss—
The rearing of her callow brood.

Thou little rebel, thus to fly
The summer shadows of the trees,
The sunlight of the gracious sky,
The tender toying of the breeze.

What made thee leave thy leafy home,
The deep hid shelter of the tree,
The sounds of wind and stream, and come
To where all sounds are strange to thee?

Thou wilt not answer anything;
Thy thoughts from these are far away;
Five little globes beneath thy wing,
Are all thou thinkest on to-day.

ONE RED ROSE.

ONE red rose you took from my hand—
O the light was sweet that summer day—
One red rose from her queenly band,
That was far too sweet to pine away.

“Come I will pluck thee,” I said to the rose—
O the light was sweet that summer day—
“And give thee to one who is pure, God knows,
To wear thee though blooming from May to May.”

ONE RED ROSE

I plucked the rose with a leaf or two—

O the light was sweet that summer day—
Rose bloom on the breast of one who is true,
Whatever her sisters may hint or say.

Then the rose made answer, "What if I fade"—

O the light was sweet that summer day—
"Fade on the breast on which I am laid,
And my beams grow dark in their sad decay."

Then I thus made answer and said to the rose—

O the light was sweet that summer day—
"Die, and the breath of your incense grows
A memory sweet, that shall last for aye."

THE POET'S VISION.

THE poet looks on human things,
And, as his mood is, so he sings,
And lets his fingers touch the strings.

And as they stray the chords along,
He gives the passionate lover song,
And greater strength to help the strong.

He lifts the weak; with flashing eye,
He launches bolts at tyranny
That slowly withers ere it die.

When war looms like a red eclipse,
He grasps with whitening finger tips
The sword—the bugle at his lips.

And when 'mid wheeling drifts of smoke,
The charging front ranks interlock,
His is the spirit in each stroke.

THE POET'S VISION

He sees beneath the veil of things,
The undercurrent as it swings;
The touch that heals, the prick that stings.

The inward wound that inward bleeds,
The doubts that undermine our creeds,
Our holiest faiths, our highest needs.

The madness and the dull despair,
The bitter canker everywhere,
He sees and builds a beacon there.

He sees through life, he sees afar,
And at the end death as a bar,
And stopping there he lights a star.

For unto him is freely given
The fire that flashed, and fell from heaven,
To make him strive as he has striven.

MARY MORRISON.

THAT nicht the dancin' schule was dune,
We had a ball to end the spree;
An' Willie Stewart played the tune,
An' cockit up fu' gleg his ee.
But dim that nicht an' a' I see,
An' gane that time o' mirth an' fun;
But ae thing still comes back to me,
I danced wi' Mary Morrison.

Noo, could it be an auld love sang
The Master-spirit left us here
Was in my head an' workin' thrang—
I hadna time to think or spier?

MARY MORRISON

It took me a' my time to steer
Through couples till the dance was dune;
But aye a voice was in my ear,
Ye've danced wi' Mary Morrison.

What lang dreich years ha'e fled since then,
What things ha'e come, what things ha'e gane,
And some are in a foreign lan',
Some sleep aneath their ain heid stane.
The lads an' lasses unco fain
Are far an' wide as leaves are blown,
An' here I'm sittin' a' my lane,
But where is Mary Morrison?

THE AUTUMN LEAF.

AH, dear, we part for ever,
You with a longing sigh,
I with a heart that never
Can thrill with beauty nigh.
I know that time discloses
Brief joy and longer grief;
To you the time of roses
To me the autumn leaf.

I take the leaf and wear it,
With all the pain it brings;
The bitter winds they tear it
As to my brow it clings.
But time, the still offender,
Gives of his gifts the chief;
To you the rose's splendour,
To me the autumn leaf.

THE AUTUMN LEAF

A little time for mating
Is all the gods allow,
A little room for hating
And then they veil the brow.
They give where love reposes
A space as swift and brief
To you the time of roses
To me the autumn leaf.

A DREAM OF YARROW.

UPON the rails I work away,
The rails sae slim an' narrow,
But in my heart this summer day
I hear the rush o' Yarrow.

I hum the sang, the auld, auld sang,
That thrills us to the marrow,
An' as I sing I lie in thocht
Upon the Banks o' Yarrow.

