

# MODERN SCOTTISH POETS

*WITH BIOGRAPHICAL AND  
CRITICAL NOTICES.*



BRECHIN :  
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## P R E F A C E .

**D**OES Nature, when she denies to the age a royal poet—king by right of mighty genius—concede the gift in another form, diffusing the poetic art in lesser minds? While it must be admitted that there is much true and genuine poetry floating about amongst us, it cannot be said that there is at present any great poet who is known to, and reaches the hearts of the masses. The *Literary World*, in reviewing a *batch* of poets, recently said—“A grotesque fancy suggests itself, and will not away, as we glance over the scores and scores of volumes, all published under the heading of poetry. It is simply impossible that so many authors should be great poets. Does Nature grant, instead of one colossal statue, resplendent in golden purity, that the fine gold shall be beaten thin, and thus become the inferior possession of the multitude? We do not attempt to answer the quaint fancy, but one thing is certain—much of the poetry of the present day is doubtless pure gold, though beaten out, often to attenuation.” Popular poetry has been compared to the wild rose, the stock out of which the richer garden roses are grown. We suspect that it must be the minor poetry of England that is here referred to. The *Glasgow Herald*, commenting on the remarks of a writer on the subject of the dearth of English ballads, who could not understand how it has come about that English cultivated poetry is so rich when the wild stock is so poor, remarks that “the Scotch Lowlands, peopled by substantially the same race as that which inhabits England, have been prolific in peasant poets, but the Scotch peasantry have for centuries been educated, whereas the English peasantry are to this day, for the most part, sunk in ignorance. The portions of Scotland in which education has been most widely diffused are precisely those which have produced the largest number of working-class poets; and it may also be noted that the counties distinguished for

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their religious fervour, and which are flowered with the tombs of the Covenanters, have also been the most tuneful. In the West Country, for example, there is hardly a village that has not produced its bard ; Paisley has been likened to an aviary of singing birds ; and in the land of Wallace, Bruce, and Burns,

No brook may pass along  
Or hillock rise, without its song."

It does seem singular that the wild rose of song, which blooms so freely in rugged Scotland, is rarely to be met with in the garden of England. While superior education, and independent thought and action, which have been so long the heritage of Scotchmen, may in some measure account for the greater number of song writers here as compared with England, we believe that poets, like other gifted actors, are to the manner born. And no doubt such inspiring natural surroundings as rugged hills, swift flowing rivers, and brawling streams, inspire her sons.

Many think poetry earns its title chiefly through a literary skill in stringing musical words to musical cadence, producing a soothing effect upon ear, which many consider sufficient charm without any suggestion of noble or pathetic thought. We like to see the combination of the artist and the poet—the inspirational idea being the centre, around which is thrown the robe of a delicate and musical wording. In every poem the thought should be first, while the artistic feeling suggests appropriate expression. Much has been of late written on the subject of the position poetry occupies in the Arts.

Imagination is the spiritual eye, and if a poem fail to kindle it, though it may charm the senses or the intellect, it cannot touch the soul ; and poetry which does not touch the soul is, it is needless to say, of quality below the highest. "The plastic Arts," says Stendhall, "appeal to the imagination through the senses, poetry to the senses of imagination." And this is at once the chief difference between poetry and all the other Arts, and the secret of poetry's superiority. Yet the outward sensuous picture which painting, for example, presents is infinitely more satisfying to the senses than anything to which poetry can attain ; but the undercurrent of spirituality, the ideal intellectual beauty, which it is the aim of

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all true art to reveal, this is the domain in which poetry soars supreme, while painting toils after her with earth-laden wings. Principal Shairp, in reference to the power of poetic sentiment, recently said that, "in the movements of man's being, the first and deepest thing is the sentiment which possesses him, the emotional and moral atmosphere which he breathes. The causes which ultimately determine what this atmosphere shall be are too hidden, too manifold and complex, for us to grasp, but among the human agents which produce them none are more powerful than great poets.

Poets are the rulers of men's spirits more than the philosophers, whether mental or physical. For the reasoned thought of the philosopher appeals only to the intellect, and does not flood the spirit; the great poet touches a deeper part of us than the mere philosopher ever reaches, for he is a philosopher and something more—a master of thought, but it is inspired thought, thought filled and made alive with emotion. He makes his appeal, not to the intellect alone, but to all that part of man's being in which lie the springs of life.

We sometimes feel inclined to think that the hope of being a poet animates more human breasts than any other aspiration. We see people of all ages, of all ranks, of all degrees of education, of all qualities of mental power, possessed by an irrepressible desire to express their thoughts in verse, when the truth is the thoughts are either not worth expression, or, if they are, they would be better stated in sober prose. It is fortunate that many of those who at one period of their lives felt inclined to "rhyme" were never placed in circumstances favourable to the fulfilment of their desires. Readers generally would not be losers, and it would seem, according to the testimony of Robert Browning, that the embryo "poets" themselves have been the gainers. Writing to a contemporary a correspondent tells that when a boy he received half-a-crown with which he bought a small book. The possession of this treasure he determined to commemorate in a "copy of verses," in which the following lines occur:—

I bought it at Mister Cusson's,  
And it was picked out of dozens.

The lines tickled the fancy of his father so much that he showed them to everybody who came to the house. Being

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shy and sensitive, this used to make the writer cry with vexation. The result was that he determined never to write any more verses. "Meeting Robert Browning," he continues, "about a year ago I mentioned this to him, ending with, 'probably I also might have been a poet, if I had not been thus cruelly nipped in the bud.' He turned round with a bland smile, and replied, 'Ah, my friend, be very, very thankful to those who nipped you in the bud; you don't know what they have saved you from.'"

It is an oft-repeated fact that the Scottish mind has a tendency to develop its overflowing tenderness and earnest passionateness in lyrical strains of simple beauty, which no literature and no age of the world have surpassed. It has a quaintness and a grace, an elegant simplicity, and an affectionate tenderness which are peculiarly its own. The influence James I. exercised upon Scottish song was strong and lasting, and he has been recognised as the father of Scottish melody, although Scottish music was little known to the world until Allan Ramsay, in the year 1724, collected the melodies of his country in his "Tea-Table Miscellany." He, however, gave little account of them, and Dr Robert Chambers tells us that "the Scottish people are more proud of their songs and music than of any other branch of literature, and they can tell very little regarding the origin and early history of these endeared national treasures." If Burns created no new taste among his countrymen, he developed, extended, and improved that which he found already existing. The beauty of Scottish song is its truth and simplicity, and Burns as well as his compeers and successors always appealed to the heart—expressing their feelings in the pithy language of real emotion, and it appears that the kind of literary talent most in request at present is that of writing songs suitable to music. Our leading musicians are anxious to get hold of verses that are capable of being set to ballad tunes. We often find that the best poetry is the least susceptible of being wedded to music, and it must be remembered that the songs of Burns were in most cases written expressly to the airs to which they are sung. In the case of songs—as, indeed, in many other cases—genius is a disturbing element, and a delicate vein of sentiment or fancy is, so far as the composer

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is concerned, in advance of imaginative or creative gifts.

Much of our modern poetry is not only good in form and wording, but it has also the ring of inspiration—as natural as the song of the bird or the ripple of the stream. Our poets always cherish a warm sympathy for the history of their country and its noble traditions. In our second and third series in particular we give several examples of Scotchmen, who, although they have wandered far from the broom and the heather, have retained their love of “the Mither Tongue,” and are still filled with enthusiasm in regard to everything concerning their native country. Both at home and abroad our countrymen are inspired by the historic events and great historic names of Scotland—its battlefields; its ruined strongholds, where once old clansmen had their homes; its bleak hills and dales, moors and glens; the traditions and associations of the heroic past, impress themselves indelibly on their minds, and are the haunts of the Muse of Poetry. With few exceptions, they are unsuccessful in the production of little poems in celebration of interesting events, and as tributes to friends, or to the memory of important personages, in praise of girls with blue or black eyes, or affecting partings. We have invariably been suspicious of such themes, and intending authors should be warned of the fact of how flatly, even a lively poem or song, written to amuse a genial circle of friends, will fall upon the public.

As several competent authorities considered that a number of the sketches in our first series were too brief, we have here, as in the second, and where desirable, gone more fully into details of the career of the authors. Since we commenced our efforts we have had various proofs of having treated too briefly several poets, including Mr Matthias Barr, whose writings are acknowledged everywhere as having the quality which wins for them a passport to the heart, and Mr Dugald M'Fadyen, a young man, who, during the past two years, has been making for himself a name as a poet of affluent fancy, and bright sparkling humour. We could mention others, regarding whom opinions may differ, but would just add that we have found that in critics, as occasionally in poets, the raven may croak, and the howlet hoot, the magpie may chatter, and the jackdaw caw, but the blackbird shall whistle

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no less delightfully than heretofore, and the mavis, and the thrush, and the lark shall sing as if there were neither rook nor pie in existence. However we may speak of poets when we speak critically, we beg to say most explicitly that, as fellow-countrymen, we have an esteem for them all. The very feeling which prompts to write poetry implies something good in the character—something ingenuous and warm-hearted, and we almost feel that no cold cunning villian ever yet wrote a line of real poetry.

Encouraged by the kindly reception which was accorded to our first series, and the growing taste manifested for the productions of our present-day poets and versifiers, we have thus been induced to go deeper into the subject by preparing a second and third series. Even now we have been reluctantly compelled to omit several names of living writers, particulars of whose career, with selections from their poetry, we were anxious to include in this series, but the space to which we had restricted ourselves was more than exhausted. We now learn that at the outset we must have had a very imperfect idea of the extent of a department of modern literature so extensive and varied; yet we feel that a fourth series would exhaust the subject, and should the present effort meet with a reception as kindly as the first, it is possible that we may prepare the stores we have on hand, and accept of the material and assistance kindly offered by friends. Meanwhile we would gratefully acknowledge the valuable aid of numerous literary gentlemen who have communicated information. Our thanks are also due to publishers of copyright works, who, with great frankness, gave us permission to reprint many fine compositions.

D. H. EDWARDS.

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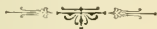
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## MODERN SCOTTISH POETS.



JOHN F. MILL,

**A** MOST prolific and deeply thoughtful prose-writer, who occasionally contributes to several of our magazines poems evincing a delicacy of thought, combined with a force and sweetness of expression, was born in the Pleasance of Edinburgh, in 1838. At the time of his birth, his father was traveller for the *North British Advertiser*, and was also cashier for forty-four years. Having received a good education, which he finished at the Edinburgh Institute, he entered on his first situation in the office of the *Edinburgh News*, under the late Mr Forsyth of the *Inverness Advertiser*. Since that time he has been what might be called a newspaper clerk, having served in that capacity in Edinburgh, Nottingham, and Plymouth.

Having been given to story-telling and verse-making from early in life, it was only natural that he should feel inclined to give the public the benefit of his abilities, and the first occasion of his doing so was in 1858, when a sentimental piece, inspired by

Cupid, appear in the *Ladies' Own Journal*. In a letter we received from Mr Mill, he says:—"At the time I thought I had never read anything so fine, and I am sure I never read anything so often. To my certain knowledge and pecuniary loss the circulation of the paper was increased that week by a dozen copies. I have never repeated such extravagance." Since then he has been steadily writing serial tales, essays, sketches, antiquarian papers, and poetry to many of our best-known newspapers and literary journals and magazines. A most noteworthy series of articles appeared from his pen several years ago in the pages of the *People's Friend*, entitled "Conversations on Origins."

Mr Mill has been a great reader, and a collector of scraps, but as yet he has not, although frequently urged by competent judges of the merits of his productions, seen his way to collect his writings, and publish in book form. "Literature," he says, "is not a lucrative profession generally, therefore I have never seen my way to 'pay the printer,' should ever I aspire to issue a volume of my own; but I have really no ambition that way." For ourselves, we feel that it is a pity such productions should be lost sight of in the pages of periodical literature, and we feel certain that should Mr Mill think proper to change his mind, he will receive a warm welcome from many thoughtful readers. As we have already hinted, he possesses a very considerable share of poetical talent, but his genius as a poet is exceeded by his skill as an essayist and story-teller.

#### A TOWN LOVER'S SONG.

There isn't a lark in the town, my dear,  
 To warble over your head;  
 Nor a blade of grass, nor a small blue bell  
 To bend beneath your tread.  
 But I can whistle myself, my dear,  
 At the bottom of the stair;  
 And 'mid the dust where the arabs play  
 We can wander at pleasure there.

There isn't a trysting tree, my dear,  
 Where you and I can meet ;  
 But there's nothing to hinder me waiting, love,  
 At the corner of the street.  
 And if there's no dewy meadow, my dear,  
 Where you and I can rove,  
 There are miles on miles of causeway stones  
 On which to tell our love.

There isn't a silver stream, my dear,  
 Wherein to view your face ;  
 But the plate-glass windows of the shops  
 Are sufficient to suit the case.  
 And if there isn't a lane, my dear,  
 With hedges on either hand,  
 There are any number of thoroughfares  
 And closes at our command.

My father hasn't a cow, my dear,  
 On which to bestow your care ;  
 But my father has got a son, you know,  
 Fix your attention there.  
 And remember that love is the same, my dear,  
 Whether in town or not ;  
 So let us be doing with what we have,  
 And never complain of our lot.

## T O M M A R S H A L L .

Tom Marshall was a tailor good as any one that treads.  
 Great compass with his needle had, and skill in waxen threads ;  
 But though no vegetarian, Tom did inconsistent act,  
 For he took cabbage right and left with most consume-it tact.

His dinners were like Christmas ones, though not quite so  
 profuse,  
 For, if you credit me, they were indebted to a goose.  
 Tom beat all lawyers out and out at getting up a suit,  
 But except some great clothing feat, did nothing else to boot.

But Tom, alas ! like other fools fell over ears in love,  
 I understood that one like he such acts would stand above ,  
 For Bessy Park, his heart's true love, the cause of all his pain,  
 Seeing he was straitened for effects did not love him again.

For Bessy was by no means green, although she was a Park,  
 And looked upon his soaring love as nothing but a lark.  
 So Tom, when he discovered this, quite melancholy got,  
 To find that true affection's ties would never form a knot.

"Ah, Bessy Park !" poor Tommy cried (although he didn't weep),  
 " I greatly fear you do not know that my love is so deep.  
 Oh, Bessy, hear me at your feet, I vow to take up arms  
 If you don't wed me now, and so save me from war's alarms."

“ Ah, you may doubt me, but 'tis true, as you shall quickly see,  
 And I shall be a martial man, if you'll not Marshall be.”  
 But Bessy said “ it was no use his speaking in that sort,”  
 And pitying his lengthen'd face, she bade him “ cut it short.”

So poor Tom sold his business off, and sold the folks who bought,  
 Then having made this sacrifice, the rendezvous he sought ;  
 Having an ear for music good, a splendid tympanum,  
 He was destined to drum the ear of who could 'ear his drum.

Soon as a drummer he went out to the Crimean War,  
 But there his powers of music met with a decided bar ;  
 For by mischance a random shot cut him off in his prime,  
 And thus time beat poor Tommy who was always beating time.

### BESSIE O' MIREYSIDE HA'.

Losh, hae a care o' me ! what's this o't noo ?  
 My arm's growin' feckless at haudin' the plow ;  
 Thae furrows I canna get strachten'd at a'  
 For thinkin' on Bessie o' Mireyside Ha'.

I dream o' the lassie at noon-day and mirk,  
 I dream o' the lassie at market and kirk ;  
 My peace o' mind fled, and my heart got a thraw  
 When first I saw Bessie o' Mireyside Ha'.

I ne'er sit me doon to my coggie o' brose,  
 But I see her blue e'en glintin' under my nose ;  
 I'm donnert wi' love, over head, lugs, an' a'—  
 Oh, plague take that Bessie o' Mireyside Ha'.

Fu' sweetly ye lilt your bit sang, bonnie bird,  
 Fu' lightly, my lammie, ye spring on the sward ;  
 But Bessie sings sweetly, and licht's her footfa'—  
 Ye'll ne'er match wi' Bessie o' Mireyside Ha'.

It's a fortnicht come Tyesday I gaed to the fair,  
 Thinkin' to meet wi' the bonnie lass there ;  
 But, wae's me, she wadna look my airt at a'—  
 The saucy wee Bessie o' Mireyside Ha'.

She oxtert wi' Watty M'Andrew, the loon,  
 And smiled upon him as they gaed through the toon,  
 After me buyin' sweeties, and ribbons, and a'  
 As a fairin' to Bessie o' Mireyside Ha'.

The ribbons I took to my young sister, Ann,  
 The sweeties I flung 'mang the weans near at han' ;  
 Threw my plaid owre my shouther, and syne cam' awa'  
 Mair in love wi' sweet Bessie o' Mireyside Ha'.

## "THESE THREE."

1ST COR. XIII. 13.

Albeit she saw not, she believed on Him,  
 For his kind words at length had reached her heart,  
 And there ta'en root; and now, as with a start,  
 That stood revealed which had erewhile been dim.  
 "I am the Resurrection and the Life: believ'st thou this?"  
 Oh, yes! and, clinging steadfast to the Cross,  
 She counted worldly vantage now as dross.  
 Was not the Great Atoner hers, as she was His?  
 A peaceful smile o'erspread her face, while tears  
 Of gratitude well'd from her dove-like eyes.  
 Bright through these orbs which gem the midnight skies,  
 How dull they glow compared to FAITH when fears  
 Evanish: for the doubting soul finds rest  
 When FAITH enthrones her in the human breast.

Oh star, fair star! that on the brow of night  
 Art like a jewel in a princely crown,  
 So bright thy radiance! oh star, look down  
 With pity on me from thy meteless height  
 And say what lies beyond my longing sight.  
 I may not know, but I believe there stands  
 My Father's home, the house not made with hands.  
 When I am laid within my mother's womb,  
 And in corruption fades each lifeless limb,  
 Say, shall my spirit upward soar to Him,  
 Mounting in triumph from an earthly tomb?  
 Feed me, fair HOPE! sustain me with thy power,  
 And shine thy brightest in my dying hour.

To lighten misery, and to aid the poor,  
 Was now her task self-chosen; and each day  
 Beheld her pass untiring on her way,  
 Now at the outcast's, now the pauper's door.  
 Kind words she gave them; little acts of grace  
 She scattered, as one scattereth seeds,  
 In that poor soil where hitherto but weeds  
 Of sin and ignorance had thriven apace.  
 And, lo! they sprouted: tender shoots at first,  
 Warring 'gainst influences of long years,  
 But gaining daily, till at last they burst  
 Into a golden harvest of ripe ears.  
 Oh, stars of FAITH and HOPE, though bright ye be,  
 The fairest in the firmament is CHARITY.

## THE SONG OF THE SHELL.

I sat upon a shell-strewn beach and dreamed the hours away,  
 As to my childhood's days I let my wandering memory stray.  
 When but a boy I sported there in innocence and glee,  
 Or bathed my youthful limbs within the ever-bright blue sea.



With steady skilful hand, whose scope is ever great and vast,  
 The artist memory pourtrayed the ne'er returning past,  
 And scenes of grief arrayed themselves before my fancy's view,  
 Mixed with those pleasant scenes of joy when time too swiftly  
 flew.

As thus I mused, I careless stooped to lift a tiny shell,  
 And listened to the music soft that issued from its cell ;  
 'Twas a low sweet strain of sadness, as when summer winds  
 expire,  
 And waft their dying breath across some lady's gilded lyre.  
 As thus I listened, thus I thought, " Oh, shell of snow-white  
 hue,  
 Dost ever think of days gone by, hast thou thy memories too ?"  
 It murmured louder than before, and thus it seemed to say :—

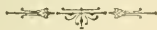
" Yes, I have visions of the past, of days long passed away,  
 Long, long I lay upon the strand in India's sunny clime,  
 And then existence was to me an endless summer time ;  
 Untainted by the foot of man, unstained by human hand,  
 Charmed by the music of the sea I lay upon the strand.  
 Till my peace was broken by a wave far ruder than the rest,  
 Which bore my trembling form away upon its watery breast ;  
 And now upon its surface blue, now sinking 'neath the sea,  
 I was wafted o'er the ocean wide, my sunny clime, from thee.

" I've seen the water-nymphs deck'd out in pale sea-green attire ;  
 I've heard the melodies they sung, and seen their eyes of fire ;  
 I've seen their long and floating locks of autumn's golden hue ;  
 I've rested on their bosoms white, and kiss'd their fingers too.  
 I've listened to their silvery tones, as with enchanting strain,  
 They drew the seamen to their arms ne'er to return again.  
 I've seen the little nautilus, with tiny hoisted sail,  
 Ride safely o'er the waters deep in many a stormy gale ;  
 I've seen a sight, a solemn sight, forget I never can,  
 The fleshless bones of what was once a god-like image—man,  
 The long and bony fingers clutched in death-grasp to the gold  
 So worthless now to him o'er whom the crested billows rolled ;  
 I've seen two bony arms embrace a smaller frame of bone,  
 As if together they would be when life itself had flown ;  
 No smile was beaming on the face, now grown so wan and wild—  
 I knew these skeletons had been a mother and her child.  
 I've seen the coral islands rise like mushrooms from the sea  
 Gigantic statues of the power of ceaseless industry ;  
 I've looked on many a mammoth whale, on many a greedy  
 shark ;  
 I've seen the swordfish pierce the keel of many a stout-built  
 bark ;  
 I've wept to see the fatal net launched from the fishing-boat,  
 And seen the eyes of ruthless men with pleasure o'er it gloat.  
 I've seen Death in his majesty ride o'er the stormy sea ;  
 And many a gallant ship go down into eternity ;

I've heard the storm-king's fiendish laugh as cries of wild despair  
 From drowning wretches floated through the cheerless midnight  
 air ;

I've seen the ocean in a calm when scarce a billow roll'd ;  
 And 'neath the noon-tide's brilliant sun bathed in a sea of gold.  
 All these I've seen, and many more, while drifting o'er the main,  
 But now they're memories to me, I'll ne'er see them again,  
 For winds and waves have borne me unto this distant shore,  
 And to my native strand I may return again no more."

Thus sang the shell, at least I thought 'twas thus it sang to me ;  
 And touched with pity for its fate, I threw it in the sea,  
 And trusted to the friendly waves to bear the stranger home  
 Unto that sunny clime whence it unwillingly had come.



## DAVID HUTCHESON

**W**AS born at Inverkeithing, in 1799, and was brought to Port Glasgow in infancy. There, as a boy, he saw the launch of the "Comet," the first steamer built on the Clyde. In early youth he found employment at the steamers carrying cargo between Glasgow and the lower ports, and eventually became the originator and head of the well-known firm of Messrs David Hutcheson & Co., the owners and managers of the steamers plying between Glasgow and the Highlands. He died at Glasgow, in 1880, and at the time of his death he was probably the oldest man connected with steam navigation in Europe, or perhaps the world.

Although Mr Hutcheson led a busy useful life, he frequently courted the Muses, and might be said to have been a rhymer from his youth. He contributed numerous poems to the newspapers and literary journals, and these give evidence of a loving, tuneful heart, and much spontaneous fervour.

## "LOCHABER NO MORE!"

Lochaber farewell! there is snow on the hill,  
 And the breeze, as it sighs through Glen Nevis, is chill;  
 No longer the linnet is trilling his lay,  
 And the bloom of the heather is fading away.  
 Yet Spring will return over mountain and glen,  
 And the wilderness blossom in beauty again;  
 The linnet will carol his songs as of yore,  
 But we may return to Lochaber no more.

Ah! would it were only the sweet month of June,  
 With its beautiful verdure, the birds all in tune,  
 And its golden light streaming afar through the glen—  
 Away would we hie to the mountains again.  
 For the winter is long, and we cannot fortell  
 What sorrows amid the dark future may dwell;  
 The lark to the summer cloud gaily will soar,  
 But we may return to Lochaber no more.

## FAREWELL REQUEST.

When I am dead, oh, lay me not  
 Within the churchyard's crumbling walls,  
 But bear me to some lonely spot  
 Of greenwood groves and waterfalls;  
 Where violets bloom and daisies spring,  
 And the glad lark at dawn of day  
 Waves the cold night-dew from his wing,  
 And, singing, soars to heaven away.

For I would wish my bones to lie  
 Among those scenes I've loved so well;  
 The mountain glen, the gorgeous sky,  
 The murmuring brook, the ferny dell.  
 And where were sepulchre more meet  
 For me than 'mong dear Oban's braes,  
 Where oft in contemplation sweet  
 I rambling tuned my simple lays.

So, when I'm dead, oh, lay me not  
 Within the churchyard's crumbling walls,  
 But bear me to some lonely spot  
 Of greenwood groves and waterfalls;  
 Where violets bloom, and daisies spring,  
 And the glad lark at dawn of day  
 Waves the cold night-dew from his wing,  
 And, singing, soars to heaven away.

## THE DAY-DREAM.

I dreamt a pleasant dream to-day,  
 Unlike those visions wild, whose fears,  
 Chase the lone sleeper's rest away;  
 Mine was a dream of former years.

And well it might be pleasant, for  
 I dreamt it in a lonely vale,  
 Where, sweetly from the hawthorn hoar,  
 The linnet told his love-lorn tale.

And there were pleasant things around —  
 Green branching trees and flowerets fair,  
 And gurgling streams, whose gentle sound  
 Murmured like music in the air.  
 Ev'n as you see the light clouds roll  
 Along the hill then melt away,  
 So there are thoughts that shade the Soul  
 Transient and beautiful as they.

And phantom dreams that haunt our sleep  
 The Soul's mysterious secrets show,  
 As bubbles rising from the deep  
 Reveal the life that throbs below.  
 Oft have I gazed upon the Star  
 Of Evening, twinkling in its sphere,  
 With sadness strange, yet sweeter far  
 Than sounds melodious to the ear.

And thus, altho' the spirit feels  
 No brooding sorrow lowering nigh,  
 A melancholy o'er it steals  
 And yet we know nor how, nor why.  
 And so it came in pensive mood  
 I wandered through the vale alone,  
 Where, solemnised by solitude,  
 I dreamt of friends long dead and gone.

Bright apparitions were they all,  
 Fair forms I counted o'er and o'er :  
 But chiefly did my heart recall  
 One I ador'd in days of yore.  
 She was the darling of my life,  
 For whose pure love long, long I sighed —  
 My own, my dear, my beauteous wife !  
 But ah ! in early youth she died !



JAMES BALLANTINE.

**L**IKE many Scotchmen who have made their mark in business or literature, James Ballantine was in the best sense of the term a self-made

man. His literary productions are numerous; but he will be longest remembered for his songs, some of which, exquisitely pure, simple, and pawkily wise, have obtained a world-wide renown. Two of his songs especially, "Castles in the Air" and "Ilka Blade o' Grass keeps its ain drap o' Dew," are known to every singer of "a guid Scotch sang." He was born in 1808, at the West Port of Edinburgh, and lost his father, who was a brewer, when he was only ten years old. Being the youngest of the family, which consisted of three daughters and himself, his early training devolved upon his mother, who did all in her power to obtain for her children the advantages of an ordinary education. While yet a mere boy, however, he had to exert himself for his own support and the assistance of the family. He was accordingly apprenticed to a house-painter, and very soon attained to considerable proficiency in his trade. On growing up to manhood he made strenuous exertions to obtain the educational advantages which were not within his reach at an earlier period of life, and about his twentieth year he attended the University of Edinburgh for the study of anatomy, with a view to his professional improvement. At a subsequent period he turned his attention to the art of painting on glass, and he was long well known as one of the most distinguished of British artists in that department. When the designs and specimens of glass-painting for the windows of the House of Lords were publicly competed for, the Royal Commissioners of the Fine Arts adjudged those produced by Mr Ballantine as the best which were exhibited, and the execution of the work was entrusted to him.

Although Mr Ballantine began at a very early age to woo the Muse, some of his most popular pieces having been produced about his sixteenth year, he made his first appearance in print in the pages of "Whistle Binkie." In 1843 the early edition of his well known work, "The Gaberlunzie's Wallet," was

published in monthly numbers, illustrated by the late Alexander Ritchie. This production was enriched with some of his best lyrics. There was something taking in the very title of the work, and the evidences of original genius which it displayed were strong and unmistakable. It proved that the author had an eye to the picturesque, an ear for verse, and a true feeling both for the humorous and pathetic. A cheap edition was issued by the Edinburgh Publishing Company in 1874. This work was followed by "The Miller of Deanhaugh," which likewise contains a number of songs and ballads. In 1856 Messrs Constable & Co., of Edinburgh, published an edition of his poems, including many of those which had been previously given to the world. This volume contains the happiest effusions of his genius, and at once procured him a prominent place in the country's literature.

In 1875 a volume appeared from his pen, entitled "One Hundred Songs," and a later production, containing a love tale in the Spenserian stanza called "Lilias Lee," and "Malcolm Canmore," an historical drama, was issued in 1872. Mr Ballantine died in December, 1877, at the ripe age of seventy. His poetry is not the mere dreamy effusion of sentimental fancy, but a faithful transcript of the impressions produced upon an honest heart and a discerning mind by mutual contact with the realities of life. One of his reviewers has said that "his exquisite taste for the beautiful in natural scenery and in language, his keen eye to observe, and his warm heart to commiserate the sorrows of mankind, render him a 'sweet singer' after Nature's own heart; while his thorough mastery of the fine language of old Scotland, in all its wealth and pith of expressive terms and familiar idioms, gives him the power to wield at will the sympathies and feelings of a large portion of his fellow-countrymen." The grand lesson of his life is that while loving and wooing the

poetic spirit, he resolutely minded his business. Lord Cockburn, who was an admirer of the man as well as the poet, condensed the moral of his dual life in one happy phrase: Ballantine, he said, "made business feed the Muses, and the Muses grace the business."

### CASTLES IN THE AIR.

The bonnie, bonnie bairn sits pokin' in the ase,  
Glowerin' in the fire wi' his wee round face;  
Laughin' at the fuffin' lowe—what sees he there?  
Ha! the young dreamer's biggin' castles in the air!

His wee chubby face, an' his towzy eurlly pow,  
Are laughin' an' noddin' to the dancin' lowe;  
He'll brown his rosy cheeks, and singe his sunny hair,  
Glowerin' at the imps wi' their castles in the air.

He sees muckle castles towerin' to the moon,  
He sees little sodgers puin' them a' down;  
Warlds whomlin' up an' doun' blazin' wi' a flare,  
Losh! how he louns, as they glimmer in the air.

For a' sae sage he looks, what can the laddie ken?  
He's thinkin' upon naething, like mony mighty men;  
A wee thing mak's us think, a sma' thing mak's us stare,—  
There are mair folks than him biggin' castles in the air.

Sic a night in winter may weel mak' him cauld;  
His chin upon his buffy hands will soon mak' him auld;  
His brow is brent sae braid, oh, pray that Daddy Care  
Wad let the wean alane wi' his castles in the air.

He'll glower at the fire, and he'll keek at the light;  
But mony sparkling stars are swallow'd up by night;  
Aulder een than his are glamour'd by a glare,  
Hearts are broken—heads are turn'd—wi' castle in the air.

### CREEP AFORE YE GANG.

Creep awa', my bairnie, creep afore ye gang;  
Cock ye baith your lugs to your auld grannie's sang;  
Gin ye gang as far ye will think the road lang,  
Creep awa', my bairnie—creep afore ye gang.

Creep awa', my bairnie, ye're ower young to learn  
To tot up and down yet, my bonnie wee bairn:  
Better creepin' cannie than fa'in' wi' a bang,  
Duntin' a' your wee brow—creep afore ye gang.

Ye'll creep, an' ye'll laugh, an' ye'll nod to your mither,  
 Watchin' ilka step o' your wee dousy brither ;  
 Rest ye on the floor till your wee limbs grow strang,  
 An' ye'll be a braw chiel' yet—creep afore ye gang.

The wee birdie fa's when it tries ower soon to flee ;  
 Folks are sure to tumble when they climb ower hie ;  
 They wha dinna walk right are sure to come to wrang—  
 Creep awa', my bairnie—creep afore ye gang.

### ILKA BLADE O' GRASS KEPS ITS AIN DRAP O' DEW.

Confide ye aye in Providence, for Providence is kind,  
 An' bear ye a' life's changes wi' a calm an' tranquil mind ;  
 Though press'd an' hemm'd on every side, ha'e faith an' ye'll  
 win through,  
 For ilka blade o' grass keps its ain drap o' dew.

Gin reft frae friends, or cross'd in love, as whiles nae doot  
 ye've been,  
 Grief lies deep-hidden in your heart, or tears flow frae your  
 een,  
 Believe it for the best, and trow there's good in store for you,  
 For ilka blade o' grass keps its ain drap o' dew.

In lang, lang days o' simmer when the clear an' cludless sky  
 Refuses ae wee drap o' rain to Nature parch'd and dry,  
 The genial night, wi' balmy breath, gars verdure spring anew,  
 An' ilka blade o' grass keps its ain drap o' dew.

Sae lest 'mid fortune's sunshine we should feel ower proud an'  
 hie,  
 An' in our pride forget to wipe the tear frae poortith's ee,  
 Some wee dark cluds o' sorrow come, we ken na whence or  
 hoo,  
 But ilka blade o' grass keps its ain drap o' dew.

### THE SNAWY KIRKYARD.

A' Nature lay dead, save the cauld whistlin blast  
 That chilled the bleak earth to the core as it pass'd,  
 And heaved in high ridges the thick chokin' drift  
 That cam' in wreathed swirls frae the white marled lift,  
 And winter's wild war, wearied baith heart and e'e,  
 As we warsled richt sair owre the drear muirland lea,  
 And our feet skyted back on the road freezing hard,  
 As we wended our way to the Snawy Kirkyard.



O ! snelly the hail smote the skeleton trees  
 That shivering shrunk in the grasp o' the breeze,  
 Nor birdie, nor beast could the watery e'e scan,  
 A' were cowerin' in corners, save grief-laden man ;  
     Tho' the heart may be broken, the best maun be spared  
 To mak' up a wreath in the Snawy Kirkyard.

The wee Muirland Kirk, whar the pure Word o' God  
 Mak's warm the cauld heart, and mak's light the lang road,  
 The slee hill-side yill-house, whaur lasses meet lads,  
 Whaur herds leave their collies, and lairds tie their yaulds,  
 Kirk-bell and house riggin', the white drift has squared,  
 But there's ae yawning grave in the Snawy Kirkyard.

Through a' the hale parish, nae Elder was known  
 That was likit by a' like my grandfather John,  
 And drear was I that day when we bore him awa',  
 Wi' his gowd stores o' thought, and his haffits o' snaw,  
     I was then a wee callant, rose-cheek'd and gowd-hair'd,  
 When I laid his auld pow in the Snawy Kirkyard.

And aye when I think on the times lang gane by,  
 Saft thoughts soothe my soul, and sweet tears dim my eye,  
 And I see the auld man, as he clapp'd my wee head,  
 While a sigh heaved his breast, for my faither lang dead.  
     He nursed me, he schooled me,—how can I regard  
 But wi' warm-gushing heart-tears, a Snawy Kirkyard.

In soothing sad sorrow, in calming mad mirth,  
 His breath, like the south wind, strewed balm on the earth,  
 And weary souls laden wi' grief aft were driven  
 To seek comfort frae him, wha aye led them to Heaven.  
     O ! sweet were the seeds sown, and rich was the braid  
 That sprang frae that stock in the Snawy Kirkyard.

Now age wi' his hoar-frost has crispit my pow,  
 And my locks, ance sae gowden, are silvery now,  
 And tho' I hae neither high station nor power,  
 I hae health for my portion and truth for my dower,  
 And my hand hath been open, my heart hath been free,  
 To dry up the teardraps frae sorrow's dull e'e,  
     And mony puir bodies my awmrie hae shared,  
 'Twas my counsel frae him in the Snawy Kirkyard.

#### A SONG TO HIS MOTHER.

Mine ain wee mensefu', mindfu' minny,  
 Sae couthy, kindly, cosh, an' canny ;  
 Just sit ye still a wee, an' dinna  
     Tent your ain callant,  
 Until he sketch your picture in a  
     Wee hamely ballant.

There sit ye on a ereepy stool,  
 Weel clad wi' flannel-coat and cowl ;  
 While simmering by the chumley jowl  
     Sits your teapatty,  
 And at your feet wi' kindly yowl,  
     Whurrs your wee catty.

The bluid in your auld veins is thin,  
 Sair shrivell'd now's your ain plump skin ;  
 Close to the ribs ye hirsel in  
     Wi' cloehrin' whaizle,  
 Till in your cutty pipe ye fin'  
     A red-hot aizle.

When sunny simmer comes wi' flowers,  
 On the door-stap thou sits for hours,  
 An' ilka birdie round thee cowers,  
     Cock, hen, an' chickens,  
 While wi' an open hand thou showers  
     Them, walth o' pickens.

An' tho' ye now are auld an' doited,  
 Your back sair bow'd, your paece sair toyted,  
 Langsyne to ilka ploy invited,  
     Your queenly air,  
 Made a' your neighbour dames sair spited  
     At tryst or fair.

On Sunday, when the kirk bell's jow  
 Set ilka haly heart alowe,  
 To the auld kirk ye went to row,  
     Toddlin' wi' me,  
 Aye welcomed by the Elder's bow,  
     An' Pastor's ee.

Thou'st been to me my mair than mither,—  
 Faither and mither baith thegither ;  
 In days o' dearth thou didna swither  
     To scrimp thy coggie,  
 To sehule an' cleed as weel's anither,  
     Thy wee wild roguie.

While manhood's vigour nerve's my arm,  
 While in my breast life's blood flows warm,  
 Frae ilka danger, skaith, or harm  
     I'll keep thee free,  
 Till death shall break the mystic charm  
     An' close thine ee !

## ROSY CHEEKIT APPLES.

Come awa, bairnie, for your bawbee  
 Rosy cheekit apples ye shall hae three ;  
 A' sae fou o' hinny, they drappit frae the tree,  
 Like your bonny sel', a' the sweeter they are wee.

Come awa, bairnie, dinna shake your head.  
 Ye mind me o' my ain bairn, lang, lang dead ;  
 Ah ! for lack o' nourishment he drappit frae the tree,  
 Like your bonny sel', a' the sweeter he was wee.

O auld frail folks are like auld fruit-trees,  
 They canna stand the gnarl o' the auld warl's breeze ;  
 But heaven taks the fruit, though earth forsake the tree,  
 An' we mourn our fairy blossoms, a' the sweeter they were  
 wee.

## TAILOR DAVIE.

O ! wha's the loun can elout the claes,  
 Canty Davie, dainty Davie ;  
 Wha the lassocks' spunks can raise  
 Like little tailor Davie ?

Though callants ca' him " whup the cat,"  
 And men folk curse his gabbin' chat,  
 The lassies they find nae sic faut  
 Wi' kindly little Davie !

O ! blythe is ilka body's house  
 Whaur Davie sits and cracks fou crouse ;  
 Nae post-bag's half sae cram'n'd wi' news  
 As touguey tailor Davie !

The weanies round him in a raw,  
 He raises sic a loud guffaw,  
 Ye'll hear the din a mile awa  
 O' them an' tailor Davie !

The auld man's roomy weddin' coat,  
 Wi' age an' moths scarce worth a groat,  
 Maks breeks to Tam, an' coat to Jock,  
 An' spats to tailor Davie.  
 O ! wha's the loun, &c.

## COLIN MACPHERSON,

**P**OTATO merchant, has, in a very creditable manner, cultivated the Muses during a busy life as a farmer, and latterly as a potato merchant. He was born in Keith, Banffshire, in 1826, his father having died a short time before the birth of his son. Colin was sent at a very early age to herd cattle on Speyside. He was engaged in this occupation for about four years, when his maternal aunt took him to her home. Her husband, John Kynock, then provost of Forres, sent him to school, but the lad only remained there one brief quarter, when he again became a herd, and afterwards was apprenticed to a shoemaker. He only served part of his apprenticeship in Forres, and at the end of four year she went to Aberdeen, where he completed his "time." Getting tired of the long hours and short pay which shoemakers then had, and having scraped together some funds, he took to travelling in the jewellery line. He felt as a slave set free, and for many years followed throughout the whole of Scotland the unfettered life of a packman. During these years he greatly improved his scanty education by the study of standard works, and many of the best-known poets were his pocket companions. After getting married, he remained for ten years in Kirkcaldy. On leaving that town, he took a lease of the farm of Craiginches, Nigg, and previous to settling down as a potato merchant in Dundee, he received the honour of a public dinner from numerous friends and his neighbouring farmers.

Mr Macpherson was a most intelligent farmer, and published in the newspapers several very important articles on the subject of "rearing seedling potatoes," "potato disease," and "disease-resisting potatoes," &c.—subjects which have long received his careful

study. In 1878 Mr Macpherson published a work entitled "The Farmer's Friend," in which he (in pithy verse) exposed the errors of the present method of rearing and breeding cattle, traced the causes of disease and plagues in cattle to "the injurious system of gross stall-feeding and inadequate housing, and the baneful effects of spurious manures on cattle, crops, soil," &c.

Altogether, considering the busy life he has led, the careful attention he has given to business, and the want of early training and culture, Mr Macpherson has been a thoughtful and voluminous writer. As a poet, he is stirring and patriotic, and his verses have a sweet and musical flow.

#### THE BRIGHT BLOOMING INLAND SO GAY.

Let them sing of the sea, with its rude rolling waves,  
And of good ships that plough the salt spray ;  
But give me the green vales where the fre h river laves  
Through the bright blooming inland so gay.

Where the daisy, the primrose, and sweet heatherbell  
Gaily bask in the sun's golden ray ;  
Where the birch, broom, and whin scent the soft soothing gale  
In the bright blooming inland so gay.

Let them boast of the might of their maritime powers,  
And their navy extel as they may ;  
But the bulwarks of war like a vast mountain lowers  
Through the bright blooming inland so gay.

Let the mariner cling to his home on the wave,  
Or by Orient shores let him stray ;  
But I love still to roam where the true and the brave  
Guard the bright blooming inland so gay.

Dearest land of my fathers, where no foreign foe  
Could e'er match thy bold sons in the fray,  
May thy garlands of glory still flourish and grow  
O'er thy bright blooming inland so gay.

May my home ever be in the land of the free,  
Till my pensive heart ceases to play,  
And my soul take its flight to the regions of light,  
From the bright blooming inland so gay.

## HOW LIKE TO OLD AGE ARE THE EMBERS.

How like to old age are the embers  
 That glimmer upon the hearthstone ;  
 And how like to old age are the embers  
 When the flame from the fuel has gone.

Like to childhood the fire when it's kindling,  
 While its first feeble light it displays :  
 When the smoke with the flame is commingling,  
 As it playfully bursts into blaze.

Like to manhood the fire when it's blazing  
 In the might of its mystical flame ;  
 So man in his prime is upraising  
 The bright worth that illumines his name.

Then how like to the dead are the ashes  
 That are mouldering on the hearthstone ;  
 O ! how like to the dead are the ashes  
 When the fire from the fuel has gone.

## SCOTLAND THOU ART DEAR TO ME.

Though distant lands with sunny climes,  
 And blooming isles beyond the sea,  
 Love, wit, and worth adorn the north—  
 O Scotland, thou art dear to me.

Thy rivers, lakes, and fertile plains,  
 Thy woods and verdant valleys fair,  
 Thy moors and mountains, hills and glens,  
 Are to thy sons choice treasures rare.

True hearts embued with social ties  
 Of ardent love that owns no guile,  
 With peace of mind, life's dearest prize,  
 Enrich thy noble sons of toil.

With modest minds and manly forms,  
 Industry makes them brave and free,  
 Who conquer 'mid life's direst storms,  
 Or fighting die for liberty.

There's music in thy foaming linn,  
 And power pervades thy lofty name ;  
 O Caledon ! long may thy sons  
 Uphold the glory of their fame.

Though distant lands with sunny climes,  
 And blooming isles beyond the sea,  
 Love, wit, and worth adorn the north—  
 O Scotland, thou art dear to me.

## RUSTIC ROBIN.

Come sing a sang in Robin's praise,  
 And crown him still with laurel'd bays,  
 For master o' the lyric lays

Was rustic, rhymin' Robin.

Brave, dauntless Burns, the bard of fame—  
 The bard of fame, the bard of fame ;  
 All o'er the world is lo'ed the name  
 Of independent Robin.

Tho' some, through spleen an' peevish spite,  
 On Robin's fau'ts may rail and write,  
 Yet envy's blast can never blight

An evergreen like Robin.

For Robin was a noble Scot—  
 A noble Scot, a noble Scot,  
 Tho' whinin' slaves would deign to blot  
 The name of honest Robin.

Ye drones wha think it lawful game  
 To rob the honeycombs of fame,  
 Gae judge yoursel's afore ye blame

An honest man like Robin.

For we hae a' our freaks an' flaws—  
 Freaks an' flaws, freaks an' flaws ;  
 An' a' wha break just Nature's laws  
 Maun pay their debt, like Robin.

Hypocri'sy could never find  
 A place within his noble mind,  
 For he was generous, just, an' kind ;

Alas, we've few like Robin.

For Robin was the king o' men—  
 The king o' men, the king o' men ;  
 A star o' licht, the magic pen  
 Of never-dying Robin.

The ploughman bard of toil an' woe,  
 Misfortune still his direst foe ;  
 'Mid poortith's cares, alas, laid low,  
 I'm wae to think on Robin.

A genius blighted in his prime—  
 In his prime, in his prime ;  
 A patriot and bard sublime  
 Was unrewarded Robin.

Amid his life's beclouded day  
 He checked grim superstition's sway ;  
 For truth and right he turned the lay,  
 Then sing a dirge for Robin.

For we are wild flowers by the way—  
 By the way, by the way,  
 Wha bud an' bloom but to decay ;  
 We a' maun follow Robin.

## W. D. LATTO.

**N**OT a few will be delighted to find that "Tammias Bodkin" (Mr W. D. Latto) is immortalised amongst the poets. The *People's Journal* is almost a household word in Scotland, and its editor must therefore be a household friend. His treatment and knowledge of Scottish manners and customs is universally known—indeed, his humorous delineations of humble life and simple character, his invention and arrangement of suitable circumstances, comic incidents, and graphic scenes will not suffer from a comparison with "Mansie Waugh"—but few know much of his career.

Mr Latto was born at Ceres, a snug Fifeshire village, in 1823. He, after being a handloom weaver for several years, chose the teaching profession; and, having gone through a Normal School course in Edinburgh, he acted for sometime as Free Church school-master at the fishing village of Johnshaven, Kincardineshire. When quite a youth, we are told in an excellent paper in the May part (1880) of the *Wizard of the North* (Dundee), which also gave a very characteristic portrait of the worthy gentleman, Mr Latto wrote occasional pieces for the poet's corner of the *Fife Herald*, and at a later date for the columns of *Hogg's Instructor*, to which the late George Gilfillan, Isa Craig-Knox, and many others who have since distinguished themselves in the world of letters, were contributors. One of his juvenile efforts, "My Granny," appeared in "Foo Fozle," a collection of contemporary verses, which was edited and published by James Myles, bookseller, Dundee, author of "Rambles in Forfarshire," and other works of merit. Amongst his fellow-contributors to that clever poetical *brocheure*, was the late Robert Leighton, author of the "Bapteezement o' the Bairn," as noticed in our



first series. During the heat of the Papal Aggression Controversy, about the year 1851, Mr Latto published "The Twa Bulls: a Metrical Tale for the Times," in which the rivalries between Popery and Protestantism were humorously hit off. The "Bulls" referred to were John Bull and the Papal Bull, whereby Pio Nono re-established the Roman Catholic Hierarchy in England, with Cardinal Wiseman at its head.

During his teaching career he at various times contributed vigorous stories and sketches to the *People's Journal*, and the ability displayed in them was such that in 1860 he was asked to join the editorial staff of the paper. He has ever since filled the responsible situation with great ability and tact, as the position the paper occupies in Scottish journalism sufficiently proves.

By the publication of the sketches—"Tammas Bodkin, or the Humours of a Scottish Tailor," Mr Latto struck a congenial vein, and they showed literary abilities of an unusual kind. They abound with fine strokes of homely humour, ready wit, and strong common sense, and reveal a wide acquaintance with the habits and customs of the Scottish people. Since they appeared in the columns of the *Journal*, they have gone through several editions in book form. In this way they have become favourites at public readings—their fine admixture of pawky fun and good philosophy making them eminently acceptable alike for amusement and instruction. The same might be said of his work entitled "Song Sermons," published in 1879. They convey many a sound lesson and good moral in pithy and striking language, as well as diligent and able study and research on the part of the preacher in a rather difficult field. These *sermons* consist of interesting homilies on certain well-known old ballads and songs, such as "The Wee Cooper o' Fife," "My Jo Janet," "The Wife of Auchtermuchty," and "Maggie

Lauder." They have proved an acceptable offering to the admirers of our older ballads, and we can only hope that he will see fit to continue preaching from the same field. The exacting nature of his editorial duties has of late subordinated his personal affection for the Muses, and he has more frequently had to sit in judgment on fledgling poets, whom he corrects with a loving hand. He is admired and beloved by a wide circle of friends, is an effective and popular platform speaker; and can, we are told, when occasion demands, "oblige the company wi' a sang."