What care I for the ringin' clank
O' rail, an' key, an' hammer;
The engines roarin' up an' doon,
Wi' shriek an' dusty clamour?

Up Mail an' doon Express may pass
Wi' roar, an' shriek, an' rattle,
An' smoke an' steam may whirl about,
As over some wild battle;

But I have still my double life
To cheer me in my sorrow,
An' so within my heart to-day
I hear the rush o' Yarrow.

A DREAM OF YARROW

I see the birks wave in the win',
The simmer sunshine glintin',
The flowers that keek frae oot each nook,
Wi' a' their gowden tintin';

I hear the birds amang the trees
Sing with a touch of sorrow,
For still I think that as they sing,
They ken they lilt in Yarrow.

O, sweet love-sang o' auld, auld days,
What hauntin' magic hovers
Around each simple note an' line,
An' speaks of love and lovers!

Hush, who is this frae Tinnis' Bank,
That comes with wail an' weeping,
An' kneels to clasp within her arms
A form that still seems sleeping?

Her hair hings doon upon his face—
(He never heeds his marrow);
Her pale lips redden wi' the blood
O' him that lies in Yarrow.

Wha can it be that lifts his heid,
An' kisses his lips thorough?
But Mary Scott, the boast o' a',
The bonnie Flower o' Yarrow.

The very birks they ken her name,
They sigh it in their sorrow;
It's in the win' frae Yarrow braes;
It's in the rush o' Yarrow.

O, sweet love-sang o' auld, auld days,
What hauntin' magic hovers
Around each simple note an' line,
An' speaks of love an' lovers!

A DREAM OF YARROW

That as I work an' toil away
Upon the rails sae narrow,
I hear far down within my heart
The soughin' o' the Yarrow.

But as I dream within my ear,
The engines as they thunder
Along the gleaming of the rail
Shriek out in smoky wonder:—

“What! in this time of rail and wheel,
When brain meets brain to marrow,
Can there still be a single fool
Who thinks and dreams of Yarrow?”

Ah, yes, I whisper to myself,
The music that has bound us,
Has tones that will not chord with those
The past has flung around us.

The solo of the sounding wire,
The smoky engine's whistle,
Have drowned the sound of Yarrow stream,
The green trees' waving rustle.

But I have still my double life
To cheer me in my sorrow,
An' so within my heart to-day
I hear the rush o' Yarrow.

IN YARROW.

A DREAM of youth has grown to fruit,
Though years it was in blossom;
It lay, like touch of summer light,
Far down within my bosom:

IN YARROW

It led me on from hope to hope,
 Made rainbows of each morrow,
And now my heart has had its wish—
 I stood to-day in Yarrow.

And as I stood, my old sweet dreams
 Look back their long-lost brightness;
My boyhood came, and in my heart
 Rose up a summer lightness.
I heard faint echoes of far song
 Grow rich and deep, and borrow
The low, sweet tones of early years—
 I stood to-day in Yarrow.

O, dreams of youth, dreamed long ago,
 When every hour was pleasure!
O, hopes that came when Hope was high,
 Nor niggard of her treasure!—
Ye came to-day, and, as of old,
 I could not find your marrow;
Ye made my heart grow warm with tears—
 I stood to-day in Yarrow.

That touch of sorrow when our youth
 Was in its phase of sadness,
For which no speech was on the lip
 To frame its gentle madness,
Rests on each hill I saw to-day,
 Till I was left with only
That pleasure which is almost pain,
 The sense of being lonely.

The haunting sense of love, that now
 Beats with a feebler pinion
Above the shattered domes that once
 Soared high in his dominion,

IN YARROW

And in the air of all that time,
Nor joy nor sadness wholly,
Seem all to mix and melt away
In pleasing melancholy.

Why should it be that, as we dream,
A tender song of passion,
Of lovers loving long ago
In the old Border fashion,
Should touch and hallow every spot,
Until its presence thorough
Is in the very grass that throbs
With thoughts of love and Yarrow?

We know not; we can only deem
The heart lives in the story,
And gives to stream and hill around
A lover's tearful glory,
Until it bears us back to feel
The light of that far morrow
That touched the ridge on Tinnis hill,
Then fell on winding Yarrow.

Ah, not on Yarrow stream alone
Fell that most tender feeling,
But like a light from out a light,
An inmost charm revealing,
It lay, and lies on vale and hill,
On waters in their flowing;
And only can the heart discern
The source of its bestowing.

Yes! we may walk by Yarrow stream
With speech, and song, and laughter,
But still far down a sadness sleeps,
To wake and follow after.

IN YARROW

And soft regrets that come and go,
The light and shade of sorrow,
Are with me still, that I may know
I stood to-day in Yarrow.

JOE SIEG.

WHO are the heroes we hail to-day,
And circle their brows with wreaths of bay?
Is it the warrior back again,
To be girt by throngs of his fellowmen?
The statesman fighting in keen debate
For the laws that will make his country great?
Or the poet, whose spirit in his song
Withers like fire the front of wrong?
Yes, these are heroes on whom we may call,
But a greater still is behind them all.
Who? And we shout, with a ringing cheer,
"Joe Sieg, the railway engineer,
"Who did his duty and never thought
He did any more than a driver ought.
Look at Sieg, I say, as he stands
With the levers clucked in his oily hands,
And hearing naught but the grind of the wheel
On the clanking rail underneath his heel;
Or, lighting his pipe for a whiff or two,
Yet looking ahead as drivers do.
Now, any one seeing him thus would have said,
With a very doubtful shake of the head:—

JOE SIEG

“ Poor stuff after all out of which to plan
Your hero when action calls for the man.”

So you would think, but listen and hear
The story of Sieg, the engineer.

Down the Pennsylvanian line,
In the light of an afternoon's sunshine,
Came Sieg with a train of cars behind,
And hundreds of lives that were his to mind.

Little thought he of danger near
As he watched for signals set at clear.

If he thought at all, and that thought could be said,
As he stood on the footplate looking ahead,

It was this: to do what a driver could do—
Run sharp to his time, nor be overdue.

So along the metals in smoke and glare,
With Sieg at his post by the levers there.

Engine and cars like a whirlwind tore
Till, just as the stoker threw open the door

Of the furnace, at once through each black flue came
The quick back-draught, bringing with it the flame

That, scorching with lightning fingers of pain,
Drove Sieg and his stoker back in the train.

Back they went, bearing all the brunt
Of the fiery tongues that were hissing in front.

They caught at the cars in their wild desire,
That in less than a moment were muffled in fire.

The engine like some wild steed that is free,
Shot ahead with a shriek of defiant glee.

Behind were hundreds of lives in a tomb
That was hot with the breath of their awful doom.

JOE SIEG

To leap from the train would be certain death,
To stay would be food for the flame's wild breath.

Now was the time for your hero to plan;
The hour had come, and Sieg was the man.

Not a moment he stood, for at once he saw
His duty before him, and that was law.

Not a single thought of himself came near
To shake his grand brave spirit with fear.

Only there rose, like a flash, in his eye,
As in those when the last stern moment is nigh,

A look that would do all that duty could claim,
And with one wild rush Sieg was into the flame.

The red tongues quivered and clutched at him;
They tore the flesh from his arm and limb;

They wove, like scarlet demons, between
The engine and him a fiery screen.

But he fought his way to his terrible fate
Till he felt his feet touch the tender plate.

Then, blind with the flame and its scorching breath,
And weak from his terrible struggle with death,

He groped for the levers, clutched them at length,
And, with one wild effort of failing strength,

'Mid the hissing of fire and the engine's roar,
Threw off the steam, and could do no more.

When the engine at last was brought to a stand,
Not a life was lost out of all that band.

No life, did I say? Alas! there was one,
But not till his duty was nobly done.

For, back in the tender, silent and grim,
Blackened and scalded in body and limb,

JOE SIEG

Lay Sieg, who had without aid, and alone,
Saved hundreds of lives and lost his own.

That is the story, plain and clear,
Of Sieg, the railway engineer.

Honour to him, and no stint of praise
From the best of hearts in these modern days.

Honour to Sieg! I say, and hail
This last Jim Bludso of the rail,

Who did his duty, and never thought
He did any more than a driver ought."

BANNOCKBURN.

I HEARD beneath my feet the clear sharp ring
Of grinding rail and wheel,
I felt, as on we sped with rush and swing,
The carriage sway and reel.

Outside, the metals on the other track
Like two thin lights were seen;
Ahead the signals, on a ground of black,
Glimmered red, white, and green.