#### THE BACHELOR'S LAMENT.

When cauld winter ruffles the leaves frae the tree,  
I'm as weary a bodie as weary can be ;  
There's nae ane to cheer me across the hearthstane,  
A' the lee winter nicht I maun dozin' my lane.

Dozin' my lane, dozin' my lane,  
A' the lee winter nicht I maun dozin' my lane.

The thrush lo'es to sing i' the white bloomin' thorn,  
The hare lo'es to gambol amang the green corn,  
But naething in nature can mak' my heart fain,  
For I ne'er can be blithesome while livin' my lane.

Livin' my lane, livin' my lane,  
O I ne'er can be blithesome while livin' my lane.

I've an auld dowie chaumer just twal' feet by ten,  
An oot-hoose, an in-hoose, a but-hoose, an' ben,  
A weel-plenished mailin', an' gowd, a' my ain,  
But nocht can delight me when livin' my lane.

Livin' my lane, livin' my lane,  
O nocht can delight me when livin' my lane.

Though some blame the lasses I carena a flee,  
I'll e'en tak' my fortune, whate'er it may be ;  
Guid folk are richt scarce, but I'll surely find ane,  
To mak' me far blither than livin' my lane :

Livin' my lane, livin' my lane,  
To mak' me far blither than livin' my lane.

An' gin a sweet wifie should e'er be my hap,  
I'll wake like a lav'rock, an' sleep like a tap,  
I'll sing like a lintie, an' never complain,  
But forget a' the sorrows of livin' my lane.

Livin' my lane, livin' my lane,  
O wha can be happy when livin' alane !

## THE BREVITY OF HUMAN LIFE.

How swiftly roll the wheels of Time !  
 How few and fleeting are our years !  
 A passing glimpse is all we get  
 Of this dark vale of tears.

Yet brief although our journey be  
 From feeble infancy to age,  
 Unnumbered are the ills we meet  
 Upon life's mortal stage.

In manhood, full of lucky life,  
 We madly grasp at Fortune's prize,  
 And dream ambitious dreams, till age  
 In death seals up our eyes.

Yet our existence ends not here,  
 It fails not with our failing breath  
 But stretches to eternity  
 Right through the gates of Death.

Since time is short and death is sure,  
 O let us ever strive to bend  
 Our thoughts and footsteps so that they  
 May always heavenward tend.

## YOUTHFUL ASPIRATIONS.

Ah ! little thinks the bauld aspirin' youth,  
 Vain o' the twa-three hairs around his mooth,  
 What scrapin' they will cost him, yea, what trouble,  
 Whan ance they grow to be as stiff as stubble !  
 The boast that " Britons never shall be slaves "  
 Is bootless in the case o' him wha shaves ;  
 For when was ever serf by King or Kaiser  
 Mair tortured than the wretch wha wields a razor ?  
 The downy braird that shot doon frae my ears  
 At first I trimmed and snoddit wi' the sheers,  
 But that which grew upon my chin an' lip—  
 Puir feckless trash—wad neither shave nor clip ;  
 Sae to the garret whyles I quietly slunk,  
 An' there I singed it wi' a brimstane spunk.

My peekin' voice ere lang grew deep and sture ;  
 I thoct I'd got a cauld richt ill to cure,  
 An' hawk'd an' hoastit sair to redd my hass  
 O' what had turned my treble notes to bass ;  
 But a' my clocherin' failed to clear my throat  
 O' what had twined me o' my treble note,  
 Until at last the truth dawned on my mind  
 That beards an' bass notes are maist aye combined.

When fouk get stobby beards an' rousy hasses,  
 They learn belyve to smoke and coort the lasses.  
 In a' my life—as far as I can mind—  
 I've never been content to lag behind  
 In ony project, enterprise, or plan  
 Meant to promote the happiness o' man ;  
 An' coortship bein', as it seemed to me,  
 The very root o' man's felicity,  
 I early yokit till't wi' a' the zeal  
 That only tyros in the business feel ;  
 Strivin' wi' micht an' main to love an' cherish  
 Half o' the winsome kimmers i' the parish.  
 O what were life did we the record tyne  
 O' pranks we played in days o' Auld Langsyne !

For twa-three years I trotted here an' there,  
 Like norlan' drover through a country fair,  
 Glowrin' for some ane that wad suit my taste,  
 Wi' raven hair, red cheeks, an' jimpy waist.  
 Nor did I search in vain ; for Tibbie's e'e  
 Sune shot a deidly arrow into me,  
 An' there it still remains as firm as ever,  
 An' sharp an' bricht as when it left its quiver !

O what a warld o' sunny mem'ries clings  
 To bride-cakes, hinnymunes, an' waddin' rings !  
 At hane, a-field, where'er yer fitstaps stray,  
 Yer heart gaes dancin' like a cowte at play,  
 Half crazed wi' love, aroond yer "winsome marrow"  
 Ye chirm an' flutter like an am'rous sparrow,  
 An' gin' ye dinna trow the tale I tell,  
 Put in the "cries," an' try the job yersel'.

#### CONJUGAL FELICITY.

Sweet thing of beauty ! life would be  
 A waste devoid of all things fair,  
 Did not my bosom leap to thee,  
 The soother of its grief and care ;  
 For woman's hand and woman's heart  
 Can minister a healing balm ;  
 Snatch from the soul the quivering dart,  
 And breathe o'er all a halcyon calm ;  
 A ministering angel she  
 To lighten mortal misery !

O, when I first beheld thy face,  
 And press'd in mine thy gentle hand,  
 Thy blooming cheek and modest grace  
 Waved o'er my soul a magic wand.  
 Thy kindly tone, thy playful smile,  
 Bespeaking innocence and love ;

The lustre of thine eyes the while  
 That beamed like angel-orbs above ;  
 All joined upon my heart to pour  
 A joyance never felt before.

I deemed the bosom must be blest  
 That leaned confidingly on thine ;  
 But honour then the wish suppress'd  
 That e'er such blessing might be mine.  
 I saw thee bloom a floral gem,  
 Such as the earth has rarely shown—  
 How beauteous on its graceful stem !  
 And yet between us was there thrown  
 A passless bar ! But that is past :  
 Sweet rosebud thou art mine at last !

And O the ardours of my soul  
 At our first happy interview,  
 Know no abatement, but control  
 My throbbing bosom as when new.  
 I *then* but knew the garniture  
 That lent its beauty to the rose ;  
 But *now* I taste the essence pure  
 That from its core divinely flows,  
 Absorbing all those bitter tears  
 That follow in the wake of years.

Perchance thine eyes are dimmer now,  
 Thy step less light, thy cheek less fair ;  
 More grave thy voice and smile ; but thou  
 Art still the soother of my care.  
 Now from thy lips a current flows  
 Of meek intelligence and truth,  
 And kindness in thy bosom glows  
 More sweet than all the charms of youth ;  
 And, dove-like, thither would I flee  
 When round me wars life's troubled sea !

Life is a changeful scene ; and we  
 May scarce have felt its sorrows yet ;  
 But still whate'er the prospect be,  
 The path howe'er with thorns beset—  
 Still true to thee and Heaven above  
 I shall not seek another shrine  
 For solace, but hold fast the love  
 That ever draws my soul to thine ;  
 Still shall I to thy breast repair,  
 And find my consolation there !

## DANIEL W. GALLACHER,

COMPOSITOR in the *Standard* Office, Kilmarnock, published, in 1879, a small volume of poetry, which was well received by the public and the press. Although Mr Gallacher at times shows rather a want of skill in the mechanical part of verse-making, being occasionally faulty in rhythm, there is never any lack of poetic unction and feeling. In natural and touching pathos he particularly excels. Mr Gallacher, though of Irish extraction, was born in Paisley about the year 1848. After being educated at a charity school, he was apprenticed to a printer in that town. Subsequently he removed to Kilmarnock, and has been ever since employed in the *Standard* newspaper office, being an especial favourite with the late Mr Stevenson, the publisher. The first of the two following pieces is quite worthy of being classed with "The Mitherless Bairn" of William Thom.

## OOR WEE WILLIE'S DEID.

Cheerless is the ha', noo,  
 Gane the playthings a', noo,  
 Oor bairnie, far awa noo,  
     Rests his weary heid ;  
 Fragrant though the #oo'ers, noo,  
 Hopeless pass the hoors, noo,  
 Misfortune comes in shoo'rs, noo—  
     Oor wee Willie's deid !

Sad is Mysie's sang, noo,  
 Everything gangs wrang, noo,  
 Hearts warm sae lang, noo,  
     Are cauld, cauld as lead ;  
 Nae mair his lauchin' een, noo,  
 Lichtens up the scene, noo,  
 'Neath yon bed o' green, noo—  
     Oor wee Willie's deid !

Empty is his chair, noo,  
 Wrinkled broo o' care, noo,  
 Marks a face ance fair, noo,  
     That tended aft his heid ;  
 Jamie's grown less bauld, noo,  
 Nae mair his story's tauld, noo,  
 Everything looks cauld, noo—  
     Oor wee Willie's deid !

“ Faither, whaur's the wean, noo,  
 I've to play my lane, noo,  
 Since wee Willie's gane, noo,”  
     Aye the bairnies plead ;  
 “ Ye promis'd he'd come sune, noo,  
 Oh ! I lang to hear his din, noo,”  
 “ Bairns, he's weel abune, noo —  
     Oor wee Willie's deid !

Lay ye past his ba', noo,  
 Cradle-neuk an' a', noo,  
 Though sad the tear should fa', noo—  
     The heart in silence bleed.  
 Lanely here we yearn, noo,  
 For a bonnie bairn, noo,  
 Cauld 'neath mossy cairn, noo—  
     Oor wee Willie's deid !”

#### TO THE CARMEL.

Flow on, sweet Carmel, flow along,  
 Sung, though by the sons of song ;  
 O, gentle rivulet were't mine  
 The powerful pen for thoughts divine—  
 The art to sing in measured lays—  
 Then would'st thou be my theme of praise,  
 Fair-shaded brook, where lov-'s pure dart  
 First made a prisoner of my heart.

O, Carmel in those sacred hours,  
 When hill and dale lay strew'd with flow'rs,  
 Sweet words of love pledged hearts of truth  
 Beneath the radiant smiles of youth ;  
 As on thy flow'ry banks and braes  
 We strayed, as oft in brighter days,  
 Thy murmurings mingled with the knell  
 Of that heart-breaking fare-thee-well.

Fare-thee-well, sweet river. Know,  
 Close by lies her of long ago—  
 The voice that charmed, the eye that shone,  
 Are now in all their beauty gone.  
 Ah ! ripple onward, gentle stream,  
 Each thought of thee's a sunny beam  
 That lights my pathway, sad and drear,  
 For oft I've met my Mary here.

## JOHN WHITE, LL.D.,

**W**AS born at Inchscoonings, parish of Errol, in the far-famed Carse of Gowrie, in 1807. The sweet and quiet beauty of the spot was a fine nurse for, and tended much to foster in him, his natural poetic gift. This, combined with the well-ordered household of his parents, impressed so deeply his mind that they never were forgotten in after life, and when his head had been whitened by the snows of more than threescore and ten years, we find him thus beautifully singing of

## THE AULD HOUSE AT HAME.

The auld house and the golden lea,  
The broomie knowes an' rowan tree,  
Whaur aft we roam'd in childish glee,  
    Will mellow a',  
Till life's bit thread, sae short an' free,  
    Breaks richt in twa.

Still, in our dreams, we climb the braes,  
Whaur blissfu' joys hid a' our waes,  
An' revel 'mang the hips and slaes,  
    A' roun' the biel',  
Whause charms, though bent by life's sad faes,  
    We'll ever feel.

There pure devotion daily reigned,  
That gilded hope, and fears restrained ;  
There artless love, alike unfeign'd,  
    Lent weakness power,  
While Heaven on us freely reigned  
    Its promised dower.

The auld folks aft were scant o' gear,  
And ne'er were blessed wi' meikle lear,  
But still they had what stood life's wear—  
    Guid common sense  
That brang content, nay even mair—  
    Faith's recompense.

Content and peace grew side by side,  
Like blushing flow'rs at e'ning tide ;  
While modest worth and manly pride,  
    Man's noblest crest,  
Ne'er bent the knee wi' fawning slide,  
    E'en to the best !



Time's rusty share can ne'er efface  
 The glowing charms that love can trace ;  
 The childish joys, the fond embrace,  
     That still we feel ;  
 Nor Fortune e'er, in life's sad race,  
     Supplant the biel' !

Dr White received the first part of his education at St Madoes' Parish School, after which he was sent for four years to the Grammar School at Perth ; when he proceeded to the University, where he studied till 1831. After this he taught in Edinburgh for two years, and was appointed to the Commercial Department of the Irvine Academy. Here Dr White continued to teach for the period of thirty-two years—the Academy prospering, and his fame as one of first mathematical teachers of the day spreading far and wide. In 1867 the Senatus of Glasgow University conferred upon him the distinction of Doctor of Laws ; and few men can more worthily write LL.D. after their names. The West of Scotland is proud of him, while the Irvine people claim him now as one of their most gifted sons.

A few years ago Dr White retired from his public duties, and he now lives in honoured and contented retirement in the town where he has taught so long, so well, and so acceptably ; and here, still strong in body and bright and vigorous in mind, he now crowns

A youth of labour with an age of ease,

while in heart and feeling, and an ardent love of Nature, he is as young and lively as when he was climbing the hill of Kinnoul, or racing on the banks of the Tay full sixty years ago. The closing years of his life are cheered and brightened by a calm and unclouded Christian hope, and by a beautiful resignation to the will of the Creator, and he feels and shows exactly what he says—

In meekness, Lord, I'll own Thy sway,  
 My guide, my all, my only stay !  
 To thee I'll cling till faith's bright ray  
     A crown has won !  
 Till life's last ebbing tide I'll say,  
     Thy will be done.

Although Dr White has written a good deal for many years, yet it was not till 1879 that he published a volume. In that year, however, he gave to the world "Jottings in Prose and Verse," a goodly work of nearly 300 closely-printed pages. The prose portion consists of some sixteen sketches and essays on miscellaneous subjects, sparkling with wit, and brimful of humour. The poetical portion of the volume is made up of short lyrical pieces, mostly in the Scottish dialect. The poems show tenderness, lively wit, and a genial nature, and all of them are possessed of a charming simplicity and a skilful finish. His songs have a fine point and an easy flow about them which always pleases.

#### OOOR LAST FLITTIN'.

Life's lease is unco short, John,  
 And the term is comin' fast ;  
 The flittin' day we'll min', John,  
 Lest sorrow come at last.  
 A treasure we'll lay up, John,  
 A' safe frae ilka fae,  
 Whaur ne'er a warning's gi'en, John,  
 A hame without a wae.

Come when the flittin' may, John,  
 We'll e'en noo dae oor best,  
 And aye look up for grace, John,  
 To bring us peace an' rest.  
 Wi' heart sincere, we'll strive, John,  
 To keep the narrow way,  
 And watch, wi' jealous e'e, John,  
 Oor last, oor flittin' day.

Ye ken we've flitted aft, John,  
 An' sair for fouchen been,  
 To keep oor bairnies sax, John,  
 An' sticks a' neat an' clean :

But oh, it mak's me wae, John,  
 (My only pride an' stay)  
 To think that we must part, John,  
 When comes the fittin' day.

Through a' oor cares an' toils, John,  
 We've helpit ane anither,  
 And e'en when at the warst, John,  
 We closer drew thegither.  
 Oor bonnie bairns four, John,  
 Noo clad in white array,  
 We'll meet, if we hae faith, John,  
 When comes the fittin' day.

We've warnin's had fu' aft, John,  
 That filled oor hearts wi' wae,  
 To tell us baith the truth, John,  
 We're creepin' doon the brae ;  
 A' these were wisely sent, John,  
 Sure inklin's o' decay,  
 That whisper'd aye, tak' tent, John,  
 Ere comes the fittin' day.

#### THE DARKEST O' CLOUDS HAE AYE SILVER LINING.

When strange freaks o' fortune darken hope's e'e,  
 Whose weaving and end we canna weel see ;  
 Gird on Wisdom's shield, and cease a' repining,  
 For the darkest o' clouds hae aye silver lining.

Should grief's sombre shades fall fast at your door,  
 When whiles ye are moor'd on Misfortune's lee shore ;  
 With meekness submit to this hard refining,  
 For the darkest o' clouds hae aye silver lining.

When life's e'ening tide is ruffled wi' care,  
 And fancy's bright dreams are maist lost in despair ;  
 Trim faith's flick'ring lamp, and keep it aye shining,  
 For the darkest o' clouds hae aye silver lining.

When Fortune her gifts withdraws with a frown,  
 And life's silver chord is nearly run down,  
 Think o' the land where light's ever shining,  
 For the darkest o' clouds hae aye silver lining.



## JOHN F. DUNCAN

WAS born in Newtyle in 1847. At present he is engaged in trade in Dundee as a painter and house decorator. Mr Duncan's opportunities of courting the Muse have been few, as his business has demanded the most of his time and attention. "Lights and Shadows," a dramatic sketch, turning upon episodes in the life of Robert Burns, is as yet the only work that Mr Duncan has found it convenient to publish. The sketch was composed in connection with the Dundee Burns Club. This Club, now in the twenty-third year of its existence, has held an annual festival, on or about the 25th of January, since the date of its origin. At these festivals a dramatic entertainment forms the principal feature of the programme, and to Mr Duncan's labour in producing sketches is mainly due the success of these festivals. The piece has been produced on various occasions in the Theatre Royal, Dundee. Through its representation on the stage the members of the Dundee Burns Club were able to hand over a sum of £50 towards the erection of the Burns Statue, executed by Sir John Steel, and unveiled in Dundee in October 1880. The sketch has also been performed in the country districts in the neighbourhood of Dundee for various charitable purposes, and has always been enthusiastically received. At the time of its representation in the Theatre, the local newspapers wrote unani- mously in its praise. One of them referred to it as a singularly well written piece, constructed with an amount of skill which would have done credit to a professional playwright.

The selection from the first scene will give the reader a slight idea of the scope of a work which ought to be read in its entirety:—

## INTERIOR OF WILLIAM BURNS' COTTAGE.

WILLIAM BURNS and GILBERT seated at a table.

*W. Burns.* Ah! Gillert, but yer brither's sair to blame,  
His nichtly wanderins, negleck o' hame,  
His godless, glaikit company wi' fules,  
At feein' markets, kirns, an' dancin' schules,  
Wi' a' the evils o' their time an' place,  
Will surely bring him ruin an' disgrace.

*Gilbert.* Oh! faither, but ye judge pair Robert sair,  
He kens the richt an' wrang, tak ye nae fear;  
What tho' he mixes in the hamely sport  
O' kindred spirits o' the humbler sort;  
It may na be that wisdom always dwells  
In Sage's toors or lanely hermit cells:  
Whyles ye may see it in the kindly face,  
In lowly cot, or in the market place.

*W. Burns.* Ah! Gilbert, Gilbert, but my fears maun speak.  
Wi' passions strong an' resolution weak,  
Wi' gifts o' mind magnetic in their po'er,  
He may attract, no aye the gude an' pure!  
An' I hae markit in his youth the bent  
O' his ower eager ardent temperment;  
Defiance bold sits on his forehead hie,  
Speaks in his quiverin' lip and flashin' e'e;  
Dour honesty is his, that canna bide  
The sight o' cant, hypocrisy, an' pride;  
Placed in society whaur these abound,  
As plenteous will enemies be found.  
But noo, it's wearin' late, I'll gang tae bed,  
An', Gilbert, bear in mind a' I hae said,  
Should Robert come, an' in a canny mood,  
Speak to him kindly as a brither should.

[Exit WILLIAM BURNS.]

*Gilbert.* Speak tae him! Aiblins if I werena wise  
I'd ack the counsellor wi' sage advise.  
Speak tae him! Ay, an' see the proud disdain  
Wi' which he'd cast it in my face again.  
Na, na, whate'er may be his lot in life—  
The conqueror or conquered in the strife—  
Unfettered must he be in every limb,  
God an' posterity maun judge o' him.  
But here he comes. [Enter BURNS.] Robert, ye're late the  
nicht;  
Ye've pit oor faither in an unco fricht;  
He's winderin' sair whaur ye can get to gang.

*Burns.* Indeed! Weel, Gilbert, there's nae meikle wrang;  
But in the gloamin', haein' time to spare,  
I wandered listless east as far as Ayr,  
There met some freens, adjourned to hae a dram,  
Spent a naist happy nicht, an' here I am.

*Gilbert.* Ah! Robert, but——

*Burns.* Come, Gilbert, nae advices,  
We buy behaviour at various prices ;  
Supposin' it a matter o' expense,  
The best, tho' dearest, is experience.

*Gilbert, aside.* Juist as I said, advice he winna tak.

[BURNS goes to a chest, and takes a manuscript from the locker.]

*Burns.* Aweel noo, Gilbert, lat us cheenge the crack :  
I wrote some verses here the ither day—  
Suppose yersel' a critic in a way—  
I think they're gude, still I wad like to ken  
If they can touch the hearts o' ither men.  
The theme is humble : Ae day busy plewin',  
A wee field moosie's nest I brocht tae ruin ;  
Wi' sid'lin' coorse the frichtit creatur' ran  
Frae his arch enemy, a' po'erfu' man.  
Commiseration, pity, stirred my breast,  
Which in poetic form is thus exprest.

[*Reads poem. "To a Mouse."*]

*Gilbert.* Maist beautifu' ! in fack, it is sublime ;  
It's maist extraord'nar hoo ye mak it rhyme.  
But, Robert, ye'll excuse me if I tell ye  
I tak's yer mind aff things o' far mair value.  
It's no that Poetry there's ony hairm in.  
But, ah ! it's no sae profitable as fairmin'.

*Burns.* *Ne sutor ultra crepidam.* Weel said,  
Gentlest o' oracles, noo gang to bed.

[GILBERT slowly retires, turns at the door, looks wistfully at BURNS, and exit.]

*Burns.* Noo let me pause and tak a forward view.  
Two paths lie open, *one* I maun pursue :  
This leads to fortune, independance, ease ;  
That, to the puir reward Apollo gies.  
I fain wad rank auld Scotia's bards amang,  
Gie her a lift in hamely rustic sang,  
But, ah ! the wild flow'rs and the green grass wave  
On ill requited Ferguson's young grave.  
I see his ghasty hunger-wasted form,  
The shattered wreck o' ae continuous storm  
O' rude adversity. I hear him cry  
In wailin' tones o' mental agony,  
Left by the land he loved an' sung so well  
To moan his life out in a mad-house cell.  
Then, why should I self-interest disown—  
Accept the laurel as a martyr's crown ?  
No ! by puir Ferguson, neglected, dead,  
And by the starry roof abune me spread—

[*Vision of COILA at the back, who offers him a laurel wreath.*]

## JAMES ROGER,

**S**TATION-MASTER, Roslin Castle, has been a prize-taker in connection with poetical competitions in the columns of the *People's Journal*, &c., and many of his pieces give evidence of a pure and thoughtful mind, deeply in love with the beauties of Nature, of which he sings with simple and unassuming tenderness. He was born at Kirkmichael, Ayrshire, in 1841, and graduated in the school of honest poverty, having been working for himself since he was eleven years of age. He left Ayrshire in 1858, entered the service of the North British Railway Company in 1866, and has been in his present position since 1870—greatly esteemed for his civil and obliging manners, as well as for his moral worth. Besides writing occasional verses, Mr Roger is known as a diligent and intelligent student of geology and botany.

## THE BRAES O' BLACKCASTLE.

The brackens are brown on the braes o' Blackcastle,  
 The red leaves o' autumn are strewn on the plain ;  
 But aft on the hillside the brackens will rustle,  
 Ere with Flora I roam on Blackcastle again.

Oh, sadly we gazed on the crimson sun setting,  
 Whilst bricht shone the licht on the Isle o' the May,  
 And doon in the meadows the cattle were grazing,  
 Whilst the redbreast was warbling the dirge o' the day.

And the woodland was bathed in a golden brown glory,  
 Where the warin lips of autumn each leaflet had prest ;  
 Whilst sombre and stern, like the heroes of story,  
 The uprearing pines swayed their feathery crest.