I saw from windows, as if hung in air,
'Mid handles gleaming white,
Pointsmen that clutched and drew the levers there,
And set the points aright.

At times from out the dark there roared and crashed,
With sudden whistle blast,
An engine, and a gleaming head-light flashed
A moment, then shot past;

BANNOCKBURN

But not until I saw, as in a land
Misty with whirling steam,
Driver and stoker on the footplate stand
Ghost-like as in a dream.

Then all my thoughts began to wander out
To meet the march of Time,
With all his triumph poets rave about
And prophesy in rhyme.

The higher man, the broader laws to be;
The life of larger powers,
A furlong farther from the moaning sea
Of what to-day is ours.

Till, fraught with wonder at such Atlas-toil,
Wherever I might turn,
A voice said, "We are passing sacred soil,
The Field of Bannockburn."

"The Field of Bannockburn!" that name to me
Came like a spell of might;
I rose and put the window down, to see
That glorious spot by night.

Ahead, the dark, as in a sudden breeze
Went swaying up and down;
Behind, but faint and dim, by twos and threes,
The lights of Stirling town.

To right and left I shot an eager glance;
A heavy murky wall
Rose up, and spread a drear and cold expanse
Of darkness over all:

Not over all; for, when the stoker drew
The furnace doors apart,
A shaft of light rose upward, and shot through
The clouds like some huge dart.

BANNOCKBURN

Then I drew back, but as I took my seat
My former dream was gone;
The iron music underneath my feet
Sang with another tone.

The roar of wheel on rail had now become
One long continuous tread
Of thirty thousand men by trump and drum
To battle sternly led.

The engine's whistle was the trumpet shout,
The mighty battle cry,
Calling on men to sternly face about
And for their country die.

My blood was up. I saw the standard shake
Its folds upon the breeze,
And men from out the heavy columns break,
And fall upon their knees.

I saw the glitter of an axe on high,
And, keen to overwhelm,
Flash like a sudden bolt from out the sky,
And crush a shining helm;

A war-steed, rearing with his nostrils burst,
And eye-balls gleaming white,
Rush from beneath his falling rider, first
Fruit of the coming fight;

Then rolling onward full of death and doom,
A flood of chivalry,
Led on by streaming flags that rose like spume
Thrown from a roaring sea;

A billowy sea of steeds and riders grim
Mailed to the very lips—
Each one the bearer of some doom, like him
In the Apocalypse.

BANNOCKBURN

A sound of cutting hoofs that mar and smite
The turf; a long deep roar,
As if a muffled ocean smote by night
Upon an unseen shore!

From right to left with trumpet blast and blare,
A gleam of English steel
Sweeping on thirty thousand Scotsmen there,
On fire from head to heel!

On, on they came. At last they reach the pits,
A quiver and a shock
Breaks through the front rank, as a river splits
Upon a stubborn rock.

Then with one shout that quivered with its wrath
Our Scottish lions leapt,
And, like a torrent from its mountain path,
Down on the foe they swept.

A clash of sword and spear, of shield on shield,
The flash of eye to eye,
Wherein was but one thought, to keep the field,
Or, losing it, to die!

So went the storm of battle, fever red,
From thinning rank to rank;
The careless earth beneath the heaps of dead
Their life-blood slowly drank.

A waver through the English hosts, and then,
Like some retreating sea,
They fled, and, fleeing, left their heaps of slain,
And Scotland once more free.

Hark! that long shout from thousands as they yearn
To make their hearts as one,
That shout has made this Field of Bannockburn
Another Marathon!

BANNOCKBURN

I wake up from my dream. I hear no more
The battle shout prevail,
Nor underneath my feet the rush and roar
Of wheels upon the rail.

Far other music now is mine again;
The battle clangours cease,
With all the wiser years that proffer men
The white results of peace.

For lo! I hear on either side of me
The busy tramp of feet,
And, like a lower lane of stars, I see
The lights of Princes Street.

CAMERON'S STONE.

A PILGRIM of the wilds to-day,
I lie by Cameron's stone,
And let my fancy roam and play,
And take sweet flights alone.

Air's Moss lies stretching out its bound,
All wild and weird to see;
And all the silence round and round
Falls like a spell on me.