And sweet frae yon tree-top the mavis was trilling,  
 And the coo o' the cushat sae plaintive and wae,  
 Struck an echoing chord in our hearts which were thrilling  
 Responsive to a' the sweet notes o' their lay.

But the glory soon faded— the birdies ceased singing,  
 As dark o'er the land-cape nicht's mantle did fa',  
 And the seagull o'erhead was screaming while winging  
 Its way to the Bass or to dark Berwick Law.

And the dewdraps, as saft as the kiss o' a maiden,  
 Were weetin' the wee flowers that spangled the hill ;  
 Whilst the blush-fringed gowan, wi' nectar o'erladen,  
 Bent low to its neebour, the bonny blue bell.

Oh, friendship is pleasant, in youth's sunny morning  
 It springs frae the heart, free frae envy and strife :  
 Our toils they grow lighter, our joys they grow brighter,  
 For the love-wreaths we weave round the chains of our life.

'Tis in mem'ries like these where true pleasures are found  
 Illuming the mind with a mellowed caste,  
 When the gloaming of life draws its curtains around,  
 And we turn o'er the tear-blotted leaves of the past.

#### TWILIGHT.

Gently falls the evening shadows  
 With a soul-inspiring calm ;  
 Soothing down each warring passion,  
 Healing aching hearts with balm.

The silver moon steals gently upwards,  
 Smiling o'er the softened scene,  
 Casting lengthened shadows over  
 Mountain top and meadow green ;

And the little pearly flowerets  
 Feel the gentle influence too,  
 As they close their fairy petals,  
 Laden with refreshing dew.

Memory also owns the sway,  
 Reflection opes her varied store ;  
 Things thought worthless, cast away,  
 Now are mourned and grievéd o'er.

Hours misspent and moments squandered,  
 Though we knew they could not last ;  
 Gone to swell the insatiate garner  
 Of the ever craving Past.

Through the trees the wind is moaning  
 Like the wail of recreant soul,  
 As it sinks into Life's gloaming,  
 Draweth near the earthly goal.

Feelings too more calm and holy  
 Come we know not whence nor why ;  
 Make us humble feel, and lowly,  
 Thrill the heart and dim the eye.



Still the moon is gliding upward,  
 And from the beggar to the throne ;  
 With regret each looketh backward,  
 As they haste to their long home.

#### EVENING CHIMES.

'Tis by struggling men grow noble,  
 Trampling on unworthy things ;  
 Gathering up the misspent moments—  
 Precious pearls on golden strings.

Looking upwards, ever heavenwards,  
 Like the spire of God's own house ;  
 Casting worldly cares behind us,  
 Praising God with cheerful voice.

Then droop not in the weary conflict,  
 God will help you on your way ;  
 And, in hours of dark temptation,  
 Hopefully and humbly pray.

Though adversities surround thee,  
 Still press onward, do not fear ;  
 And though vanquished in thy sorrow  
 God will wipe the falling tear.

Look with loving gaze to Jesus,  
 Kingly author of our faith ;  
 Present aid in every trouble,  
 Comforter in hour of death.

Oh, look upwards, ever heavenwards,  
 Listen to his gracious word ;  
 They are blest, for ever blest,  
 Who wait and rest upon the Lord.

#### TO A FRIEND.

Oh ! blame not if my woodnotes wild,  
 In strains harmonious may not roll ;  
 I let the flowers of fancy twine  
 In wreaths uncultured round my soul.

The hedge-side flowers will serve an end,  
 Unnoticed in the worlds rude strife ;  
 And like the flowers those lines many tend  
 To soothe some thorny path in Life.

Look friendly on those simple lays,  
 Think kindly of me as you read ;  
 You would not blame the homely bird  
 That sweetly sings on daisied mead

Because its song was not more sweet,  
 Its notes did not more glorious thrill ;  
 And mine is but a rude wild strain  
 To please my own untutored will.

## JOHN DAVIDSON BROWN,

**B**R. as he delighted to call himself, "The Bard of Glazert," was born in the pastoral parish of Dunlop, in the north of Ayrshire, about 1820. His parents, though labouring people, gave him a superior English and commercial education, which enabled him to engage in teaching. For some years he taught in country schools in his native district, and at the village of Hollow-wood, in the parish of Lochwinnoch, Renfrewshire. Unfortunately he gave way to restless and intemperate habits; and while yet a young man, he went to the United States, but only remained there a short time. On returning home he published his "Adventures," and in 1845 he issued "The Bard of Glazert, with Miscellaneous Poems and Songs." Of the first mentioned, only part one, extending to about sixty pages, was given—the second, we believe, was never written. The Glazert is a small stream which flows through a beautiful district, until it falls into the Annick, about four miles below the populous village of Stewarton; and the poem in which Mr Brown celebrates its beauties is partly lyrical and partly narrative—the former being by far the best. The other portion of the volume is unequal—some of the poems being very beautiful and finely-finished productions, while others appear to have been written with haste. The work, however, was favourably received by the press, and procured him an appointment on the *Ayr Observer*, but he only kept the situation for a short time.

In 1850 he brought out by subscription "Ballads Founded on Ayrshire Traditions," with interesting historical introductions. Some of these ballads are touching, and have a fine easy and graceful flow of verse.

Meanwhile Mr Brown had sent a copy of his first volume to the Rev. George Gilfillan, whose "Bundles of Books" were then appearing in *Hogg's Instructor*. The critic gave it a severe "cutting up," and the poet took this much to heart. In his anguish he went to Mr A. B. Todd, of Cunnock, then a young poetical aspirant, but who has since earned a wide fame, and to whom he dedicated one of his longer ballads. Mr Todd gave the poor stricken bard wise counsel, and endeavoured to soothe his anguish, and to cheer him by giving him substantial help in the way of enabling him to get the "Ballads" out of the hands of the publisher. Instead of using the aid for this purpose, he again yielded to his besetting temptation, and was never able to *relieve* his work. Soon after, it is thought, he again went to America, where he is supposed to have died, as all trace of him has long been lost.

The following pieces show that, with loftier aims and steadier habits, he might have obtained an honourable place amongst our national poets:—

#### MY NATIVE LAND.

My native land, my native land,  
 Where dwell the brave and free,  
 Lies far from dark Columbia's strand—  
 Beyond Atlanta's sea.  
 And I have cross'd the raging main—  
 An exile now I roam,  
 And I may never greet again  
 My happy island home.

Land of my fathers ! tho' the sea  
 Rolls dark and wide between,  
 This fond heart ever is with thee,  
 And throbs at every scene  
 That recollection brings to view,  
 Of boyhood's happy days,  
 When I roam'd o'er thy mountains blue,  
 And sported on thy braes.

A tear is trembling in mine eye—  
 My throbbing heart is full ;  
 I see in fancy all that I  
 In youth deemed beautiful :—

I see the cottage of my birth  
 In thy green glens remote ;  
 I see my friends of noblest worth—  
 Friends ne'er to be forgot.

O Scotland ! wherefore did I leave  
 Thy shores, where freedom reigns,  
 To seek a land where now I grieve  
 For thy green flow'ry plains.  
 Can gold beguile the weariness  
 That brings this burden'd sigh,  
 Or rob from all, its dreariness,  
 On which I turn mine eye ?

And I am in a sunny clime,  
 Where winter is unknown,  
 Where tow'rs the cedar and the lime,  
 By silent Mageron ;  
 But I would rather see the isle  
 Where winter's chilly breath  
 Congeals the brook, and clothes awhile  
 In white, the mountain heath.

Above me in the breezeless air,  
 Soar birds of daring wing ;  
 But oh ! I long again to hear  
 The warbling skylark sing ;  
 And birds of rainbow plumage flit  
 In every flowery bush ,  
 But I would rather listen yet  
 The chanting of the thrush.

And Scotia, stubborn is thy soil,  
 And cold thy northern sky ;  
 But to thy hardy sons of toil  
 What land with thee can vie ?  
 Thy soil is hallow'd by the tread  
 Of freedom's bravest sons,  
 And danger never made afraid  
 Thine own undaunted ones.

A Wallace and a Bruce have been  
 Of yore thy sons of might,  
 And with their blades of dazzling sheen,  
 Maintained thine honoured right ;  
 And thousands of thy Saxon foes,  
 Who came to Bannockburn,  
 Thy sons of freedom to oppose,  
 Fell, never to return.

But by thy mountains and thy plains  
 War's shout is heard no more,  
 And gentle peace serenely reigns  
 In thee from shore to shore.

In thy green glens, and on thy hills,  
 Gay thrilling songs are heard,  
 Sweeter than music of thy rills,  
 From many a rustic bard.  
 By "bonnie Doon" was heard a lyre—  
 'Twas sweet and gay by turns ;  
 And he who woke its strains of fire  
 Was thine own minstrel Burns.

Thy blue streams that sweep singing by  
 Dark greenwood, rock, and brae,  
 Are in soul-melting melody  
 Sung of, in many a lay.  
 Thou land of beauty and of song—  
 Land of blue limpid streams,  
 Thy woods and glens I stray among,  
 In sweet Elysian dreams.

Land of the mountain and the fell—  
 Land of the twilight glen ;  
 Land of the strath and bosky dell—  
 Land of the lake and fen ;  
 Land of the brave land of the free,  
 Where tyrants may not roam,  
 I would I were again in thee,  
 My happy island home.

#### TAM GIFFEN.

Auld grannie sat carding her woo' by the fire  
 On a cauld winter eve ; and as midnight drew nigher,  
 The bairns gather'd roun' her and quitted their glee,  
 To list to her tales : mony auld tales had she,  
 O' brownies, an' spunkies, an' wee merry men  
 That dance in green jackets at nicht in the glen—  
 O' ghosts an' grim spectres, in auld castles grey,  
 That haud their wild revelries till break o' day.

In a circle aroun' her the wee bairnies drew,  
 An' eerie they look'd at the fire burnin' blue ;  
 Nae whispering was heard when auld grannie began  
 To tell o' Tam Giffen, the wild warlock man :  
 Lang, lang in the warld woun'd warlock Tam,  
 Nae ane could tell frae what kintra he cam' ;  
 He seem'd like a stranger on earth left forlorn,  
 An' some said he ne'er in this warld was born.

He wander'd the kintra, north, east, south and west,  
 An' aft gaed to ca' on them wha used him best ;  
 Alane in some glen he at morn nicht he seen,  
 But nae ane kent whaur he nicht be or 'twas e'en ;  
 Pale, pale was his lank cheek, but dark lowered his brow,  
 An' his black e'e seem'd glancin' wi' mearthly lowe ;  
 He lauched at the sorrows that made ithers weep,  
 An' he never was kent to slumber or sleep.

In through the keyhole, or down through the lum,  
 When the doors were a' barred he at midnight wad come ;  
 Or afar in some glen wi' the boggles wad be,  
 At the dead o' the nicht hauding unholy glee ;  
 Or dancin' wi' fairies far ben in the wood,  
 Or sai'ing in cockle-shell far o'er the flood,  
 Or fleeing wi' witches away through the air,  
 Or doing dark deeds that I daurna declare.

When a tempest was brewing afar in the sky,  
 There aye was a wildness in Tam Giffen's eye,  
 An' awa oot o' sicht he would soon disappear,  
 Crying " Wark's to be dune, an' I daurna bide here."  
 An' aften wad gude folk in terror declare  
 He rade in the black storm on high in the air,  
 Leading whirlwinds quick onward o'er valley an' hill,  
 Working mischief an' ruin to gude an' to ill.

Ae nicht when a revel o' goblins had been  
 Far down in the glen, on the mune-lighted green,  
 Tam shared in the glee, and next morning telt a'  
 The wonderful things that he heard an' he saw ;  
 Then the fairies, an' goblins, an' witches did meet  
 By Garrits' dark linn—a wild lonely retreat—  
 An' wailings were heard in the dread midnight air,  
 An Tam Giffen, next morning, was found lifeless there.



## JOHN LEE

**3**S a native of Montrose, where he was born in 1797. His father came to that town as a member of the troop of the 7th, or King's Own, Heavy Dragoon Guards, who were stationed there while the American war was going on. John and a

brother David were the only members of a family of nine who grew up to manhood. The latter, when a youth of sixteen, enlisted in the Royal Horse Artillery, in which regiment he passed through the Peninsular War, and was also present at the Battle of Waterloo. The subject of this sketch served an apprenticeship as a shoemaker, and became foreman in one of the principal shops. He was an enthusiastic musician, and composed music for several of his effusions. This led him into the society of the leading gentlemen of the town. Mr Davidson Nichol, then bookseller in the well-known establishment now occupied by Mr George Walker, took an interest in the young man, and giving up his *awl*, he entered his service as salesman and traveller. He remained in this situation until the death of Mr Nichol, and was also in the employment of his successor, Mr G. W. Laird, as well as with Mr Walker. He left the service of the latter, became a clerk for a short time, and then returned to his original calling. After the lapse of several years he became a pressman in Mr Walker's printing establishment. John lived for a year or two in England, but came back again in poor circumstances, and found a home in Dorward's House of Refuge.

Being a man of considerable intelligence, with genial and social manners, he felt the change keenly, and wrote as follows:—

#### POVERTY.

'Tis worth the pains of penury—its curse—  
 The inconvenience of an empty purse,  
 To feel, to look abroad, to stand alone,  
 When your fair prospects are for ever gone,  
 Like some lone scarecrow, out amidst the storm,  
 With garments flaunting tag-rag round its form,  
 You watch your *birds*, that hailed you morn and night—  
 They see you, and at once take sidelong flight,  
 Frighten'd at gaunt poverty, they fly,  
 And leave the human scarecrow but to sigh.  
 I've many friends who rank among a class  
 Whose wiser plans rebuke me now, alas!

For want of aim—they've watch'd the wind  
 And kept their course, and I am left behind,  
 But yet afloat - still I look up and see  
 Th' intrinsic worth of life's nobility.  
 'Tis glorious, amidst life's trash to know  
 That there are souls who feel for other's woe !

For many years he has composed a New Year's hymn, which is sung with earnestness at the festive gatherings of the inmates of the "refuge." Here is a fair sample of these odes :—

Awake each voice—from hearth and home,  
 From cottage, fane, and sounding dome,  
 From palace-pomp, and hamlet rude,  
 From city's stir, and solitude.  
 Praise ye our God, great Lord of Time,  
 Who reigns in heaven's high courts sublime ;  
 Who rules the floods, wipe's off the tear,  
 And gladdens man with each New Year.

Look round our home ; Almighty care  
 Tends to our wants—He hears our prayer ;  
 He guides our youth with parent hand,  
 And points them to a better land.  
 He smiles upon us from above,  
 And calls us with the voice of love ;  
 Approach Him, then, with holy fear,  
 With grateful thanks for this New Year.

John has on several occasions essayed to become an author, by publishing small collections. One of these, "Wild Flowers of Solitude," has reached a second edition. Besides his pieces issued in a collective form he has frequently appeared in the columns of the local newspapers. These have generally been in the comic and strongly sarcastic vein, and consist of allusions to well-known characters. They are, however, very unequal, and much inferior to his serious poems.

He is much respected by a wide circle in Montrose and district, and is a man of keen sensibilities. We might add that he has long mourned the loss of his partner in life and holds her memory dear. He speaks often of the Sunday prior to his marriage, and relates that he with his bride then walked on the



beautiful links in the afternoon, and rehearsed the marriage service as contained in the Book of Common Prayer. On the 50th anniversary of this Sunday John took the same walk, and read the service from the same book, remarking to an acquaintance he met—"Just to think noo, that I am left alane in my auld age an' nae ane to care for."

#### SWEET IS THE AUTUMN, MIDNIGHT HOUR.

Sweet is the autumn, midnight hour,  
 When silence in her sylvan bower,  
 Arrayed in moonbeams, hails the light  
 From yon clear portals of the night ;  
 The tuneful songsters of the grove.  
 Now cease to sing their songs of love !  
 The brooks glide, murmur'ing to the sea  
 Their harps tuned up to ecstasy.

'Tis here devotion loves to dwell,  
 Beyond the city's midnight pale—  
 Beyond its unrein'd, frantic noise  
 Which shoutings bid the fool rejoice !  
 Obedient, thus, *on* to his fate,  
 Hastens the poor inebriate,  
 Like insects rushing to the light  
 To meet destruction in their flight.

Thrice bless'd are they whose souls expand  
 Whilst yet on earth, to yon bright land,  
 And who, like Enoch, walk with God  
 As pilgrims, but, without the load.

Silence be mine, the silver moon,  
 I love to watch, at night's pale noon,  
 When human tongues are lock'd in sleep—  
 When moon and stars their vigils keep—  
 Stars, that in thousands deck the sky  
 In numberless infinity.

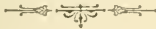
Night is the time to meet with God—  
 To walk within his bless'd abode.

Thou Majesty divine, whose power  
 Is written in the midnight hour  
 In yon interminable space  
 Where Thou sustain'st th' eternal race  
 Of blazing orbs, that speak Thy praise  
 Far from the telescopic gaze,  
 Away in yonder depths sublime  
 Unmeasured by the sons of time,  
 O ! hear me, when I cry to thee,  
 Thou dweller of eternity.

My last breath looms upon my sight,  
 And, when the mandate gives it flight,  
 Disclose to me Thy leading star,  
 To lead a pilgrim from afar.  
 O! be Thy guardian angel near  
 My falt'ring footsteps, then to cheer;  
 May Thy salvation cup be there  
 To keep far from my soul despair,  
 Thus, shall I with my latest breath,  
 Exclaim—"Where is thy sting, O Death!"

## HOGMANAY SCENES.

What shouts of joy are these that meet my ear,  
 Mingling with sounds of an expiring year?  
 Surely they come from those whose souls are blent  
 With consciousness of days and years well spent:  
 And do they think of Him who now has given  
 Another year with bounties fresh from heaven—  
 Of Him who is man's never failing trust  
 In all his paths till dust returns to dust?  
 Ah, no—alas! they come from folly's shrine,  
 Without one thought of blessings so divine.  
 But, list! I hear the voice of grateful praise  
 From other lips, a nobler song they raise  
 To that High Being who lends a list'ning ear  
 To all our wants, who crowns each passing year  
 With blessings all His own, whose table's spread  
 To undeserving man with daily bread,  
 Who guides us through this sterile vale of tears,  
 And pours the light of heaven upon our fears,  
 And who, with open arm, at our last breath,  
 Receives the soul beyond the reach of death.  
 Oh! let us then to wisdom bend the ear,  
 And praise the Lord who rules the passing year!



## WILLIAM NICHOLSON,

WHO is known to most readers of poetry by his fine and strikingly-original poem, "The Brownie of Blednoch," was born at Tannymas, in the seaboard parish of Borgue, in the south of Galloway, so long ago as 1783. His parents were humble,

though highly intelligent people. His mother—like those of most poets—had quite a literary taste, and delighted in the old ballads of her native land, and in Blind Harry's "History of Wallace." Our grand old rugged Scottish version of the Psalms she had completely in her memory, and could also repeat the whole of Allan Ramsay's "Gentle Shepherd." The hearth, then, where the future poet was reared, was truly a "meet nurse for a poetic child."

At school, young Nicholson cared not to acquire more learning than only to enable him to read—arithmetic, like not a few other poets, he utterly abhorred. He delighted in music, and early learned to play well on the Irish bagpipe.

Nicholson was so short-sighted that he was unfit for either a ploughman or a shepherd. He was therefore set up as a packman, and in that capacity he afterwards travelled through Galloway and Dumfriesshire, having his bagpipes always along with him. These made his visits welcome at every farm house and cottage, all over the country. In the open air, on the banks of the purling streams, in the shadow of the wood, or on the purple hillside, he read his favourite authors, and composed most of his poems, taking more delight in these things than in pushing off the wares of his pack. When his business in this line had fallen sadly off through neglect, he began to think of collecting and publishing his poems. With this end in view he set about procuring subscribers, and these soon numbered 1500 names. In Edinburgh, whither he had gone to arrange for the printing of his volume, he met the kindhearted Ettrick Shepherd, who treated him as a true poetic brother, corrected his manuscripts, and, it is said, made a few alterations in "The Country Lass," the principal poem in the volume. By the publication he cleared about £100; and the press was not stinted in the praise it bestowed upon the poems.

It is melancholy to relate that after his fame had been so well established as an author, he became somewhat intemperate. He was, like many other men of genius, of a melancholy temperament, and his drinking habits tended to increase his mental gloom. In 1825, when he gave up his pedlar business entirely, he fell into strange delusions on matters political, religious, and moral. Proceeding to London, amid many difficulties, he tried to get the ear of Royalty, but of course failed. Honest Allan Cunningham was then in the metropolis, and through his aid he was taken care of while in "the great wilderness" of London, and sent safely back to his own green hills.

Two years after this, a second edition of his poems was brought out, edited by Mr John M'Diarmid, of Dumfries, himself an author of note. To this volume was prefixed a well-written sketch of the author's life. For years before his death he had altogether ceased to sing; and, having never married, he resided in loneliness at Kildarroch, in the parish of Borgue, mainly dependant on charity. He died there on the 16th of May, 1849, and was buried in the quiet churchyard of Kirkandrews, an ancient parish, now comprised in that of Borgue. Here, close to a creek of the Solway, and past which glides a murmuring brook, he was often wont to linger in life; and here, where the sea waves moan, and the summer winds sigh soothingly, the weary, erratic wanderer takes his unbroken and everlasting rest.

Nicholson's fame as a poet has hitherto, as already hinted, depended almost wholly on "The Brownie of Blednoch." He has, however, besides writing a lengthy poem, "The Country Lass," in eight parts, composed many songs and poems possessing high merit. In "The Country Lass," for example, a rare knowledge is displayed of human nature, and the actions of men and women in the spheres of life described; while there are in it also numerous

passages of much descriptive beauty. Take this for instance, regarding a rejected lover on his road home:—

The east win' blew, wi' hailstones keen ;  
 The lightning gleamed the blasts between :  
 His road lay ower a dreary moor,  
 And by a castle's haunted tower,  
 Whar howlets screamed wi' eerie din,  
 Till vaults re-echoed a' within.  
 The spate spewed ower ilk burn and sleugh,  
 The toad screamt eldrich frae the cleugh,  
 The Dee spread wide his darkened waves,  
 And roared amang his rocky caves ;  
 The moon and stars their light withdrew  
 And hid their heads frae human view,  
 As daunderin' slow he stalked his lane,  
 A' wearied, wan, and wae-begane.  
 His fondest fairy dreams were fled—  
 He sighed an' wished him wi' the dead.

With a better education, and a more careful moral training (for he was left to himself and to his own resources at the early age of fourteen), the native genius of the man would certainly have given him a high place among the poets of the century. Nicholson's love of the country, and his poetic aptitude for describing it, are seen in the following portion of a poem on

#### RURAL RETIREMENT.

O! rural life, O, blest retreat,  
 Where sweet contentment dwells aye ;  
 To me ye're dearer than the street,  
 Where din and discord yell aye.  
 Where countless wretches are immured,  
 In fell disease and starvin' ;  
 And thrivin' knaves, to guilt inured,  
 Frae virtue's paths are swervin'.

Right dear to me are glens and howes  
 Wi' craigs aboon me towerin',  
 While burns come tumblin' frae the knowes,  
 And owre the linns are pourin'.  
 The sun blinks blythly on the pool,  
 That bickers to his glances ;  
 There water-clocks untaught by rule,  
 Skip through their countra dances.

The sturdy aik aboon the brow,  
 Supports the feeble ivy ;  
 See how it twines wi' mony a bow,  
 Just as it were alive aye.  
 The bloomin' broom, the hawthorn white,  
 That scent the caller mornin' ;  
 And wild flowers that the heart delight  
 The banks and braes adornin'.

Yet still the bonniest flower's unsung  
 O' a' creation's plantin' ;  
 For thee has mony a harp been strung,  
 And ilka heart been pantin' ;  
 But if the precious dew o' sense  
 Bedeckt, it shows the sweeter ;  
 Foster'd by mirthfu' modest mense,  
 It mak's the gift completer.

Leeze me on e'en, when hill and tree  
 Are pictured in the valleys ;  
 When lasses to the loan do hie,  
 To milk and feed their mailies :  
 While sweet an' lang they lilt the sang,  
 As lads come frae the mawin',  
 Wha pree their mous ere it be lang  
 In corner till the daw'in'.

Now e'enin' star, to lovers dear,  
 Beams on the purple west ;  
 Wi' modest beauties soft and clear,  
 Like Peggy's spotless breast.  
 The moon like ony buskäd bride,  
 In silver grey was glancin',  
 And on the restless rockin' tide  
 Her lightsome locks were dancin'.

But sure contentment lives, hersel',  
 Beneath yon brow clay biggin',  
 Weel theekit frae the heathery fell,  
 While brackens crown the riggin'.  
 The honeysuckles speel the roof,  
 And fous adorn the gavel ;  
 The frien'ly firs, they keep it noof,  
 Frae Boreas' bauldest devel.

Here auld folks live wi' bairns' bairns,  
 And blest wi' peace and plenty ;  
 Here parents' hope the boson warms,  
 Here youth blooms fair and dainty ;  
 Here dwell the mither's virtuous smiles,  
 The faithfu' friend and father ;  
 Unlike those skilled in city wiles,  
 That aften slip the tether.

What though they hae nae opera joys,  
 Or carriage gay to flaunt in ;  
 Or dainty that the stomach cloys,  
 They never ken the want 'em.  
 Their hamespun grey, and halesome fare,  
 Mak' life as sweet's the gentry's ;  
 And what they hae, they freely share,  
 Nor heed they learn'd comment'ries.

Unknown to them the borrow'd glance,  
 To smile when sorrows twine them ;  
 Or a' the mummeries come frae France,  
 Few spleens or vapours pine them.  
 Their life is like yon todollin' burn ;  
 Though cross craigs whiles may stint it,  
 Still presses through ilk thrawart turn,  
 And never looks behind it.

My wearied limbs I'd here repose,  
 And woo the muses roun' me ;  
 There mark the briar that bears the rose,  
 While laverocks soar aboon me.  
 Here, far frae busy bustlin' strife,  
 I'd tend life's latest ember ;  
 Unteased by feign'd friends, or wife,  
 That wauken care and clamour.

#### THE BANKS OF TARF.

Where windin' Tarf, by broomy knowes,  
 Wi' siller waves to saut sea rows ;  
 And mony a greenwood cluster grows,  
 And harebells bloomin' bonnie, O.  
 Beneath a spreadin' hazle lee,  
 Fu' snugly hid where nane could see,  
 While blinkin' love beamed frae her e'e,  
 I met my bonnie Annie, O.

Her neck was o' the snawdrap hue,  
 Her lips like roses wet wi' dew ;  
 But oh ! her e'e o' azure blue,  
 Was past expression bonnie, O.  
 Like threads o' gowd her flowin' hair,  
 That lightly wantoned in the air ;  
 But vain were a' my rhymin' ware  
 To tell the charms o' Annie, O.

While smilin' in my arms she lay,  
 She whisperin', in my ear di'l say,  
 " Oh ! how could I survive the day,  
 Should you prove fause my Tammie, O ? "

“While spangled fish glide to the main,  
While Scotlan’s braes shall wave wi’ grain  
Till this fond heart shall break wi’ pain,  
I’ll aye be true to Annie, O.”

The Beltan winds blew loud and lang,  
And ripplin’ raised the spray alang ;  
We cheerfu’ sat and cheerfu’ sang,  
“The banks o’ Tarf are bonnie, O.”  
Though sweet is spring, when young and gay,  
And blythe the blinks o’ summer day ;  
I fear nae winter cauld and blae,  
If blest wi’ love and Annie, O.

### THE BRAES OF GALLOWAY.

Oh ! Lassie wilt thou gang wi’ me,  
And leave thy frien’s i’ south countrie—  
Thy former frien’s and sweethearts a’,  
And gang wi’ me to Gallowa’ ?

Oh ! Gallowa’ braes they wave wi’ broom,  
And heather-bells in bonnie bloom ;  
There’s lordly seats and livin’s braw  
Amang the braes o’ Gallowa’.

There’s stately woods on mony a brae,  
Where burns and birds in concert play ;  
The waukrife echo answers a’  
Amang the braes o’ Gallowa’.

Oh ! Gallowa’ braes, etc.

The simmer shiel I’ll build for thee,  
Alang the bonnie banks o’ Dee,  
Half circlin’ roun’ my father’s ha’  
Amang the braes o’ Gallowa’.

Oh ! Gallowa’ braes, etc.

When autumn waves her flowin’ horn,  
And fields o’ gowden grain are shorn,  
I’ll busk thee fine in pearlins braw,  
To join the dance in Gallowa’.

Oh ! Gallowa’ braes, etc.

At e’en, when darkness shrouds the sight  
And lanely langsome is the night,  
Wi’ tentie care my pipes I’ll thraw,  
Play “A’ the way to Gallowa’.”

Oh ! Gallowa’ braes, etc.

Should fickle fortune on us frown,  
Nae lack o’ gear our love should drown :  
Content should shield our haddin’ sma’,  
Amang the braes o’ Gallowa’.



Come, while the blossom's on the broom,  
 And heather-bells sae bonnie bloom ;  
 Come, let us be the happiest twa  
 On a' the braes o' Gallowa'.



### THOMAS WATTS.

THE minstrels of the Scottish Borders are undoubtedly much fewer in number now than they were in the past; and with the death, in 1870, of the Rev. Henry Scott Riddell, many said that we had witnessed the last of the Border bards. In a certain sense this was true, for he was the last of those poets who linked us to the past, and most worthily connected our own time with such lofty sons of song as Sir Walter Scott, the Ettrick Shepherd, Thomas Pringle, and Dr John Leyden. It could not be, however, that the beauty of the Borderland, and its numberless romantic and soul-stirring historical and traditional associations, should ever fail to inspire her most gifted sons to sing.

Thomas Watts is truly a Border minstrel, although Ireland has the honour of his birth. His father was a non-commissioned officer in the Royal Marine Artillery, and fought under Sir Charles Napier on the Syrian and Egyptian coasts, in 1840, when Ibrahim Pacha, "the terrible bull-dog of the east," was not only attempting to throw off the yoke of the Sultan of Turkey, but was even menacing Constantinople itself. It was after this war, in 1845, and while the regiment was lying in Wexford barracks, that our bard was born.

Having been put to a school taught by a pedagogue who could not feel for the delicately fine nervous temperament of the lad, he made very slow progress,

and his friends, fearing he was good for nothing, removed him from school and put him to learn the tailoring trade, "that refuge," as has been said, "of imbeciles and cripples." The poor lad entered upon this career greatly against his own inclination, and for the first four years was in no mood to learn—hoping and longing for more congenial employment. During the last year of his apprenticeship he applied himself to the business with such diligence that he soon became perfect at the trade. On becoming a journeyman, a strong desire came upon him to travel; and in the course of a few years he visited most of the principal towns in the United Kingdom, working and perfecting himself at his business; and by self-teaching, and diligent application not only making himself an excellent English scholar, but storing his mind by reading, and cultivating a literary, and, particularly, a poetic taste.

Broomhouse Cottage, where Mr Watts, with his mother and two sisters, reside, is in one of the most picturesque valleys of the Merse, close upon the banks of the Whitadder, a stream of gentle beauty. It nestles amid the fine trees which adorn the banks of the river, a delightful spot to gaze upon, and a most fitting residence for a poet. In 1880 Mr Watts published "Woodland Echoes." These "Echoes" show a chaste and cultivated taste, with a pure and a boundless love of Nature, an eye to discern her aright, and ample ability to describe her ever-changing moods. The poems are marked by fine moral reflection and lit up by flashes of humour, while passages of tender and touching pathos abound. The volume is not only an extraordinary production for a working tailor, but one of such high excellence that any poet might be proud to be the author of it.

#### THE GRASS.

The poet may sing of the smiling Spring,  
With its wealth of sweet flowerets so fair,

And tell of the rose where the zephyr blows,  
 Wafting sweets on the soft summer air ;  
 While Autumn's brown leaf, and the golden sheaf,  
 May form for his musings a theme,  
 And the struggling brook from the frozen rock  
 Flow warm through the poet's fond dream ;  
 And he wreathes them in song, but how seldom, alas !  
 Is entwin'd with its garland the beautiful grass.

When the honeyed flowers of the vernal hours  
 Scatter perfume in sunshine or shade,  
 Where primroses grow and violets blow  
 By the brook in the briary glade ;  
 When every soft sound sheds melody round,  
 Like the sweet tender whisp'rings of love,  
 And the rich perfume of the hawthorn bloom  
 Fills the depths of the tuneful grove ;  
 What charm can outvie, or what beauty surpass,  
 The emerald tints of the beautiful grass.

When lovely doth seem both woodland and stream  
 As we traverse their mazes alone,  
 When the sun beams high in the noonday sky,  
 And storm-boding shadows are gone ;  
 When Summer's light breeze sighs soft 'mong the trees,  
 Like the sigh of a slumbering child,  
 And murmurs again like some lyric strain  
 That the slumberer's fancy beguil'd,  
 How void would appear every scene that we pass  
 If bereft of the charms of the beautiful grass.

When Summer at last like a vision hath pass'd,  
 With her voices so joyous and glad,  
 And Autumn appears, like a matron in tears,  
 With a beauty so pensive and sad ;  
 When a something sublime, we cannot define,  
 Seems to mingle with every sound,  
 When the low winds moan with an eerie tone  
 'Mong the leaves that are scatter'd around ;  
 There, smiling alone 'mid the withering mass  
 Of Nature's decay is the beautiful grass.

When arid and sear the woodlands appear,  
 When chill is the Winter's rude breath,  
 When life seems to rest on Nature's cold breast,  
 Fast bound in the fetters of death ;  
 When the stout oak's form bends low in the storm,  
 And the earth seems to tremble and quake ;  
 When the snow-drifts whirl in eddies, and curl  
 In wreaths o'er the ice-fetter'd lake ;  
 Then, how sweetly there droops round its surface of glass  
 The ever-green fringe of the beautiful grass.

How oft have we long'd in a great city, throng'd  
 With contrasts of sadness and mirth,  
 For a few sweet hours 'mong the forest flowers,  
 Far away mid the scenes of our birth ;  
 'Tis thus we have turn'd— with feelings that yearn'd  
 For some clime of a purer air—  
 To some lonely lane again and again,  
 And sooth'd the heart's longings there ;  
 For at every lone corner and nook that we pass,  
 Like an old friend will greet us the beautiful grass.

## AFFECTION'S GIFT.

Though we may prize true friendship's gift,  
 And own it gives a pleasure,  
 Time may employ some other joy,  
 And cast aside the treasure ;  
 But when the hand of love bestows  
 The tribute of affection,  
 'Neath Time's fell sway can ne'er decay  
 Its treasured recollection.

There comes at times, 'mid lonely hours,  
 A sweet impressive feeling,  
 When thoughts will flow to long ago—  
 Youth's happy scenes revealing ;  
 Then some dear relic of the past  
 May tender thoughts awaken,  
 And bring us back o'er memory's track,  
 Love's pledges unforsaken.

When other joys dissolve beneath  
 The shadowy veil of sorrow,  
 That joy will last, and from the past  
 Sweet inspiration borrow ;  
 While 'mid the wreck of shattered hopes  
 Still lives the recollection,  
 When youth and love together wove  
 The bonds of true affection.

## THOUGH FAR FROM THEE.

There's joy attends the silent thought  
 That wafts me to thy presence,  
 At times when saddest hours are fraught  
 With memory's purest essence.

That thought brings back the halcyon days  
 When love shed joys around us,  
 When pleasure wove 'mong flow'ry ways,  
 The fairy chain that bound us.

Think not that rival charms could part  
 The magic chain asunder,  
 That links my fate to thine, sweetheart,  
 Though far from thee I wander.

Though beauty may with artful wiles  
 A homage win from many ;  
 The changeless beauty of thy smiles  
 Shall fix my choice, dear Annie.

And through life's varying scenes, dear love,  
 Will fond remembrance treasure  
 Thy every word, and look, to prove  
 The constant theme a pleasure.

Though beauty's form appears to me  
 In soft allurements many,  
 My faithful heart will turn to thee,  
 And own thy worth, dear Annie.

Though years of trial my faith may test,  
 Its source shall fail me never ;  
 While swells the life-stream in my breast,  
 'Twill flow with thee for ever.

#### THE AULD HEMAL HOOSE.

Oh ! auld Hemal Hoose, frail, luckless, an' lane,  
 A sorry sicht noo frae the times that are gane ;  
 When, eident and thrifty, bauld " Whup-the-cat " Jock,  
 And his couthy spouse Janet—the wale o' auld folk—  
 'Neath thy turf-theekit roof faund a cosy bit bield,  
 Wi' ilk blessin' o' life that contentment could yield :  
 When his day's wark was dune, Jock, prood as a laird,  
 Might be seen 'mang his skeps in his tidy kail-yaird ;  
 While his canty guid-wifie, as trig as a preen —  
 Wi' a sang at her hairt an' a smile in her een—  
 Gaed flittin' aboot 'tween her snug " but-an'-ben,"  
 Or amang her live gear at thy auld gable-en'.

But noo yer alane,  
 While scarcely a stane

Remains on the solit'ry scene, auld Hoose,  
 To tell o' the times that ha'e been.

Oh ! auld Hemal Hoose, fu' weel dae I min'  
 When my billies an' I were schule laddies lang syne ;  
 When freed frae the yoke o' auld Tawsie's misrule,  
 An' the terrible phantoms that hauntit the schule,  
 We'd awa' to the knowes where, amang the wee floors,  
 As happy as fairies, we'd gambol for hours ;  
 Or we'd speel thro' thy winnocks, lang wantin' the gless,  
 Syne on to thy couples fu' reckless we'd press :

Thy auld dozant couples, where stridlin's we'd sit—  
 'Deed, I canna but laugh when I'm thinkin' o't yet—  
 Hoo we'd cock-a-ride-roozy till aff rowed a stane  
 Frae the end o' a jeest, until jeest there was nane ;

While flat on the grund

We lay groanin', an' fund

That it wasna a' frolic wi' thee, auld Hoose,  
 When siccan fell dunts ye could gi'e.

Oh ! auld Hemal Hoose, ever present wi' me  
 Are the mem'ries that link ilka feelin' to thee ;  
 When I think o' the times when a wheen glaikit bairns  
 Play'd hide-an'-gae-seek 'mong the howes an' the cairns ;  
 Or when storm-biggitt cluds bore an ominous cast,  
 Hoo we faund thee, auld freend, a sure bield frae the blast ;  
 While the snell nor'lan' wind, wi' an eeriesome seuch,  
 Like a speerit o' madness, scream'd wild thro' the cleuch ;  
 In the darklin' howe neuk, where thegither we'd stown,  
 Aye the closer we'd creep as the gloamin' came on,  
 And, time aboot, whisper, wi' fear-burden'd breaths,  
 O' Spunkies, Hobgoblins, auld Boggles, an' Wraiths,  
 Till we sprang ower the sod

In het haste for the road,

Wi' mony a scared glance to the rear, auld Hoose,  
 A' speechless an' feckless wi' fear.

Oh ! auld Hemal Hoose, fu' weel dae I ken  
 When I coortit young Tibbie o' Preston toon-en',  
 Though late was the hoor, an' ye loom'd thro' the mist  
 Like a motionless, ill-faurant, gruesome auld ghaist ;  
 No' a spot i' the clachan sae welcome could be  
 As thy lanesome auld biggin' to Tibbie an' me ;  
 We feard'na the mirk, nor the wild, soughin' blast,  
 As 'neath thy auld wa's the dear moments we pass'd :  
 An' it's little we cared what the jealous auld dame  
 To hersel' wad be sayin' or thinkin' at hame ;  
 Or what the slack-gabbit, glibe gossips wad say,  
 And report on their way through the steadin' next day :

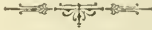
Tho' their cunnin' an' skeel

Might baffle the Deil,

They never jalous'd yet, or kent, auld Hoose,  
 Where oor happiest moments were spent.

Oh ! auld Hemal Hoose, sin' I gaz'd on thee last,  
 What a wonderful change ower thy count'nance hath pass'd ;  
 Where the goggle-e'ed hoolets sat blinkin', instead  
 They ha'e rear'd on thy shooters a braw-lookin' heid ;  
 While a set o' swack limbs ha'e been clapp'd to thy form,  
 That'll guard thee for lang through the pitiless storm ;  
 And thy auld mouldit ribs that were bruckle as chalk,  
 They hae shapit ye new yins to prop up yer back ;  
 'Deed, I'm half in a swither, an' muckle in doot,  
 To ken yer auld count'nance, or what yer aboot ;

Yet I'm thinkin', auld freend, could we mortals discern  
 The lessons ye teach, faith ! the young yins might learn  
     Frae poortith an' cauld  
     To protect aye the auld,  
 As they battle life's storm alane, auld Hoose,  
 When the wale o' auld cronies are gane.



## ANDREW STEEL.

**C**OBBLERS and Shoemakers appear, from a remote time, to have had the reputation of being a remarkable race of men. Some have thought them to be, among the humbler trades and professions of lowly life, the most singular in the production, from their craft, of eminent men. It has been further considered that in this particular they have been more gifted than either tailors or weavers, printers or ploughmen, carpenters or smiths. Somehow the calling has been favourable to the production of students, and of men remarkable for their learning, their wisdom, their genius, and their wit. We have had several notable examples of this in the course of these sketches.

The subject before us is a shoemaker to trade, and was born in Coldstream in 1811. His father was noted as a fine worker in dapier. Andrew received a liberal education, and became a "master shoemaker," although he never had a great love for the calling. His mind has always been set on the acquisition of literary and scientific knowledge—delighting more especially in Natural and Revealed Theology. He married late in life, and his wife being dead for several years, he is at present living a quiet thoughtful life with an only daughter.

Mr Steele has on several occasions published collections of his poetical efforts. In 1867 a fifth edition of his "Select Productions" was issued, while in 1871, he gave to the public a second edition of a volume entitled "Poetical Works," inscribed to the Earl of Home. He writes with true lyrical flow and warmth, and with much clearness and point.

## ADDRESS TO A THRUSH.

Sing on, sweet minstrel of the wood and grove !  
 Enshrined, as wonted, in thy towering plain ;  
 With ravished ear I hail thy artless strain  
 Of soul-inspiring symphony and love.  
 Would that this cold and callous heart of mine  
 Glowed with instinctive praise like that of thine !

Sing on, thou lovely Thrush ! thy heart is light ;  
 No dark forebodings nor regret are there :  
 Rapt in the present, while no rankling care  
 Conspires thy vocal melody to blight ;  
 Unlike the wretch assailed by guilt and fears—  
 His songs are sighs, his scene "a vale of tears."

Sing on, my favourite of the powers of song,  
 Thrice dear remembrancer of other days,  
 Of other joys and feelings, which thy lays  
 In fond imagination yet prolong !  
 Ah, then, sweet Thrush, like thine, my heart was young,  
 Bounding and free, with love and gladness strung.

Sing on, my loved one ! how the bosom sighs ;  
 What chords are there still tangible by thee,  
 Those slumbering memories endeared to me,  
 Death-blasted hopes, and friendship's broken ties ;  
 Thy powers awake, renew, and knit once more,  
 And scenes recall I fondly trod of yore.

Sing on, thou soft magician of the heart !  
 Who points the tube at thee with evil eye,  
 May vengeance seize him, pity spurn his cry ;  
 The callous miscreant, cursed be his art.  
 Humanity responds her sad Amen :  
 And now adieu !—perchance we meet again.

## THE FAVOURITE'S RETURN.

Hoo happy was I wi' my mither again,  
 Wi' my canty and canny auld mither again—  
 Wha shook my cauld hands as she ca'd me her ain,  
 Wi' the tear in her e'e as I met her again.



Embalmed in my bosom, to me ever dear  
 Be the night that I met her I fondly revere ;  
 In her auld happy hame, hoo proud and hoo fain  
 I felt, and I glowed to embrace her again !

She led me in joy to her auld arm chair,  
 Whare smiled a glad faither, wha noo is nae mair,  
 Syne sat down aside her bit callant her lane,  
 And thanket the God wha restored him again.

Hoo fondly she speered hoo life wi' me passed,  
 And I tell't her it a' frae the first to the last,  
 Wi' mingled emotions o' pleasure and pain,  
 And a smile or a sigh was her answer again.

The joys and the sorrows that fell to her lot,  
 Since the morning sae waefu' I left our bit cot,  
 She breathed in her turn in her ain hamely strain :  
 O hoo the heart thrilled as I heard her again !

Wi' her saft, gentle hand—I mind it yet fine—  
 Hoo she sleeked down my hair as she spak o' langsyne :  
 Her words were as vernal as show'rs to the plain,  
 As the scenes of my boyhood renewed she again.

Aye ready to hear, and her counsel to lend ;  
 When my back's at the wa', O she's aye my best friend—  
 She's a joy for ilk cross, and the sting has she ta'en  
 Aft frae the bit canker, and healed it again.

The worth o' a mither's but kent by her loss—  
 She's the gowd o' our being, the rest is but dross ;  
 And what e'er befa's us on life's stormy main,  
 Then we steer for the haven, her bosom, again.

#### THE AULD MAN'S SOLILOQUY.

O awa, ye gay warld ! a' lanely and eerie  
 I cower ower the ingle baith dowie and wae :  
 Hoo heartless the hame whare a' ance was cheery—  
 O welcome release, hoo I lang for the day !

I'm auld noo, and donnert, and naething's a pleasure :  
 I hirple about, but in sorrow and pain ;  
 I sich and I sab, and the weary hours measure—  
 Unnoticed I pine, and unpitied complain.

Frae a' that I liket noo severed for ever ;  
 O hard is the fate that compels me to mourn !  
 The flowers may revive, but never, O never,  
 To me shall the spring of the bosom return.

As the ivy yestreen frae yon auld tree was riven,  
 I thocht o' the hour, wi' the tear in my e'e,  
 When torn frae my heart was my Nancy by Heaven,  
 And helpless she left our bit lammies and me.

But sin' her last blessing to us she imparted,  
 As fondly her cauld, dewy hand then I pressed,  
 What changes, alas ! and hoo often has smarted,  
 And keenly, this weary and careworn breast !

As lovely young birdies are scattered in summer,  
 Sae our bonnie bairnies are now ane and a' ;  
 And aften returned has the leaf to the timmer  
 Sin' Jamie, the flower o' the flock, gaed awa.

Sae well as he liket aye me and his mither —  
 But O the tongue flutters, my heart it is sair—  
 Sad tidings this e'enin' ; wi' Willie, his britther.  
 He slumbers afar, and I'll ne'er see him mair.

Noo peace to our dead, and lang health to the leevin',  
 And ne'er may their lot be sae chequered as mine ;  
 But sune their auld faither, his sorrow and grievin',  
 For rest and repose in the grave maun resign.

Then awa, ye gay warld ! a' lanely and eerie  
 I cower ower the ingle baith dowie and wae :  
 Hoo heartless the hame where a' ance was cheery—  
 O welcome release, hoo I lang for the day !

#### TWELVE O'CLOCK—MIDNIGHT.

The clock strikes twelve !—with melancholy pleasure,  
 Hail to its solemn monitory chime !  
 'Tis sweet betimes the winged hours to measure,  
 And take in solitude a note of time—  
 To ascertain our progress or delay,  
 As pilgrims posting o'er a dubious way.

The clock strikes twelve !—wrapt in a death-like slumber,  
 The gay, the busy world encircles me :  
 Joy fails to charm, care ceases to encumber,  
 And silence reigus in sable livery,  
 Save the lone owl, which from yon frowning steep,  
 In mournful requiem Nature seems to weep.

The clock strikes twelve !—night is the time for weeping—  
 To hallow with a holy tear the past,  
 To sigh o'er memories oblivious sleeping,  
 Dear loves and hopes the grave alone can blast,  
 And leave the bosom desolate to mourn,  
 O'er bliss departed never to return.

The clock strikes twelve !—in this dark vale of sadness,  
 Since last it struck, what changes have transpired ?  
 How many hearts that glowed with love and gladness  
 Are, as the marble, cold and uninspired ;  
 While others, sad impaled with griefs and woes,  
 Where sorrows are unknown, have found repose.

The clock strikes twelve !—momentous contemplation !  
 Who knows, but Heaven, if e'er these ears again  
 On earth may tingle with the like sensation !  
 To-morrow's boast, e'en with the best how vain !  
 What pledge, what guarantee has he for life,  
 Environed by the battle's mortal strife ?

The clock strikes twelve !—prophetic'ly revealing  
 The awful twelve of Nature hastens on :  
 Soon must I hear its dismal thunders pealing,  
 And her tremendous, deep expiring groan :  
 Oh ! for that august unexampled hour  
 Prepare thou me, O thou Eternal Power !