From Wellwood's low and distant vale,
By fits a sudden wind
Comes upward with a weary wail,
That still no rest can find.

The heath-fowl wing their rapid flight,
The sailing curlew screams,
And on Cairntable's distant height
A speck of sunshine gleams.

CAMERON'S STONE

But here I lie and dream and brood,
By Cameron's simple stone,
With all the soul of solitude
In converse with my own.

O, sacred spot whereon I rest!
The heather, with its bloom,
Seems conscious that its purple crest
Is on a martyr's tomb.

For here stern men in one small band
Set foot upon the sod,
And with red swords within their hand
Stood up for faith and God.

But that dread time has fled away,
As sinks a flooded stream,
And will not come again to-day,
Except within a dream.

Down drops the mist upon the moss,
As if God from on high
Had flung His winding sheet round those
Whose hour was come to die.

Yet stern and firm they stood like men
Who in the spirit knew
That, though the mist was all around,
God's face was gleaming through.

And hark, like incense rising up,
To deepen all the calm,
The voice of Hebrew David yet
Within the grand old psalm.

And far across the moss it floats,
Low, plaintive, wild, and sweet—
The music of the soul to God
That rolls around His feet;

CAMERON'S STONE

The heath-fowl stop their flight to hear,
The curlews cease to scream,
And Nature listens all the while
As if in one wide dream.

The wailing wind sinks down, and like
A chidden thing is mute;
The very heather seems to feel
The red dew at its root;

Ay, ere another hour be past,
The red dew will be seen,
And with its purple stain the heath
And make a darker green.

But still the glorious psalm goes forth,
And fills the earth and sky,
Like some wild threnody for men
To sing before they die.

Roll on, thou melody of God,
And, wafted by the wind,
Take up to heaven the hearts of those
Whose souls will come behind.

The psalm has died away, but hush!
A deeper sound is heard,
At which rough cheeks flush up, and hearts
Grow strangely touched and stirred.

It is the voice of Cameron
That rises upward now—
I tell thee there is nought on earth
Can blanch that fearless brow.

Mark ye the Bible in his hand,
He holds it with such might
That, as he lifts it up on high,
The finger tips grow white—

CAMERON'S STONE

God's truth is graven on his heart
As if by living fire,
He quails not, though each moment brings
The wild, fierce troopers nigher;

The very moss beneath his feet
Becomes as solid stone,
Whereon he stands erect to brave
The world's worst wrath alone.

Talk not to me of noble deeds,
When thou hast in thy land
A Covenanter on the hill,
The Bible in his hand.

O, grandest manhood yet on earth!
The dim far sunken time
Comes back again until we stand
With angels in our prime.

O, failing one whose faith unfixed
With every movement sways,
Look back, and in thy spirit kneel
With Cameron as he prays.

Hush! far across the moss there comes
The sudden neigh of steed,
As the rough trooper reins him in,
And checks his hasty speed.

The clank of scabbard, too, on heel,
The voice of high command,
That seems an echo warrant come
To capture all the band.

And Cameron heard that sound, nor paled,
But raised his hand on high—
"My God, be near to us this day,
And teach us how to die."

Then, turning to his band, he said,
" The Bibles to your breast;
The hour is come in which your faith
Must stand the last dread test.

" Unsheath your swords and fling at once
The useless sheaths away,
The Bible is no shield 'gainst those
Who come to kill and slay.

" Come, Hamilton, lift up thy head,
Unbend that gloomy brow;
I tell thee, man, the crown of heaven
Is half upon it now.

" I know it. In a dream last night
Heaven's doors were opened wide;
I saw myself before the Throne,
And eight were by my side.

" I knew them. Each had on his brow
The martyr's diadem—
Ay, Paterson, thou well mayest look,
For thou wert one of them.

" Dick, Fowler, Gray, and Gemmel, too,
Stood in that mighty light,
And where each blood spot had been on
That place grew wondrous bright.

" Then, lo! methought the same sweet psalm
That we have sung this hour
Rose up and rolled through heaven's court
A miracle of power.

" It ceased; and, kneeling down, I felt
Laid on me ere I wist,
Soft as a summer's mid-day wind,
The mighty palm of Christ.

CAMERON'S STONE

“ I tell thee Watson, when I woke,
That touch was glowing there;
I could not sleep, but rose in awe,
And passed the night in prayer.