#### HEY FOR A WIFE WI' A HUNNER OR TWA.

Sing hey for a wife wi' a hunner or twa,  
 A canty bit wife wi' a hunner or twa ;  
 Contentet and blithe, and hoo crouse wad I craw,  
 Gin I had a wife wi' a hunner or twa !

I've aft had a blink o' Dame Fortune's bricht e'e,  
 But passed her aye bye, as she cared nae for me ;  
 What's wealth but a syren that sings to beguile,  
 And honour a bauble that glitters a while ;  
 For them and for grandeur I hae little care—  
 Enough be my lot, wi' a morsel to spare :  
 The sma'er the height, O the less is the fa',  
 Sae a' my ambition's a hunner or twa.

I care nae for beauty, gin she be but guid,  
 I rate nae her worth by connection or bluid ;  
 As the fairest o' flowers hae aft the least smell,  
 And the finest o' grapes by the tastin' we tell :  
 But if she is lovin', and modest, and true,  
 Can wash a bit sark, and can airn and sew,  
 And guide the bit penny wi' care aboon a',  
 She's naething the wair wi' a hunner or twa.

'Twad keep us fu' cosy, wi' that o' my ain,  
 When drifts the cauld snaw o'er the moor and the plain ;  
 Be to our wee blossoms a bield frae the blast,  
 That's withered the brightest and best as it passed.  
 O mony the pleasures that wait its command,  
 And hoo fuely and freely it turns the hand !  
 "Your wit and your wisdom are naething ava,  
 Without," cries the warld "a hunner or twa."



## JOHN G. INGRAM,

THE son of the wood forester to the late Lord Glenlee, at Barskimming, in the parish of Mauchline, was brought up on the classic banks of the Ayr, where its scenery is of surpassing beauty. Here the river, broad, and often deep, winds its way through valleys and beneath banks, where the noblest woods wave wide and far, while now and again it bends with a grand majestic sweep round lofty perpendicular rocks. Only a little way above this place it is embraced by and joined to the waters of the equally classic Logan, amid scenery the fairest that the eye may see, while a little farther down the river, and away to the west, is Coilsfield House, "the Castle o' Montgomery," celebrated by Burns, and which he has rendered famous forever by his love for and his parting with Highland Mary. The soul of the future poet could not but be nursed, fired, and filled with lofty aspirations by such scenery and such hallowed and romantic associations.

His education was solid, and as liberal as the excellent parish school of the county could make it; and when it was over, he began to dream of being an artist (having already become a poet), and took lessons in drawing. Latterly he kept a drawing school himself in Kilmarnock, and for a time succeeded well; but his company being much courted on account of his wit and fine conversational powers, he soon began to neglect his business, when, leaving Kilmarnock, he went to Cumnock and took to painting those beautiful wooden snuff-boxes which made that town not a little famous in the past, though the business now has almost entirely left the place and gone to Mauchline, six miles distant, where some hundreds of hands are still employed.

Mr Ingram wrote a good deal of poetry for *Tait's*

*Magazine*, and occasionally in the newspapers. In 1847 he published "The Angel of Hope, and other Poems," and shortly after the bard flung aside his lyre, and went back to his native vale, living with strangers (who were kind, however, to the stricken poet) at Haughholm, within a mile of Mauchline. The gentle murmur of a crystal stream in summer, and its wild rush and roar in winter, could be heard at all times by the poet. Here he painted a little, not unskillfully, and always in the sublime and lofty way which was so entirely natural to him. In a manner dead to the world, and too often in a misanthropic mood of mind, he lived till the sere leaves of 1875 were falling from the trees, when he "went his eternal way," having reached the age of three-score years and ten. When we consider the great and original powers of mind which he possessed, we are forced to lament a life in a manner lost; and from his, and that of too many other men of genius, and the sons of song especially, we see how useless the greatest talents are without a steady guiding judgment to control and direct them.

"The Angel of Hope" is a poem of considerable length, and is full of the richness and the gushing beauty of Moore, as its opening lines will show:—

From her place, before the Eternal throne,  
 Hope hath on a mission of mercy gone;  
 She hath pass'd the angelic guards that wait  
 For ever around the Elysian gate;  
 And these bright spirits mark'd her brow  
 Shine with unwonted glory then,  
 And they did deem her journey now  
 Was to the fair abode of men,  
 That in the cloudless blue afar,  
 Resplendent shone a new-born star;  
 Behind her soon the abodes of bliss  
 Lie far in ether's vast abyss:  
 She leaves behind those myriad spheres  
 That have roll'd in the light of countless years,  
 And still on tireless wings upborne,  
 She hath reached the portals of the morn.  
 She sees the sun in glory rise,  
 On a fair world, unlike her own; .

A flow'r-strew'd earth, and cloudless skies,  
 She deems this lower paradise—  
 Meet dwelling-place for God's last son.  
 As lovely in her shadeless sight,  
 The Wonders of Eden appear in light :  
 She sees the crystal waters shine,  
 O'erhung by odour-breathing trees ;  
 She sees them sleep in the light divine,  
 Unruffled by the balmy breeze,  
 Which scarcely stirs the leaves that gleam  
 And tremble o'er the sparkling stream ;  
 She mark'd the flow'rs as they gorgeously shone  
 On the banks, meet for angels to walk upon,  
 Or rather gaze, for their shining feet  
 Might refuse to tread upon things so sweet.  
 O ! theirs was a wonderful loveliness ;  
 They might have bloom'd by the River of Bliss,  
 Whose waters glide by the throne of Him,  
 Before whose eyes all beauty grows dim.

How truly Byron-like are these two stanzas from  
 a powerful poem, entitled "A Dream of Another  
 World" :—

Now God's dread thunders rais'd their voice afar,  
 And fearful lightnings glar'd athwart the gloom ;  
 The deep, with all its terrors, join'd the war  
 Of upper air, as if the day of doom—  
 The hour which should lay Nature in her tomb  
 Were come, and storms were uttering her knell  
 In all the majesty they might assume  
 In the wild utterance of their dread farewell,  
 Which with its voice sublime, shook earth, and utmost hell.

Yea earth to its foundations seem'd to reel,  
 The eternal hills were heaving to and fro ;  
 While the great ocean, moaning, seem'd to feel  
 And mourn o'er Nature's final overthrow ;  
 While in the bowels of the earth below  
 Dire earthquake wrought in terror and in fire—  
 Creation trembled at the coming woe,  
 Feeling throughout her frame that terror dire  
 That told her God approach'd to light her funeral pyre.

#### H Y M N T O T H E M O O N .

All hail ! to thee, Queen of the radiant brow,  
 Bright traveller of the starry realms on high,  
 Fair, even as at thy birth, thou journeyest now,  
 Though countless years have pass'd before thine eye.

The eternal mountains lift their heads to thee,  
 As their stern summits with thy glory gleam ;  
 Thy mystic light falls soft on tow'r and tree,  
 Sleeps on the lake, and trembles on the stream.

At thy approach the shrinking stars grow pale,  
 Before thy face their trembling lights decline ;  
 "Thy robe of beams" is spread o'er hill and dale ;  
 E'en the stern rocks joy in thy light divine.

To thee the boundless, everlasting deep  
 Lifts up its voice around a thousand isles ;  
 Or like an infant in its dreamless sleep,  
 Calmed by thy presence, slumbers in thy smiles.

To thee the bard, enraptur'd, lifts his voice,  
 For thou inspirest oft his noblest strain ;  
 Thy presence makes the love-lorn youth rejoice,  
 While beauty blesses thy soft, silent reign.

And the green earth reposes in thy sight,  
 And thou dost clothe her in the hue of dreams ;  
 Thy glory brightens the dark brow of night,  
 And thy fair face is mirror'd in earth's streams.

#### THE DAYS OF OTHER YEARS.

Oh, the days of other years !  
 When the heart, the heart was young,  
 Ere the eye has dimmied with sorrow's tears,  
 Or grief flow'd from the tongue.

How lovely seemed creation then,  
 By mountain, stream, and plain ;  
 O might I see as once I saw,  
 And be a child again !

Where are the glowing visions  
 I had in life's fair spring ?  
 The radiant dreams of childhood,  
 All, all have taken wing.

Does the stream glide on as softly,  
 By my father's dwelling lone ?  
 Yes, Nature's beauty still remains,  
 But the child's pure heart is gone.

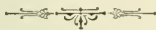
Once more I see the river  
 Gliding on its gladsome way ;  
 Do the branches o'er it quiver,  
 As they did in life's young day ?

Where are the happy faces  
 That oft beside the stream  
 I met, ere care had shaded  
 The light of life's young dream ?

Alas ! they're all departed ;  
 And that once joyful scene  
 I should gaze on broken-hearted  
 With the thoughts of what hath been.

And where, where is the maiden,  
 The light of whose dark eyes,  
 Caus'd dreams of blessful Eden  
 In my young heart to arise ?

Why thus doth retrospection  
 Wake thoughts of fearful pain ?  
 God !—what is our affection ?  
 Would I were a child again !



## WILLIAM LAING

**W**AS born at Guildhall, in the parish of Kirkconnel, in Upper Nithsdale, in 1829, near the birthplace of James Hislop, author of that sublime and widely-known poem, "The Cameronian's Dream." His father was a most intelligent farmer, and had much of the poetic faculty about him. Our poet having received a good education at the parish schools of Kirkconnell and Sanquhar, which latter is four miles down the Nith from the former, he was placed in a writer's office in Glasgow, but, within a year, failing health sent him home to his native hills. On recovering he went for two years as tutor to Mr Beattie's family of Newbie House, near to the border town of Annan. This place he left to study at the University of Edinburgh, and while there he gained prizes in both the mathematical and humanity classes — the latter for a fine poetical translation of a portion of one of the Latin poets.

After leaving the University he went for a short time as tutor to the family of a gentleman near Bir-



mingham, and afterwards opened a public school in that place, and was succeeding admirably when health failed him again, and once more he was obliged to seek for its restoration among his own green native mountains. Recovering somewhat, he opened a small academy at Carco Mains, a farm of his father's, on the delectable banks of the Crawick, a beautiful stream which falls into the Nith, near to the ancient burgh of Sanquhar; and so well was he liked, and so high had his fame as a teacher become, that pupils came to him even from England. This place is one of surpassing beauty—steep hills, green to their summits, winding valleys, deep mountain gorges, clothed with natural wood, pelucid streams straying through numerous fairy dells, lie all within view, and far and wide around. Here, for a while, he was able to attend to his pupils, and to cultivate the Muse he loved so well; but consumption had laid its hand upon him, and he was compelled to give up all the duties of life, and look forward to the certainty of an early grave. He was happy, however, and contented, as these lines from part of one of his last-written poems will show:—

To glory now, or back a little longer  
 To earth again? good Lord decide for me,  
 Thy will be done: the nearer death the stronger  
 Became my hope and confidence in Thee.

Now halt my steps on Jordan's clammy verge;  
 Support my faltering footsteps I implore,  
 Whether to stem the darkly swelling surge,  
 Or stay a while upon this earthly shore.

Thy will be done, and not my wavering will  
 Which now looks hopefully to heaven, and then  
 Back on the earth, just as life's trembling rill  
 Ebbs low, then flows with feeble gush again.

When night, the terror of the weak, draws nigh,  
 I count its creeping hours of pain and care,  
 And weary wish for morn: but from on high  
 Comes comfort in the words, "there's no night there."

But the fountain of life ebbed and ran dry at last, and on the 2nd day of July, 1858, the meek and gentle poet died, a little before he had completed his twenty-ninth year. Soon after his death, a volume of his poems was published, with an introductory sketch of his life, by the Rev. Dr Simpson, of Sanguhar, author of "Traditions of the Covenanters." Nearly all of them are of high merit, though a few of the shorter pieces would doubtless have been left out had the author lived to superintend the publication himself.

## ODE TO CRAWICK

ON THE LOSS OF HER BARD (HISLOP).

In glen and glade, sweet winding stream,  
 Where'er thy crystal waters shine ;  
 For him in ceaseless murmurs mourn,  
 Who oft did blend his song with thine.  
 At close of day he'll ne'er return,  
 To stray thy flow'ry banks along ;  
 His gentle muse no longer may  
 Embalm the beauties of her song.

Can ye not weep, ye smiling flow'rs,  
 That bloom so fair beside the stream,  
 For him who sang your scented braes,  
 Nor knew, nor wished a sweeter theme ?  
 For him, ye leafy woodlands mourn,  
 With sighs which fragrant summer heaves,  
 Nor cease to sigh when autumn winds  
 Make sport among the falling leaves.

The muse that sang the martyrs' tale  
 Shall wake no more the tuneful lay,  
 Nor ponder on the long gone by,  
 But well-remember'd Sabbath day.  
 Dear be his memory 'mang the hills  
 And glens he lov'd and sang so well ;  
 Record his fame, thou moorland wild,  
 Where saintly Cameron fought and fell.

Not long he stood the storm of time :  
 Life's sunset came when day was young,  
 Not long his simple strains were heard,  
 But oh ! his lyre was sweetly strung.  
 Mourn, gentle stream, thy gentle bard,  
 He sleeps not where thy waters lave,  
 Afar he found a resting place  
 Beneath the envious ocean's wave.

## SIMMER'S AWA'.

The riches o' harvest are gather'd together ;  
 Again has September sent plenty to a',  
 Again the green beauties o' Nature maun wither,  
 For Autumn's chill breath has sent Simmer awa'.

Again the fresh leaves o' the Simmer are fadin',  
 And some on our path are beginnin' to fa' ;  
 And the callisarily wiin' keeps the branches a' wavin',  
 Bewailing their loss that the Simmer's awa'.

The sun canna banish the gloom frae before him ;  
 He climbs 'mang the clouds, we scarce see him awa' ;  
 Whiles peepin' between, as they're aye driftin' o'er him,  
 Wi' watery glent syne the Simmer's awa'.

Nae mair frae his high arch o' glory he scatters  
 O'er prond swelling Solway a lustre sae brow ;  
 Nae mair do his gladsome beams bathe in its waters,  
 They're cauld like, and dark like syne Simmer's awa'.

Fareweel then to Simmer, an' a' that it brought us ;  
 Fareweel its enjoyments, for sweet were they a' ;  
 But though in his turn gloomy Winter has sought us,  
 We ought na to murmur that Simmer's awa'.

'Tis good that life's journey frae Winter should borrow,  
 A pavement o' ice, and a carpet o' snaw ;  
 For man's discontent wad mak' sunshine a' sorrow,  
 If Winter ne'er cam' to send Simmer awa'.

## THE ALMA.

See from the north surly winter advances,  
 Marshalling his clouds and his storms from afar,  
 Cold are his regions, rude are his legions,  
 Rathless his ravages, deadly his war.

Ruder than winter blast,  
 Sweeping the desert vast,  
 Wide-spread as winter clouds rolling afar  
 Breaking earth's peace and rest,  
 Blighting where peace had blest,  
 Forth from the north came the hosts of the Czar.

Some demon had counsell'd the despot, it seem'd that  
 The lust of dominion had entered his soul—  
 He look'd on the realms of the south, and deem'd that  
 The Muscovite's god might be god of the whole.

Up then Britannia stood—  
 France, as a brother would,  
 Grasped by the hand his old rival in war—  
 Shoulder to shoulder then,  
 Earth has no bolder men,  
 Forth went their armies to cope with the Czar.

Tools of your tyrant lord, mind your munitions now,  
 Batteries and trenches commanding the height—  
 Rouse all your valour to hold your positions now,  
 Yonder come England and France to the fight.  
     Stem first the torrent's course,  
     Strive with the tempest's force,  
 Bid the swift avalanche rest on the steep ;  
     Then may ye overthrow  
     Yonder avenging foe—  
 Then may ye hope your entrenchments to keep.

These are no serfs that are marching to meet you,  
 They come from the lands of the brave and the free—  
 One purpose impells them, to die or defeat you,  
 Slaughter'd they may be but ne'er shall they flee.  
     Grim guns around them roar,  
     Fire show'rs around them pour,  
 Thinned are their ranks on their terrible way ;  
     But forming aye readily,  
     Marching aye steadily,  
 Onward and upward they press to the fray.

Brave ones are slain, but their comrades beside them,  
 Appear to inherit their fire as they fall ;  
 Strong as the flood on the foe that defied them,  
 Rush they where vengeance and victory call.  
     Vain your munitions now,  
     Vain your positions now,  
 Tools of the tyrant your valour is vain ;  
     Right puts the wrong down,  
     The brave puts the strong down ;  
 Ye flee—but your trenches are heap'd with your slain.

Sebastopol heard when the haughty were humbled,  
 When Alma's scared waters ran red to the sea ;  
 From turret to deep-laid foundation, she trembled,  
 She quailed at the near-coming shout of the free.  
     Proud were her looks when  
     She scowl'd o'er the Euxine ;  
 But destiny marks her hereafter to be,  
     To tyrants a warning,  
     To nations a scorning,  
 A trophy from tyranny won by the free.



## MARIAN PAUL AIRD,

THE gifted and widely-known authoress of "The Home of the Heart," was born in Glasgow in 1815. She has, however, resided in the populous and spirited town of Kilmarnock from an early age. Her forefathers were at one time extensive landowners in the county of Ayr, and her mother was a niece of the Rev. Hamilton Paul, the poetical and witty minister of Broughton, in Peeblesshire, and who was at one time settled in Ayrshire, in which his peculiar sayings and eccentric doings are still well remembered and related.

In 1846 Miss Aird published "The Home of the Heart, and other Poems," which at once attracted much attention, and which has since passed through several editions. In 1853 appeared her "Heart Histories," fully sustaining her reputation. This has since been followed by another volume, "Sun and Shade." She also wrote an "Immortelle" on the death of the Prince Consort, a beautiful poem, for which she received a grant from the Royal Bounty fund.

Owing to an accident, the gifted authoress has been confined to bed for nearly a year, with small prospect of being able to use her limbs again; and now that she is also gliding into the vale of years it would be a generous, fitting, and a most becoming act if the Government would confer a small pension upon one who, for well nigh forty years, has written with such moral force and winning purity much poetry which is sure to survive in our literature.

Although Miss Aird writes her native Doric effectively, and with a purity which is now somewhat rare in those who attempt to string the Caledonian harp of yore, yet she more frequently writes in graceful English, and of this her popular hymns are fine

examples. Some of these are among the most beautiful in the language—"Had I the wings of a dove" is to be found in nearly every collection of hymns.

Cheered though all Miss Aird's views of life always are by the unfading light of the benign Christian religion, there is nevertheless a tinge of melancholy in most of her productions, though it is always of a pleasing rather than of an oppressive kind.

### F A R, F A R A W A Y.

Had I the wings of a dove, I would fly  
 Far, far away ; far, far away ;  
 Where not a cloud ever darkens the sky,  
 Far, far away ; far, far away ;  
 Fadeless the flowers in yon Eden that blow,  
 Green, green the bowers where the still waters flow,  
 Hearts, like their garments, as pure as the snow,  
 Far, far away ; far away.

There never trembles a sigh of regret,  
 Far, far away ; far, far away ;  
 Stars of the morning in glory ne'er set,  
 Far, far away ; far, far away ;  
 There I from sorrow for ever would rest,  
 Leaning in joy on Immanuel's breast ;  
 Tears never fall in the homes of the blest,  
 Far, far away ; far away.

Friends, there united in glory, ne'er part,  
 Far, far away ; far, far away ;  
 One is their temple, their home, and their heart,  
 Far, far away ; far, far away ;  
 The river of crystal, the city of gold,  
 The portals of pearl, such glory unfold,  
 Thought cannot image, and tongue hath not told,  
 Far, far away ; far away.

List ! what you harpers on golden harps play ;  
 Come, come away ; come, come away ;  
 Falling and frail is your cottage of clay ;  
 Come, come away ; come, come away ;  
 Come to these mansions, there's room yet for you,  
 Dwell with the Friend ever faithful and true ;  
 Sing ye the song, ever old, ever new ;  
 Come, come away ; come away.

## THE HERD LADDIE.

A herd laddie sat, in his plaidie o' gray,  
 Neath the beild o' a bush in the howe o' a brae,  
 On the moss-theekit stump o' an auld aiken tree,  
 By a wee wimplin' burnie that sang to the sea,  
 And silvered the hem o' a bonnie green knowe,  
 Whare the broom-bush, and breckan, and primroses grow :  
 As wee stars that glimmer like sprinklins o' gowd,  
 As they blink through the blue o' the gray e'ening cloud,  
 His sheep lay besprent on the green mountain's breast,  
 As white as the snaw-cleeded gowan they prest—  
 Where the lammies were bleatin', an' jumpin' wi' glee,  
 An' nibblin' the gowan that spangled the lea ;  
 Noo laughin' and dancin' like youth's mornin' wave,  
 Ere it wanders an' yaummers awa' to the grave.  
 The herd laddie doffed his wee bonnet, an' smiled,  
 But a tear in his dark e'e my heart near him wyled,  
 Like an amber bead trickled adown his brown cheek,  
 Clear as pearlins o' dew-draps that glanced at his feet :  
 I said, " Wee herd laddie, what maks you sae wae,  
 A' nature around you is smilin' an' gay—  
 Come, tell me your story, I'll sit by your side—  
 What book's that you're hidin' aneath the gray plaid ?  
 Are ye cauld, are ye hungry ? is't far frae your hame ?  
 Hae ye faither or mither ?" He sighed— " I hae nane.  
 You bonnie cot house in the lap o' the glen,  
 When a bairnie, I toddled its but an' its ben ;  
 When I leuk till't I greet for that ance was my hame—  
 Noo faither and mither an' help I hae nane ;  
 Syne the nicht faither dee't gushes back to my mind,  
 Though maister and mistress to me are fu' kind ;  
 An' there is the psalm round his bed that we sung—  
 I hear his last words drappin' yet frae his tongue ;  
 O, the tears happit fast frae his dim closin' e'e !  
 When he blest us, and tauld us his bairns he mann lea'e ;  
 An' that is his Bible he gied me, an' said,  
 ' Mind your Father in heaven, my bairns, when I'm dead ;'  
 When my wee brithers grat round the auld elbow chair—  
 For he learned us the psalms on the Sabbath e'en there ;  
 And we kneeled on that hearth-stane where uncoss noo meet ;  
 When I think I've nae hame, oh ! what wonder I greet ;  
 But I look to the skies, an' I ken there is Ane  
 Wha lo'es me an' guides me, tho' on earth I hae nane."  
 Oh ! the heart that ne'er warms for the faitherless bairn  
 Is hard as the mill-stane, an' cauld as the airn ;  
 Oh ! daut them and cleed them, wi' mitherly care—  
 They are nurslings o' heaven—oh ! nurse them wi' prayer.

## THE AULD KIRK-YARD.

Calm sleep the village dead  
 In the auld kirk-yard ;  
 But softly, slowly tread  
 In the auld kirk-yard.  
 For the weary, weary rest,  
 Wi' the green turf on their breast,  
 And the ashes o' the blest  
 Flower the auld kirk-yard.

Oh! many a tale it hath  
 The auld kirk-yard,  
 Of life's crooked, thorny path  
 To the auld kirk-yard.  
 But mortality's thick gloom  
 Clouds the sunny world's bloom,  
 Veils the mystery of doom  
 In the auld kirk-yard.

A thousand memories spring  
 In the auld kirk-yard,  
 Though time's death-brooding wing  
 Shade the auld kirk-yard.  
 The light of many a hearth,  
 Its music and its mirth,  
 Sleep in the deep, dark earth  
 Of the auld kirk-yard.

Nae dreams disturb their sleep  
 In the auld kirk-yard ;  
 They hear nae kindred weep  
 In the auld kirk-yard.  
 The sire, with silver hair,  
 The mother's heart of care,  
 The young, the gay, the fair,  
 Crowd the auld kirk-yard.

So live that ye may lie  
 In the auld kirk-yard,  
 Wi' a passport to the sky  
 Frae the auld kirk-yard ;  
 That when thy sand is run,  
 And life's weary warfare done,  
 Ye may sing o' victory won  
 Where there's nae kirk-yard.



## THE RUINED COT.

In the shadow of a mountain wood,  
 In a ruin, mossy grey,  
 On a deserted hearth I stood,  
 To muse on life's decay.

The fox-glove in the lattice grew,  
 With spiral-tufted bells,  
 The wild bee honey treasures drew—  
 Pure from its purple cells.

The ivy o'er the threshold crept,  
 Where gladdening steps had passed—  
 Where radiant eyes o'er partings wept,  
 And loved ones look'd their last.

Where home-sick wanderers oft returned,  
 From stranger, land, or main,—  
 Where beating hearts with joy once burned  
 To greet their home again.

Where lost ones sought the loved they left,  
 When silence echoed—"Where?"  
 And read the tale of hearts bereft,  
 Writ on "a vacant chair."

The grasshopper chirped on the hearth,  
 Where household voices sang  
 The evening psalm—and childhood's mirth  
 In bird-like carols rang.

The thistle reared its lofty head,  
 Where flow'rs of cherished bloom  
 Their beauty and their fragrance spread,  
 Now faded in the tomb.

The family band in thought I drew,  
 That nightly gathered there,  
 When holy words, like evening dew,  
 Bow'd low the head in prayer.

The father with his hoary head  
 Bent o'er the evening meal,  
 Began blessings on the children's bread,  
 And blessings for their weal.

The old arm chair they gather near,  
 With looks and words of fun,  
 Where tales of old they marv'ling hear—  
 Day's sunny gambol run.

Now who may trace those springs of life,  
 That Time's all-wrecking wave  
 Has parted far in ocean strife,  
 And find each wanderer's grave?

Fair faces scattered—closed in night  
 Bright eyes, whose joy and mirth  
 Circled with smiles of love and light,  
 The cold and darkened hearth.

Where boyhood in its bounding joy,  
 Dash'd out its crystal wave,  
 As green earth for the careless boy  
 Conceal'd no wasting grave.

The streams that from one fountain gush,  
 Take many a devious way ;  
 Some darkly to the ocean rush,  
 Some clear in sunshine stray ;

Some glide o'er many a flowery land,  
 In beauty calm and deep ;  
 Some roaring o'er a rocky strand,  
 Their restless waters sweep

And who that sees youth's silver stream,  
 By no dark wand'rings tossed :  
 Can tell how far 'twill sigh or sing,  
 Where sink its waters lost ?

#### THE MARTYRS' GRAVES.

O ! martyr-sprinkled Scotland !  
 Thy Covenanted dust,  
 Like gold amid our mountains,  
 Gleam through tradition's rust.

We bless the hands that tear away  
 Dark weeds from martyr graves,  
 And graving o'er time's mossy urns  
 Faith's witness story saves.

Thy auld grey stones are sprinkled with  
 "Blood pour'd like water free,"  
 And speak in holy oracles,  
 O ! martyr-land to thee.

These altar stones of sacrifice,  
 Incarnate truth bath stor'd,  
 Where faith, in love-drawn characters,  
 Her red libation poured.

Like promise-stars in heaven's eye,  
 The lyart and the leal,  
 Sleep lonely by the heath-bound tarn,  
 Where eerie cries the teal.

Their prophet-mantles rolled in blood,  
 By tribulation riven,  
 From Scotland's ark, drove back the flood,  
 "That chased them up to heaven."

Where Peden bold, by flood and fold,  
 On mountain, moor, or glen,  
 All seer-like, bore salvation's cup  
 To fainting martyr-men ;

When heaven's brooding wing of love,  
 Like Israel's pillar-cloud,  
 Them lapped in Nature's misty tent—  
 A prayer-woven shroud.

Their home was oft the mountain cave,  
 Their couch the waving fern,  
 Their pillow oft the grey moss stone,  
 In moorlands dark and stern.

'Mid bleatings of the mountain lamb,  
 The melody of rills,  
 The moss-hag, 'mid the purple blooms,  
 Deep in the heathy hills ;

The auld cairn, where the plover wails,  
 And fern and thistle waves,  
 'Mid green spots in the wilderness—  
 There, seek the martyrs' graves.

#### THE E'ENIN' FA'.

The bee has left the closin' flow'r,  
 The lark the downy air ;  
 An' saftly fa's the dewy hour,  
 That woos the heart frae care :  
 The choral sang o' joyfu' day,  
 In murmurs die awa' ;  
 The gowden blush on burn an' brae  
 Melts in our e'enin' fa'.

The e'enin' star blinks bonnilie,  
 To wyle the day awa' ;  
 Hope whispers in its sparkling e'e  
 O' rest at e'enin' fa' ;  
 Of hames afar o' peace an' light,  
 Where tempests never blow,  
 Nor gatherin' shadows tell o' night,  
 Where comes nae e'enin' fa'.

Noo mithers seek the wander'd wean,  
 An' herds their roamin' sheep,  
 Pale sorrow dauners oot alane,  
 O'er hapless waes to weep ;

Amang the shades o' brighter days,  
 Weird memory melts awa',  
 And trims his lamp wi' faded rays,  
 Alane at e'enin' fa'.

Frae burn an' brae the weary bairns,  
 Wi' wild flow'rs basket braw,  
 Cower cannily by haunted cairns,  
 Chased hame by e'enin' fa' ;  
 The corn-craik chirmeth eerilie,  
 Where Nature's tear-drops fa' ;  
 An' gowans shut their dewy e'e,  
 To sleep at e'enin' fa'.

Noo plovers sing their wail-a-day,  
 Where heather blossoms blaw ;  
 An' downy mists row down the brae,  
 To hap the e'enin' fa' .  
 Noo slowly comes the hush divine,  
 O'er dusky glen an' shaw,  
 Sae like to heaven's walking time—  
 The holy e'enin' fa' .

The gudewife plies her e'enin' fire,  
 The hairns around it draw,  
 To welcome hame the weary sire,  
 Just at the e'enin' fa' .  
 The langest day wears to an end,  
 Earth's darkest night awa'—  
 To weary hearts and weary men,  
 How sweet the e'enin' fa' !

But, O ! there's no a bonnier sight,  
 'Mang Scotland's hearths ava,  
 Than when, aneath the blinkin' light,  
 They kneel at e'enin' fa' .  
 For auld an' young maun bend the knee—  
 The servant, sire an' a',  
 Pour forth the holy psalmody—  
 A' ane at e'enin' fa' !

An' weel I lo'e the e'enin' fire,  
 Where kind hearts gather a' ;  
 The blending tones o' voice an' lyre—  
 How sweet at e'enin' fa' !  
 To read auld stories o' the past,  
 O' friends noo far awa' ;  
 The faces cover'd wi' Time's blast  
 We miss at e'enin' fa' .

Kind pity shield the beggar lane,  
 An' wash his weary feet ;  
 O ! sweep for him the warm hearth-stane,  
 Wha sorrow's crumbs maun eat ;

The wand'rer, wha sair burdened ben's  
 'Mang poortith's drifting snaw—  
 The feckless, wha naeboddy kens—  
 Hameless, at e'enin' fa'!

O! when our sun gaes to its bed,  
 An' daylight creeps awa',  
 May Hope's pure star its glory shed,  
 Aroun' our e'enin' fa';  
 A friendly hand to close my e'e,  
 Night's curtains round me draw,  
 An' drap a burning tear o'er me,  
 Unseen, at e'enin' fa'.



### EBENEZER SMITH,

THE author of three volumes of "Verses," (for thus he modestly designates the offspring of his Muse) was born in "the auld toun o' Ayr" in 1835, where his fathers dwelt for generations. Like many men of note, Mr Smith received the first part of his education at a dame's school; it was completed, however, at the Wallacetown Academy. The teacher occasionally gave the boys a subject on which they had to write an essay in verse; and so early as his twelfth year our young bard wrote a poem on Burns' Monument. At the age of thirteen he was put to learn the shoemaking trade, and in course of time succeeded to the business which had been carried on by his grandfather, and was most successful, until he became indifferent, and forsook it for the company of the convivial. His business was ultimately taken out of his hands, and since then he has been working as journeyman, greatly respected by the head of the large firm by which he is employed. It is pleasing also to learn that, from his family connections with the incorporation of the Ayr Shoe-

makers, to whom the Burns cottage at Alloway belonged, and which was recently sold, Mr Smith has now had secured to him a moderate competency for life.

Mr Smith began "to lisp in numbers" at the early age of twelve years, and he has, he says, "at longer or shorter intervals, scribbled ever since." In 1870 he published his first volume; in 1874 he brought out a second; and at the close of 1880, a third.

Mr Smith disclaims all pretensions to the name of poet, and chooses to speak of himself only as a writer of "verses." When authors talk too frequently of their productions in this style, we are inclined to think that it is only a sort of mock humility, and a covert way of courting praise. If they really consider their productions devoid of merit, why obtrude them upon the public. He, however, is a *poet*, though we believe that he prides himself more on his facility of verse-making, than on his merit as a poet. That he has very great facility in this respect is certain, but we are almost disposed to call it a "fatal facility"; and by allowing his rhymes to "come skelpin' rank an' file," he does himself great injustice, for were he to compose his poems more leisurely, and throw more study into the work, he has latent powers within him which would enable him to rise to a far loftier flight than he has ever yet attained.

#### THE EVEN-SONG.

The day is declining, and nature is weary,  
 And sighs itself softly to slumber and rest ;  
 And into the shade the sky-lark so cheery,  
 Has sunk with the sunbeam that gilded its breast !

Brave bird ! it soared high as its pinions could bear it,  
 To catch the last ray of the light it adored ;  
 And lost in the cloud, whence I hardly could hear it,  
 Its anthem of praise on the evening outpoured !

Its hymn of delight and of thankfulness ended,  
 In love's lowly dwelling-place now it is blest !

The service with which unto heaven it ascended,  
On earth is rewarded with rapturous rest !

Oh, man ! if thy mind have a spark of emotion—  
If aught from the clod thy affection can raise—  
Look up to the lark's lovely act of devotion,  
And follow its flight with like chorus of praise !

At eve, when the beam that hath bless'd thee declineth,  
Sing thanks unto Him who its glory hath given ;  
Then sink into darkness, rememb'ring he shineth,  
And find in the grave but the gateway to Heaven !

#### BONNIE AYR.

Far be the hour that bids me quit  
This sacred spot of earth,  
To me as dear as ever yet  
To man was place of birth !  
Oh Death ! do not, I humbly pray,  
My heart's strong tendrils tear :  
Let them decay, and drop away,  
And die embracing Ayr !

For ever—as the tide returns,  
To fondle shore and shell ;  
Or evening cloud, when sunset burns  
To rest on grey Goatfell—  
My heart, when haply I have stray'd,  
Whilst other scenes were spurned,  
To Ayr's unrivalled classic shade,  
With rapture has returned.

As constant as the vale's sweet stream  
Is to its lowly bed,  
Through which, as in a songful dream,  
Slow winds its silver thread ;  
Or as the oak is to the glade  
In which the acorn grew ;  
My heart, through sunshine and through shade,  
Auld Ayr, has been to you !

As closely as the flowers infold  
Their first sweet drop of dew ;  
Or buds, the quick'ning beams of gold  
With which life's breath thy drew—  
As closely as the woodbine's arms  
Enclose the bending tree—  
Auld Ayr ! unrivalled in thy charms,  
My heart encloses thee !

Far be the hour that bids me quit  
This sacred spot of earth—  
As dear to me as ever yet  
To man was place of birth !

Oh Death ! do not, I humbly pray,  
 My heart's strong tendrils tear :  
 Let them decay, and drop away,  
 And die embracing Ayr.

## TO BACCHUS.

Go, Bacchus, go ! thy cloven foot  
 Betokens all that's evil !  
 Thy clusters are forbidden fruit ;  
 Thou'rt a deceiving devil !

False angel ! ask me not to kiss  
 Thy goblet filled with nectar ;  
 There's brimstone in thy cup of bliss—  
 Beneath thy wings a spectre !

Nay ! weave not here thy golden wile ;  
 I fear its fascination,  
 And dread, beneath thy dimpling smile,  
 Dark depths of dissipation !

I trace upon thy jocund cheeks  
 The countenance of sadness ;  
 And hear, when thou dost sing, the shrieks  
 Of misery and madness !

There's wrath in that bright lustre red  
 Through which thy form is shining ;  
 A charnel-house beneath the bed  
 On which thou art reclining !

And who are these, in forms of air,  
 A hideous group creating ?  
 Distress, disease, and death are there,  
 And imps impatient waiting !

Heaven help the wretch who does not flee  
 Thy voice and air inviting ;  
 Who unsuspecting sits with thee,  
 In dalliance dread delighting !

I, shuddering yet, recall the hour  
 When, with an eye that glistened,  
 You breath'd out bliss in Eden's bow'r,  
 And found a fool that listened !

Thou 'witched'st me with wanton face,  
 And softest songs did sing me ;  
 But once in thy unblest embrace,  
 With scorpion tail didst sting me !

Then from my paradise in spring  
 The foliage fresh departed ;  
 And all its flow'rs hung withering,  
 And I was broken hearted !



I heard God's voice as I surveyed  
 With awful transformation,  
 And fled, despairing and dismayed,  
 From death and desolation !

Accursed fiend ! I fled too late !  
 And now, where'er I be,  
 By habit followed, as by fate,  
 I cannot fly from thee !

By all the griefs of days gone by !  
 By all this soul must suffer !  
 I'll curse, until the day I die,  
 The cup which thou didst proffer !

Go, Bacchus, go ! thy cloven foot  
 Betokens all that's evil ;  
 Thy clusters are forbidden fruit ;  
 Thou'rt a deceiving devil !



## WILLIAM WALKER,

(“BILL STUMPS,”)

**A**UTHOR of many humorous and pleasingly-sarcastic poems, was born in 1830. His father had a small farm in the neighbourhood of St Andrews, Fifeshire. William left school at an early age to “herd kye,” and to assist with the work of the “tackie.” After following the calling of a ploughman on a large farm for about eight years, he became tired of agricultural life, and removed a short distance to a place called Strathkinness, where he has lived ever since, working in a freestone quarry. Unlike many of our bards, by steadiness and industry he had “saved siller”—sufficient to build a small cottage for himself, in which, in single blessedness, he lives with an unmarried sister, “as happy as a king.”

From the time he was a "herd callant," he was a diligent and thoughtful reader, and embraced every opportunity of gaining knowledge. William is quite proud of his carefully-selected library of about 400 volumes. He used to "jingle rhymes" together when at school, but he was thirty years of age before he "appeared in print" in the poet's corner of the *People's Journal*. Here he was a regular contributor of humorous ditties and sketches, displaying much natural pawkiness, with a sweet mingling of deep pathos, and bearing unequivocal evidence of having been drawn from the life. All his pieces have the *nom-de-plume* of "Bill Stumps," by which he is widely known, and which he adopted when he sent his first piece for publication. He has ever been an ardent admirer of Nature in all her aspects; but it was not until he had got settled down in "a hoose o' my ain" that he had an opportunity of gratifying his taste to any extent. He then entered on the study and cultivation of flowers, and knowing something of botany, and having, as he is pleased to term it, given up in a great measure his "hobby" of poetry, he devotes all his spare time to these ennobling pursuits.

#### ON THE BEER.

See yon human figure hoo he reels alang,  
 He's sae awfu' souple he can hardly gang;  
 Sometimes lauchin' loudly, trying whiles to sing,  
 Seemin' quite contented, happy as a king.  
 Ilka wee bit laddie tryin' to imitate  
 A' his strange contortions an' his awkward gait;  
 What's the matter wi' him need a body speer—  
 He's some drouthy neebour gotten on the beer.

Losh hoo queer he's lookin', what a fearsome chiel,  
 Ane could 'maist be certain he was far frae weel;  
 Hoo he becks an' staggers, up an' doon he goes—  
 'Od he'll get a downcome—he'll be on his nose.  
 What the mischief ails him? has he tint his wits?  
 Has he taen the colic, or convulsion fits?  
 Has he just recovered frae distress severe?  
 No, there's naething ails him—he's upon the beer.

Hoo his een are starin', hoo he thraws his mouth,  
 'Twould been better for him had he tholed his drouth ;  
 A' his senses dormant, left without a guide,  
 Like a waif abandoned on a stormy tide.  
 Noo he's clean bewildered, blind to a' he meets,  
 Helpless as an infant rollin' in the streets ;  
 Sunk in degradation, what a wreck is here—  
 Human nature prostrate, lyin' on the beer.

See hoo sound he's sleepin', like a nine-year-auld ;  
 O'd he'll catch the toothache or his death o' cauld ;  
 He will get his claithin' a' besmeared wi' dirt,  
 He might get a lounder frae a baker's cart ;  
 Or some heavy waggon, phaeton, gig, or chaise,  
 Soon might knock his nose aff or his corny taes ;  
 For he's fou's a fiddler—canna hudge or steer ;  
 What a risk he's rinnin', lyin' on the beer.

Weary fa' the drappie, muckle grief it's made ;  
 Hoo it plagues a body when it's in their head,  
 Breeds them muckle sorrow, muckle wae and dool,  
 Mak's them fit for naething but to play the fool,  
 Gi'es them mony a downcome, brings them muckle skaith,  
 Brings them aft to ruin, brings them whiles to death.  
 Weary fa' the drappie, it's a sad career,  
 When we find enjoyment daidlin' on the beer.

#### THE COO WI' THE IRON TAIL.

There are mony kye o' different breeds,  
 Baith big, an' middlin', an' sina',  
 An' guid, an' bad, an' indifferent, too,  
 An' hornies an' doddies an' a'.  
 But there's no a hawkie in a' the lot,  
 For fillin' the milkin'-pail,  
 Can compare wi' her that's the theme o' my sang—  
 The coo wi' the iron tail.

An' oh ! she's an unco usefu' beast,  
 For the leelang winter through,  
 She never gangs yell gif she's keepit in trim,  
 Whatever the ithers may do :  
 An' the folks wha drive a trade in milk  
 I'm sure their supply wad fail,  
 Gif it wisna for this by ordinar beast—  
 The coo wi' the iron tail.

She's easy keepit, she needs nae meat,  
 Except when she's aff the fang,  
 When a drink o' water sune puts her as richt,  
 As if she had never been wrang.  
 An' though ye wad search the breadth o' the globe,  
 Frae America's wilds to Crail,  
 Ye'll no find a beast for supplyin' the sap  
 Like the coo wi' the iron tail.

O' different sizes, an' different shapes,  
 An' different colours she's seen ;  
 She's sometimes black, an' sometimes white,  
 An' blue, an' yellow, an' green.  
 An' she stands the bitterest winter storm,  
 'Mid frost, an' snaw, an' hail ;  
 Wi' a rough strae-raip row'd roun' her craig—  
 The coo wi' the iron tail.

An' yet there are some, I'm sorry to say,  
 Wad hint that she's no the thing—  
 That the milk she gi'es has a bluish hue,  
 An' a taste o' the cauler spring.  
 But what signifies that i' this warld o' ours,  
 When it meets wi' a ready sale ;  
 Sae here's to the milkman's stay an' support—  
 The coo wi' the iron tail.

## SILLER.

In this weary warld, wi' a' its attractions,  
 Sae closely entwined wi' our dearest affections,  
 There's ae thing that gies a keen zest to our actions,  
 An' that is a likin' for siller.

It's common to a', frae the wee raggit laddie,  
 Whase breeks are a' torn, an' whase jacket is duddy,  
 To the hoary auld villain that's cheatit the widdie,  
 They a' hae a likin' for siller.

"Oh wae on the siller, it is sae prevailin',"  
 Sae sang Robbie Burns, the power o't bewailin' ;  
 An' Robin was richt, for in health or in ailin',  
 It's a real powerfu' article siller.

Hoo many fine schemes i' the bud hae been checkit,  
 Great plans left unfinished that hae been projeckit ;  
 I've even kent cases whaur kirks hae been stickit—  
 An a' for the want o' the siller.

Ah, siller is noble, an siller's transcendent,  
 It mak's ye sae clever an' real independent,  
 That amais a' the evils on mortals attendant  
 Will vanish at sicht o' the siller.

If you'd wish to rise frae some humble station,  
 An' mix wi' the great anes o' this generation,  
 Your talents will be little recommendation,  
 Withoot ye hae plenty o' siller.

A man without siller is seldom respeckit,  
 He may do his best, but he's sair' sair negleckit ;  
 For what i' this warld end ere be expectit,  
 Frae a bodie withoot ony siller ?

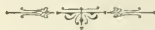
I've heard an auld sang about "Naebody kens ye,"  
 That says siller "breaks ye, an' mak's ye, an' men's ye,"  
 Sae 'mid a' the blessings kind Providence sen's ye,  
     Ye aye should be thankfu' for siller.

For though ye be doited, half-daft, or clean crazy,  
 Though yer auld pow be bald, or as white as a daisy,  
 Ye'll hae plenty o' frien's that'll study to please ye—  
     Provided ye've plenty o' siller.

But wait ye awee, should misfortunes o'ertake ye,  
 Ten chances to ane but your frien's will forsake ye ;  
 An' they'll care nae a snuff though grim poverty shake ye,  
     If he's shaken ye clear o' your siller.

An' it's no muckle wonder that friendships are broken,  
 The love o' the siller's sae strong, mair by token,  
 The clergy themsel's, "wi' reverence be't spoken,"  
     Are blamed for bein' fond o' the siller.

Then try an' get siller, ye're no richt without it,  
 It's handy to hae, that's a fact undisputit ;  
 An' it's no guid to get—that's the warst thing about it—  
     What mair need be said about siller ?



## L O R D N E A V E S

**H**AD many other claims to admiration, and even to fame, besides the lustre which he shed over the Bar and the Bench of Scotland, although for them he lived, and in their service were exercised his rare and varied endowments of mind. "The career of a successful barrister," says the writer of an "obituary" in the "Journal of Jurisprudence," "commencing with early struggles, rising with more or less rapidity into practice, and crowned at last with the position and dignity of a judge, although full of excitement, sometimes even of romance in the inner life, usually presents little that is salient or eventful to the outer world. Sometimes an Eldon or a Brougham shoots out from the crowd into public

and political distinction; sometimes a Jeffrey makes a bold and successful dash into the field of literature, but if that does not happen before briefs begin to accumulate, it either never happens at all, or only arrives to stifle the chances of forensic success." Pope lamented that so many good poets had been spoiled by the superior attractions of law and politics. Wilson and Lockhart were vigorous thinkers who deserted their original calling for the ranks of authorship, and the instinct "to pen a stanza when he should engross" must have been so strong in Scott that the law would have made him a prisoner.

Charles Neaves, one of the Lords of Session, and an accomplished scholar, eminent lawyer, and upright judge, was born in Edinburgh on 14th October, 1800, and died in December, 1876. His father was for many years Principal Clerk of the Court of Justiciary. At the High School and University our poet gave evidence of a powerful mind. His family connections and influence naturally selected the law for his profession, and at an early age he made his way at the Scottish bar as a distinguished and popular barrister, an able pleader, and, when the time came, a judge universally appreciated. In 1822 he was admitted a member of the Faculty of Advocates, and was appointed Sheriff of Orkney and Shetland in 1845. He became Solicitor-General for Scotland in 1852, and was raised to the Bench, with the courtesy title of Lord Neaves, in 1854.

In boyhood he gave remarkable evidence of two qualities in particular, and these continued to be distinctive of the man throughout his whole career—a rapid, tenacious, and accurate memory, and an insatiable avidity for the acquisition of knowledge. He seldom forgot anything he once knew, and he seemed to have the faculty of laying it by in the storehouse of his brain, and bringing it out, at whatever interval, fresh and well-preserved. This faculty, however, did not diminish his habits of study—in-

deed, he was never given to much exercise or muscular exertion, and spent much of his time, both in town and country, among his books, of which he had a very rare collection. He was exceedingly well-versed in the civil law. In dealing with facts he was rapid, discriminating, and incisive; and when these were ascertained and fixed, he handled the law applicable to them with the ease and grasp of a master. At the time of his death he had been thirty-two years at the Bar, and twenty-years on the Bench.

His sagacity and masterly analysis of evidence, and the intense earnestness with which he identified himself with his client, made his appeals to juries always powerful and frequently resistless. As a judge he was distinguished by breadth and distinctiveness of view, his graceful and luminous exposition, his purity and impartiality of character, and by uniform affability and courtesy of demeanour. In private life, while he held by his distinctive principles, he was too good-natured to obtrude them upon society. No man was more ready to co-operate with those who differed most widely from him, if he could find common standing-ground, and this, with his many other marked qualities, made him esteemed by all parties alike.

Lord Neaves became connected with *Blackwood's Magazine* in 1835. He always retained the connection, and his earlier contributions were frequently in conjunction with his friends Moir and Cheape. He was considerably younger than the great Christopher North—the leading spirit of the literary contributors to *Blackwood*—but not too far separated in age to be one of the brilliant group which surrounded that representative man. Messrs Blackwood published a volume of his “Songs and Verses: Social and Scientific,” as the production of “an old contributor to *Maga*,” a work which reached, in 1875, a fourth and enlarged edition.