“ I prayed, and all the weight of earth
Fell from me like a clod,
My very soul went out, and rose
Half way to heaven and God.

“ And all this day that touch of heaven
Is on my head and brow;
It is the nail-pierced hand of Christ,
I feel it even now.

“ It burns and glows to strengthen me
In this one hour so grim,
Nor will He take it off until
I pass to stand by Him.

“ Enough. Gird up your loins who stand
By Cameron's side to-day;
Shame on us if we shrink and let
The props of faith give way!

“ Lo, in the coming time, they yet
Will point it out to men,
When God Himself set down His foot
On moor and in the glen.

“ ‘ Here,’ they will say, ‘ our fellows stood
Girt in their glorious faith,
And with the psalm upon their lips
Went up to God through death.’

“ In that time mighty iron things
Will bound be into yoke,
And make their pathway through these hags
Half hid in fire and smoke.

“ But now—we stand like sentinels
 Within the waning night,
 To seal with blood the law that gives
 Our kindred wider right.

“ Then let them these poor hands cut off,
 And nail them up to view,
 So be it that they point to Heaven,
 I care not what they do.

“ Lift up this head upon a spike,
 Though but a clayey clod
 It still may seem a finger-post
 To point the way to God.”

Yes, noble Cameron, speak thou on,
 And nerve thy little band;
 The sword is not one space too soon
 Within their strong right hand.

For lo, as if the taint of hell
 Were in the moorland calm,
 There rises up with shout and oath
 The devil's godless psalm—

And leaping curses smite the air,
 And shouts come thick and fast,
 As on they rush upon the band
 Still faithful to the last.

But, hark, “ For God and Covenant,”—
 That glorious battle cry,
 Hear how it peals from out the heart,
 And strikes against the sky.

Yea, let the horde of Satan come—
 They come to feel and see
 How strong within the sight of God
 His faithful few can be.

They come with sudden plunge and shock,
 The foremost but to reel—
 By heavens! Earlshall shrinks back
 At Covenanters' steel!

His eye fills up with deeper thirst,
 His brow takes darker hue—
 "The black fiend seize these singing knaves,
 They fight like devils too."

Ay, double thrice that band, and they
 Would tame thy troopers' pride,
 And show how Scotsmen fight for God
 Upon the mountain side—

But back they rush like wolves on sheep;
 Hear Cameron's voice again—
 "Lord, take the ripe unto Thyself,
 And let the green remain."

Thou glorious one! fight on, nor faint—
 The buckler of the Lord
 Must surely be before the breast
 When faith takes up the sword.

Dick, Gray, and Gemmel by his side,
 Strike out with dripping glaive;
 At each firm stroke of their right hand
 A trooper finds his grave.

The God of Jacob sees them fight,
 The Mighty One who stands
 And holds the earth and seas within
 The hollow of His hands.

The Lord of Hosts He will not turn
 From us His face to-day,
 Though swift and strong on every side
 The devil comes to slay.

Back, Cameron, back! man, see you not
 Brave Hamilton is down?

"Yea, said I not that brow of his
 Felt heaven's golden crown?

"And, Watson, too, stretched at my feet,
 With bloody cheek and brow;
 If there be truth in dreams, how bright
 Must be his raiment now!

"And Michael, he has fallen too,
 That Christ his wounds may bind;
 Come, Paterson, stand thou by me,
 We will not lag behind."

O, well the mist upon the moss
 May darkly settle down,
 And hide the struggle yet to be
 Ere Cameron wins the crown;

For in its folds the fight goes on,
 Swift blow on blow is dealt—
 Steel rings against blue steel, and the
 Death-grips of men are felt.

The shout, "For God and Covenant,"
 Still rings against the sky,
 While for each Covenanter dead
 Three troopers by him lie.

"Curse on that knave," hissed Earlshall,
 And darker grew his frown,
 "What, will that braggart fear us all?
 Press on and cut him down."

Now, Cameron, by thy faith in God,
 Take with no coward hand
 The crown of martyrdom, and head
 In heaven thy sainted band.

CAMERON'S STONE

Think on thy dream last night, and feel
Once more within the mist
Upon thy head, as though thou wert
A child, the hand of Christ.

Ay, let me catch that eye of thine
That, flashing, sees afar
The heavens unfold and show the throne
By which thy fellows are.

The crown at last! he sinks, my God!
The very moorland calls
Up to the misty sky above
That noble Cameron falls.

He falls, but not within his blood,
Upon the mossy sod,
He falls into the arms of Christ
That lift him up to God.

DEAD FLOWERS.

THOSE simple daisies which you view,
Last year, when summer winds did wave,
And clouds were white with sunshine, grew
Upon the Ettrick Shepherd's grave.

But not of him they speak, nor draw
My thoughts back to that early time
When, rapt in that one dream, he saw
The shadows lift from fairy clime.

Nor yet of Ettrick, as it goes
To join the Yarrow's haunting tone,
That each may murmur as it flows
A music something like his own.

Nor even of Saint Mary's Lake,
 Amid those hills from which he drew
 The legendary past, to wake
 Its far-off melodies anew.

No; not of these I think, though each
 Is rich in spells of magic song;
 These daisies touch a chord to which
 All sadder thoughts of death belong.

And so I turn, and for a space
 Within the sacred Past I stand,
 To feel the sunshine of a face,
 The kindly pressure of a hand.

All just the same as when she* gave
 These dead flowers as a welcome thing;
 Alas! and now upon her grave
 The grass is thinking of the spring.

It seems but as a day since then—
 How slow, yet swift, the years have sped—
 And here, beside the streets of men,
 She slumbers with the holy dead.

She should have lain among the hills,
 In some old churchyard, where each sound
 Is of the wind, the tinkling rills,
 And cry of lonely things around;

Or where old ballads grew to life,
 Far back within the shadowy years,
 That sang of rugged Border strife,
 Or passions born of love and tears.

*Jean Logan Watson, author of "Bygone Days in Our Village," "Round the Grange Farm," and other books full of quaint simplicity and freshness, and breathing from every page the delightful personality of the writer. Her sudden death was deeply felt by a large circle of friends, and has left a blank that can never be filled. She died 7th October, 1885, and sleeps in the Grange Cemetery, Edinburgh.—A. A.

DEAD FLOWERS

For, loyal to their old-world chords,
She felt her heart in unison
With all their rich but simple words,
That took new music from her own.

True woman of the faithful heart,
And kindly as the summer air;
A nature such as could impart
Its genial presence everywhere.

In her the friend was friend indeed;
A larger sense of sympathy,
That overstepped the pales of creed,
Drew her to all in charity.

And now this death that waits for each,
An unseen shade by all, has come;
The Scottish music of her speech,
So sweet, is now for ever dumb.

So pass the leal ones of this earth,
To leave us with a holier claim;
To touch us with their spirit-birth,
And whisper they are still the same.

These simple flowers of withered hue,
Last year when summer winds did wave,
Were plucked by her because they grew
Upon the Ettrick Shepherd's grave.

This year, when summer pours her light,
And daisies are to beauty blown,
Some hands will pluck their blossoms white,
Because they grow upon her own.

PATRICK LAING.

THE deid sleep soun' in the auld kirkyaird,
At the fit o' the hills sae steep;
They dream sweet dreams aneath the swaird,
An' lang an' still is their sleep.

The whaup comes doon wi' an eerie cry,
An' the peesweep flaps a' day,
But they canna wauken the deid that lie
At rest in their shroods o' clay.

The grass grows lang an' waves at the heid
An' fit o' each sunk thruch-stane,
"Oh, waes me," it sighs, "for the faithfu' deid
That canna come back again."

Then the win's tak' it up an' they cry to me,
As I lie on the grassy swaird,
"We ha'e ane that kent hoo to live an' dee,
And he sleeps in the auld kirkyaird."

For when hate like a clud hung owre the lan',
For the faith that his faithers knew,
He took to the hills, wi' the sword in his han',
To fecht for the gude an' true.

An' when the storm o' his life grew still
They laid him doon to his rest,
In the auld kirkyaird at the fit o' the hill,
Wi' the green swaird on his breast,

An' what though nae stane can be seen at his heid,
There is Ane wha dwalls abune,
That kens o' his grave where the grasses wave,
Wi' its kindly heart within.

An' when at the last the trumpet blast
Shall bid the heavens be bared,
Then God will min' o' that ae leal heart
That sleeps in the auld kirkyaird.

THE BRIG O' GLENAIRLIE.

I DREAM this nicht, an' my thochts gae back
To that happy time sae early,
When we twa stood in the simmer licht
On the narrow brig o' Glenairlie.
The mavis was thrang in the Eliock wuds,
An' O, he pipit rarely;
But sweeter than a', love sang to us twa,
On the narrow brig o' Glenairlie.

The Nith ran doon wi' a happy soun',
By the hazel bushes hingin',
Then slippit into a pool to hear
The rich, deep mavis-singin'.
The lilt that he sang in the Eliock wuds
Beat a' the ithers fairly;
But sweeter than a', love sang to us twa,
On the narrow brig o' Glenairlie.

The Nith still rins wi' the same low soun',
By the hazel bushes hingin';
The mavis still lilt in the Eliock wuds ,
But we dinna heed his singin'.
But what wad we gie to hear ance mair
The sang we miss sae sairly;
That sweeter than a', love sang to us twa,
That day on the brig o' Glenairlie.

THE HILLS REMAIN.

THE hills remain; they lift their brows
Against the splendour of the skies;
The dawn a paler crimson grows,
Each night the purple sunlight dies.

THE HILLS REMAIN

The sea still rolls to Homer's song,
The clouds re-shape themselves and flow;
The voices of the wind are strong,
They come and pass unseen, and go.

Spring with a new life round her feet,
A thousand buds to shape are blown;
And Summer with her perfect heat,
Completing all she smiles upon.

Autumn that bends her drooping brow,
And weaves dead leaves within her hair;
And Winter underneath the bough,
With all his snowflakes resting there.

The streams still flash from hill and glen,
They reach the rivers and are one;
They moan to reach the sea, as when
The Memnon murmured to the sun.

These still remain, but we, alas,
Who watch the changes day by day—
This doom is on us that we pass,
We only go a little way.

THE PASTOR'S POOL.

I STOOD in the summer evening
By the side of the Pastor's Pool;
Above, the manse in the woodland
Lay hid in the shadows cool.

The Nith ran on with a murmur
That was soft and sweet to the ear,
For the streams that we heard in childhood
Are the streams that we always hear.

THE PASTOR'S POOL

Beside me the gray-haired pastor
Stood; and the light from the west
Fell down on his head like a blessing
Ere the sun sank into his rest.

His voice was low and gentle,
And the light in his kindly eye
Was that which was touching the river,
The field, the wood, and the sky.

And round by the dear old churchyard,
Where the dead sleep night and day,
From the single street of the village
Came the voices of children at play.

We heard their shouts of laughter
Take the air so sweet and still,
And ever above in the sunlight
Was the churchyard on the hill.

Then a sadness came over the pastor,
And a silence between us lay;
For he too was busy thinking
As he heard the children play.

Was he thinking of one who had vanished
And gone to his early rest,
When life and the dreams of manhood
Were stirring within his breast;

Who, full of the promise and eager
For the life that lay before,
Grew weary, and voice and footstep
Were heard in the manse no more?

Ah, yes; for the mists of a sorrow
Rose up in his kindly eyes,
And their glance grew dim, as the twilight
Takes the light from out the skies.

THE PASTOR'S POOL

Then his voice grew softer and softer,
For his talk was of solemn things,—
Of this life with its lights and shadows,
And death with dust on his wings;
Of the struggle and battle onward
With weary stumbling tread,
Our eyes on the dim sad future,
And our feet on the graves of the dead;
Of the thoughts that rise upward within us
And fly to the dim to be,
As the rivers that rising inland
Forever rush to the sea.
But over all in his converse,
In his voice's rise and fall,
Was the light that Hope has kindled
Round the shores of death for us all.
And still as he talked that evening,
The sunset sank away,
While round by the dear old churchyard
Came the voices of children at play.
Ah, often here in the city,
When weary of all the street,
My thoughts fly back to the woodland
And the manse in its shadows sweet.
Then again I stand for a moment,
In the light of a waking dream;
The gray-haired pastor beside me,
And at our feet the stream:
All just as we stood that evening,
When the west was soft and red;
And again I see the sunshine
Like a blessing upon his head.



The Pastor's Pool

From a Photograph