His songs and verses are the perfection of admir-

able good sense, combined with quickness to perceive the ludicrous. The humour is always rich, fresh, and enforced, and the satire is keen, without a particle of bitterness. He naturally had a fine sense of the ridiculous, and a lively impression of incongruity. The last work from his pen which issued from the press, "The Translations from the Greek Anthology," has been universally praised by scholars, both for the grace of the rendering and the mastery of the text which it evinces. In the year in which he died, he supplied some acute and valuable notes to the fourth edition of Mackenzie's "Treatise on the Roman Law," which he enlivens by several spirited translations from obscure Greek epigrams on lawyers and legal subjects, given with great spirit and felicity.

It has been regretted that Lord Neaves did not engage in more systematic literary work. That he would have excelled in this pursuit there can be little doubt, from the quality of what he has done. Such labour, however, he considered more as a recreation than a task; and probably more continuous or more ambitious toil might have proved too much for a frame never physically vigorous. He not only read his books, but he studied them; and that occupation, and the companionship of an attached family, and the pleasant intercourse of a large and congenial circle of friends, were the resources of his hours of leisure.

#### THE SONS OF THE MANSE.

AIR—"This Brown Jug."

O ! law is a trade that's not easy to learn,  
 And a good many failures we daily discern :  
 But, touching this matter, I'm anxious to mention  
 A fact I've observed, that may claim some attention :  
 If you look round the Bar you will see at a glance  
 Not a few of the foremost are Sons of the Manse.



Some glibly can *speak* what is not worth the speaking ;  
 Some can *think*, but they still are for words vainly seeking ;  
 A young man's best prospects will likely be blighted  
 If the tongue and the brains aren't duly united ;  
 But if men who have *both* are here asked to advance,  
 You will find out that many are Sons of the Manse.

In both Heads of the Court my assertion is proved,  
 For a grandson is merely a son once removed ;  
 Others' names I don't mention—the task would be tedious,  
 And perhaps would be found not a little invidious ;  
 But I often have witnessed a gay legal dance,  
 Where the whole four performers were Sons of the Manse.

The son of an agent, his son-in-law too,  
 May be certain at first to have something to do :  
 Political friends may secure one a start—  
 Nay, a clerk from an office may play a fair part ;  
 But in time these will not have the ghost of a chance  
 With those dangerous rivals, the Sons of the Manse.

I don't know how elsewhere these matters may be,  
 Though I daresay in England the like things they see ;  
 I remember at least that the race of the Laws  
 Had both Bishops and Judges that met with applause ;  
 But in Italy, Spain, and in most parts of France,  
 They can scarce have *legitimate* Sons of the Manse.

But talking of England, you'll keep it in view  
 That the Manse has sent thither a nursling or two :  
 Plain John through high honours successfully passed,  
 And the Woolsack sustained his Fife "hurdies" at last ;  
 While Brougham, in his pride, loved to caper and prance,  
 When, confessed, through his mother, a Son of the Manse.

I don't mean to say that these shoots from the Church  
 Have left all their brothers-in-law in the lurch ;  
 Good sons of lay Sires, not a whit behind these,  
 Have their share of the talents, their share of the fees ;  
 But all parties will own that my song's no romance,  
 And that both Bench and Bar owe a debt to the Manse.

Such wondrous results there's no way of explaining,  
 If we do not ascribe them to clerical training ;  
 The tyro begins with the "Chief End of Man,"  
 And "Effectual Calling" completes the great plan ;  
 Both Language and Logic his genius enhance  
 Till he comes out a genuine Son of the Manse.

Then here's to the Manse ! both Established and Free,  
 And don't, I beseech you, leave out the U. P. ;  
 Seceders good service performed in past years,  
 Though I'm sorry they call themselves now Volunteers ;  
 At the old Burgher Sect I can ne'er look askance,  
 When I think Robert Jameson came from that Manse.

The Manse and the Pulpit, the Bench and the Bar,  
 With the same godless enemies ever wage war ;  
 They seek to subdue, by the pen, by the tongue,  
 Dissension, Disorder, Injustice, and Wrong.  
 How changed for the worse were broad Scotland's expanse,  
 If she hadn't the Parliament House—and the Manse.

## A SONG OF PROVERBS.

AIR—"Push about the jorum."

In ancient days, tradition says,  
 When knowledge much was stinted—  
 When few could teach and fewer preach,  
 And books were not yet printed—  
 What wise men thought, by prudence taught,  
 They pithily expounded ;  
 And proverbs sage, from age to age,  
 In every mouth abounded.

O blessings on the men of yore,  
 Who wisdom thus augmented,  
 And left a store of easy lore  
 For human use invented.

Two of a trade, 'twas early said,  
 Do very ill agree, sir ;  
 A beggar hates at rich men's gates  
 A beggar's face to see, sir.  
 Yet trades there are, though rather rare,  
 Where men are not so jealous ;  
 Two lawyers know the coal to blow,  
 Just like a pair of bellows,  
 O blessings, etc.

When tinkers try their trade to ply,  
 They make more holes than mend, sir ;  
 Set some astride a horse to ride,  
 You know their latter end, sir.  
 Rogues meet their due when out they fall,  
 And each the other blames, sir ;  
 The pot should not the kettle call  
 Opprobrious sorts of names, sir.  
 O blessings, etc.

The man who would Charybdis shun,  
 Must make a cautious movement,  
 Or else he'll into Scylla run—  
 Which would be no improvement.  
 The fish that left the frying-pan,  
 On feeling that desire, sir,  
 Took little by their change of plan,  
 When floundering in the fire, sir.  
 O blessings, etc.

A man of nous from a glass house  
 Will not be throwing stones, sir ;  
 A mountain may bring forth a mouse,  
 With many throes and groans, sir.  
 A friend in need's a friend indeed,  
 And prized as such should be, sir ;  
 But summer friends, when summer ends,  
 Are off and o'er the sea, sir.  
 O blessings, etc.

Sour grapes, we cry, of things too high,  
 Which gives our pride relief, sir ;  
 Between two stools the bones of fools  
 Are apt to come to grief, sir.  
 Truth, some folks tell, lies in a well,  
 Though why I ne'er could see, sir ;  
 But some opine 'tis found in wine :  
 Which better pleases me, sir.  
 O blessings, etc.

Your toil and pain will all be vain,  
 To try to milk the bull, sir ;  
 If forth you jog to shear the hog,  
 You'll get more cry than wool, sir.  
 'Twould task your hand to sow the sand,  
 Or shave a chin that's bare, sir ;  
 You cannot strip a Highland hip  
 Of what it does not wear, sir.  
 O blessings, etc.

I'm wae to think the Scottish tongue  
 Is deein' oot sae fast, man ;  
 But some few sayin's may be sung  
 Or e'er its day be past, man.  
 It's far o'er late the nest to seek,  
 When a' the birds are flown, man ;  
 Or yet the stable door to steek,  
 When a' the steeds are stown, man.  
 O blessings, etc.

Of proverbs in the common style  
 If now you're growing weary,  
 I'll try again to raise a smile  
 With two by Lord Dundreary.  
 You cannot brew good Burgundy  
 Out of an old sow's ear, sir ;  
 Nor can you make a silken purse  
 From very sour small beer, sir.  
 O blessings, etc.

Now he who listens to my song,  
 And heeds what I indite, sir,  
 Will seldom very far go wrong,  
 And often will go right, sir.

But whoso bears with idle ears,  
 And is no wiser made, sir,  
 A fool is he, and still would be,  
 Though in a mortar brayed, sir.  
 O blessings, etc.

### THE ORIGIN OF SPECIES.

Have you heard of this question the Doctors among,  
 Whether all living things from a Monad have sprung?  
 This has lately been said, and it now shall be sung,  
 Which nobody can deny.

Not one or two ages sufficed for the feat,  
 It required a few millions the change to complete;  
 But now the thing's done, and it looks rather neat,  
 Which nobody can deny.

The original Monad, our great-great grandsire,  
 To little or nothing at first did aspire;  
 But at last to have offspring it took a desire,  
 Which nobody can deny.

This Monad becoming a father or mother,  
 By budding or bursting, produced such another;  
 And shortly there followed a sister or brother,  
 Which nobody can deny.

Excrescences fast were now trying to shoot;  
 Some put out a finger, some put out a foot;  
 Some set up a mouth, and some sent down a root,  
 Which nobody can deny.

Some wishing to walk, manufactured a limb:  
 Some rigged out a fin, with a purpose to swim:  
 Some opened an eye, some remained dark and dim,  
 Which nobody can deny.

Some creatures grew bulky, while others were small,  
 As nature sent food for the few or for all:  
 And the weakest, we know, ever go to the wall,  
 Which nobody can deny.

A deer with a neck that was longer by half  
 Than the rest of its family's (try not to laugh).  
 By stretching and stretching, became a Giraffe,  
 Which nobody can deny.

A very tall pig, with a very long nose,  
 Sends forth a proboscis quite down to his toes;  
 And he then by the name of an Elephant goes,  
 Which nobody can deny.

The four-footed beast that we now call a Whale,  
 Held its hind-legs so close that they grew to a tail,  
 Which it uses for threshing the sea like a flail,  
 Which nobody can deny.

Pouters, fantails, and tumblers are from the same source ;  
 The racer and hack may be traced to one Horse :  
 So Men were developed from monkeys, of course,  
 Which nobody can deny.

An Ape with a pliable thum and big brain,  
 When the gift of the gab he had managed to gain,  
 As a Lord of Creation established his reign,  
 Which nobody can deny.

But I'm sadly afraid, if we do not take care,  
 A relapse to low life may our prospects impair ;  
 So of beastly propensities let us beware,  
 Which nobody can deny.

Their lofty position our children may lose,  
 And, reduced to all-fours, must then narrow their views  
 Which would wholly unfit them for filling our shoes,  
 Which nobody can deny.

Their vertebræ next might be taken away,  
 When they'd sink to an oyster, or insect, some day,  
 Or the pitiful part of a polypus play,  
 Which nobody can deny.

Thus losing Humanity's nature and name,  
 And descending through varying stages of shame,  
 They'd return to the Monad, from which we all came,  
 Which nobody can deny.

#### DON'T FORGET THE RICH.

" We'll educate the Poor," you say ; and clearly it is right  
 To try to lead our humble friends from darkness into light :  
 To help their hands, to fill their hearts with feelings just and  
 true,  
 To make them skilled in handicrafts, and wise and happy too ;  
 Yet take with me a wider range, and seek a higher pitch,  
 And while you educate the Poor, pray, don't forget the Rich.

The Poor are to be pitied much, of food and clothing scant ;  
 Yet there's a kind of schooling, too, in poverty and want.  
 They learn to use their eyes and ears, they can't be idle quite ;  
 They must be up and doing, let the thing be wrong or right.  
 But when no motive stirs the mind, there comes a serious hitch ;  
 For laziness and luxury are open to the Rich.

The rich man's son, I therefore think, may claim our pity too :  
 He finds no want unsatisfied, he sees no work to do.  
 His bed is made : he's softly laid : and when he lists to rise,  
 Pleasure invites and Flattery's voice its Siren magic plies :  
 Strange power have these confederate foes men's spirits to  
 bewitch ;

So while we don't neglect the Poor, we'll also mind the Rich.

The rich man's daughter often, too, may mourn a hapless fate,  
 If head and heart ne'er learned the art to dignify her state ;  
 If life without a task or sphere is miserably spent  
 In languor or in levity or peevish discontent :  
 Scarce sadder lot has Hood's poor girl, condemned to sew an'l  
 stitch,

Than hers the unidea'd maid, the daughter of the Rich.

The untaught Poor are dangerous, they know not what they  
 need :

By clamour or pernicious threats they seek their cause to speed :  
 They quarrel with their truest friends ; and look with envious  
 glare

On those whose industry and thrift have made them what they  
 are.

But all the Blind, of guides bereft, may fall into the ditch ;  
 So give true insight to us all, the Poor as well as Rich.

What citizen can well be worse than one with wealth to spend,  
 Who neither has the power nor will to serve a noble end ?  
 Trained in his body he may be, and taught to race and game,  
 But ignorant of letters and untouched by virtue's flame :  
 Corrupted, nay corrupting too,—it little matters which—  
 Oh, if the vicious Poor are bad, what are the vicious Rich ?

If you possess compulsion's power, compel us all to learn  
 How we may best the Good and Bad, the Fair and Foul discern :  
 Let God's great laws, let Britain's weal, be rightly understood :  
 Show us the gain of growing wise, the joy of doing good :  
 Give in the social edifice to each his proper niche,  
 And teach their duties and their rights alike to Poor and Rich.

In hopes our social ills to cure, our ancient Kings and Laws  
 Built schools and founded colleges to prosper the good cause.  
 There all who came were kindly lured, or led by firm control,  
 To learn whate'er would form the mind or purify the soul.  
 These wise foundations seek to aid and elevate their pitch :  
 You'll benefit both Rich and Poor—by training well the Rich.

## THE PLANTING OF THE VINE.

### A RABBINICAL LEGEND.

When Noah first planted the Vine,  
 The Devil contrived to be there,  
 For he saw pretty well that the Finding of Wine  
 Was a very important affair.

Mankind had been sober before ;  
 But had *not* been remarkably good ;  
 And the cold-blooded crew had deserved all the more  
 To be deluged and drenched by the Flood.

To assist us in mending our ways,  
 And more safely our time to employ,  
 It was kindly determined to shorten our days,  
 And afford us some generous joy.

Then the grape came to gladden man's heart ;  
 And a bright dawn of bliss seemed to glow,  
 When the rainbow and wine-cup could tidings impart,  
 Of an end both to Water and Woe.

So to hallow the newly-found fruit,  
 Noah chose a white Lamb without spot ;  
 And he poured its young blood round the delicate root,  
 To preserve it from blemish and blot.

But the Devil, such bounty to clog,  
 And to substitute evil for good,  
 Slaughtered also a Lion, an Ape, and a Hog,  
 And manured the young plant with their blood.

The first gush of the Vine's precious balm  
 Shows its power in an innocent way ;  
 Like the Lamb's gentle nature, our temper is calm,  
 While our spirits are playful and gay.

But on tasting more freely the cup,  
 Then its Leonine vices are found ;  
 With a combative ardour the heart is lit up,  
 And resentment and wrath hover round.

Next, the Ape, if still deeper we drink,  
 His grimaces and gambols will try ;  
 Till at last, like the Hog, oversated we sink,  
 And contented lie down in the sty.

In avoiding these villainous beasts,  
 Let our sense of the blessing be shown :  
 Let the Lamb's playful spirit pre-side at our feasts,  
 Nor let even the Lion be known.

But I would not be ruthlessly told  
 From all temperate draughts to refrain ;  
 Lest perhaps, like the sober transgressors of old,  
 We should bring down the Deluge again.

## JAMES CURRIE,

**A** SOLDIER-POET, and Crimean hero, was born at Selkirk in 1829. The humble circumstances of his grand-parents, who brought him up, were such that his schoolastic education was very limited. At the age of nine he was at work in a mill as a "piecer," and ultimately became a spinner. By diligence and self-application, however, he made good progress in learning during his spare hours. At ten years of age he was in love with Burns, and after reading through his poems several times, he made a journey, barefooted, and with one penny in his pocket, to the tomb of the great bard. Fired by patriotism after reading a *hawker's* edition of the "Life of Wallace," he enlisted into the 79th Cameron Highlanders, and went through the whole of the Crimean Campaign. On the last day of the seige, Currie lost his right arm by a cannon shot, and he has since been in possession of a pension of one shilling per day. After coming home, he was employed as a post-runner to Yair, which office he kept for about six years.

Being out of work, and his circumstances getting straightened, he, in 1863, published a volume entitled "Wayside Musings," and the edition of 1000 copies was cleared out in a few weeks. The poems were mostly composed during his walks by the "silvery Tweed," and during his "lonely rounds" at the mid-night hour on the tented field—being thus literally "Wayside Musings," and frequently jotted down from memory after the day's labours. Although, in some respects many of the pieces were very defective, the volume was favourably received. Owing to his maimed condition, employment was difficult to procure, but the late Hon. William Napier having taken an interest in him, took him to London,



where he joined the *commissionaire* corps, and acted as messenger to the Duke of Sutherland during the "London season." After two years, he returned to Selkirk in poor circumstances, and found temporary employment in the mills. His next resided in Gala-shiels eleven years, and then removed to his present abode—the sweet little village of Darnick, near Melrose.

Currie is a member of the "Border Bards Association," and frequently contributes verses and occasional prose sketches to the local press and other periodicals. Although varied are the themes on which he has written, his songs feelingly display the tender passion, and an unbounded love of his country is predominant.

#### THE LASSIE O' BANNERFIELD HA'.

Ilk lad thinks his ain lass the brightest an' rarest  
O' a' ither lassies baith here an' awa';  
But her that I lo'e is the sweetest an' fairest—  
There's nane like the lassie o' Bannerfield Ha'.

I've mingled 'mangst beauties, whase hearts were beguiling,  
That wiss'd ow'er my een they the glamour nicht draw;  
Oh, little they dreamt, while on me they kept smiling,  
I lo'ed but the lassie o' Bannerfield Ha'.

Thou kindest, an' dearest, what heart-thrillin' pleasure  
Is mine while I drink in thy charms ane an' a';  
Thy beauty an' guidness proclaims thee a treasure—  
My ain bonny lassie o' Bannerfield Ha'.

How sweet 'tis at e'ening to wander thegither  
Awa' up the burnie the length o' the fa';  
But sweeter by far is a seat 'inang the heather—  
My airms roond the lassie o' Bannerfield Ha'.

O, joy never kent by the chield void o' feeling,  
Whase heart never beat to a love-tune awa',  
What raptures o' bliss through my bosom keep stealing,  
While kissin' the lassie o' Bannertfield Ha'.

Her smiles cheer my heart like the sunbeams o' simmer,  
An' chase the dark cluds o' deep sorrow awa';  
If life to me's spared ere again buds the timmer  
I'll wed thee—the lassie o' Bannerfield Ha'.

## "WEE DAISY."

Wi' achin' heart, an' tearfu' e'e  
 We saw oor bonny flow'ret dee,  
 The darlin' o' oor hame was she—  
 "Wee Daisy!"

Thy patt'rin' feet are quiet now—  
 In silence o'er thy clay we bow,  
 An' kiss thy cold an' clammy brow—  
 "Wee Daisy!"

Thy tiny shoes we've hid away,  
 An' a' the toys that day by day  
 Were prized by thee in joyous play—  
 "Wee Daisy!"

That lock o' hair we'll dearly prize,  
 Secured, when death had closed thine eyes;  
 But *that* may fade, love *never* dies—  
 "Wee Daisy!"

We mourn thy loss, tho' well we know  
 Thou could'st not blossom here below  
 As thou in Paradise wilt grow—  
 "Wee Daisy!"

But hope is ours, ay! ours the faith,  
 That when we draw our latest breath  
 We'll soar beyond the power o' death—  
 "Wee Daisy!"

To realms o' bliss that ne'er decay,  
 Where flow'rs in beauty bloom for aye,  
 We'll meet *thee* there some future day—  
 "Wee Daisy!"

## TO A FOUNDLING.

All hail, thou little stranger, hail, who would not welcome thee  
 With open arms and generous hearts, whoe'er thou mayest be?  
 The heartless ones who left thee thus, the world may never  
 know;

Enough, thou hast abandon'd been, wee flow'ret be it so.  
 Thou shalt be cared for tenderly, thy wants shall be supplied,  
 And love of strangers shall be thine, thy parents have denied.

We cannot roll the veil aside that hides thy future fate;  
 'Tis like thy birth—a myst'ry, we cannot penetrate.  
 But should'st thy life be spared to thee, who knows but thou  
 may prove  
 That *worth* from *worthless* ones may spring—a well of boundless  
 love.

The seeds of poesy, perchance, are planted in thy soul,  
 That may in beauty's bloom burst forth, and spread from pole to  
 pole.  
 A deathless name may yet be thine, though thou art nameless  
 now—  
 Ay! well-earn'd wreaths of laurel yet, may deck thy woman's  
 brow.

Strange thoughts are flitting through the mind while thus I gaze  
 on thee,  
 Though unexpress'd, yet hopeful they, of what thou mayest be.  
 True, thou in after years may know what 'tis to suffer care;  
 But oh, may He, whose name is Love, guard thee from ev'ry  
 snare.

May thou in beauty grow apace in features, form, and mind,  
 And prove to all, who shall thee know, a gem of womankind.  
 Though parted from the parent stem, and rudely cast away,  
 There's One who'll ne'er desert thee—no, but prove thy friend for  
 aye!

May peace within thy bosom reign throughout a long career  
 Of usefulness, of faithfulness, and heartfelt godly fear.  
 May thou a bright example show to all thy sisterhood;  
 While life is granted thee, may thou prove ever kind and good!

#### THE DEEIN' LADDIE'S ADDRESS TO HIS MITHER.

O whisht, my mither, diuna greet, O dinna greet for me,  
 Tho' noo I'm ga'n, we'll meet again—again we'll meet on hie;  
 Tho' dootless ye are laith to tine your ain wee Johnnie noo,  
 A brichter sun than you will shine sune on your bairnie's broo.

I wonder mither, when I'm there, gin uncle Dav' I'll see?  
 If so d'ye think that he will ken wee Johnnie, dear to thee?  
 An', mither, can ye tell me this, if bairns there hae the power  
 To come an' lead their mithers up, when death wi' them is owre?

O! if the countless bairns abune can earthly parents see,  
 I ken o' yin will keep a watch on his wi' anxious e'e;  
 For baith you an' my faither hae to Johnnie aye been kind—  
 O, 'tis nae wonder that I'm laith to leave ye baith behind.

Ah! whisht, my mither, dicht your een, list to that music there,  
 It seems as if there was a band o' singers i' the air.  
 Come nearer, mither—nearer yet—d'ye hear the singin' noo?  
 That is the happy band I'll join whene'er I part wi' you.

The darkness noo is comin' on, I haena lang to stay,  
 O kiss me, mither, ance or twice, before I gang away.  
 An' O! the darkness gathers roun' a' that I noo can see—  
 Ere dawn of morn', ae step, unseen, shall sinder you an' me.

## THE CAMERON'S FAREWHEEL.

The bugle is sounding the "Bonnetts o' blue,"  
 An' that is the Cameron's ca', lassie ;  
 Ilk hero maun sune to that land bid adieu,  
 Sae dear to the hearts o' us a', lassie.

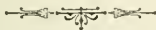
The field is before us whaur mony may fa',  
 Your lover, perchance, 'mang the rest, lassie ;  
 But diuna gi'e way, for the Ruler o' a'  
 Has planted strang hopes in my breist, lassie.

Tho' tears o' affection may yet dim my e'e  
 For some wha in battle may fa', lassie,  
 My thochts mauna rest on the sorrows I'll see,  
 But cherish fond hopes when awa', lassie.

To ken that thou lo'est me will lichten the heart,  
 An' bear me through ilk trying scene, lassie ;  
 Thy love to my bosom will pleasures impart,  
 An' happy I'll be as I've been, lassie.

Ae kiss, my dear Annie, syne fareweel awhile,  
 An' trust i' the heart that is thine, lassie ;  
 Through ilk changing scene, this I pledge wi' a smile,  
 I'll lo'e thee while life shall be mine, lassie.

On fields that are blood-stain'd thy lover may tread,  
 Whaur thousands may fa' but to dee, lassie,  
 Still safe through ilk danger 'midst dying an' dead,  
 I'll come back to Scotland an' thee, lassie.



JOHN WRIGHT,

THE Galston poet, as he has generally been called, was as truly a born bard as any man who ever courted the Piërian Nymphs, or drank of Castalia's springs ; although, in the end, he was one of the most unfortunate—as his death was certainly the most melancholy—of all the votaries of the tuneful Nine. He was born at Auchincloigh, in the parish of Sorn, in the uplands of Ayrshire, in 1805.

When but a child, Wright's parents removed to the town of Galston, which is situated on the beautiful banks of the Irvine, to the north of Auchincloigh. When about thirteen he was apprenticed as a weaver to a good and intelligent man named George Brown. He, however, was only versed in religious literature, and in polemics; but Wright early soared off into the realms of poetry, his young spirit having been nursed by his lonely rambles among the mountains and by the banks of the sweet Burnawn. Books of all kinds he read with avidity, but poetry was the delight of his soul, and that of Byron had a charm for him above any other. Notwithstanding his most imperfect education, Wright had rhymed almost from infancy; but love, with which his heart was smitten early, made him compose with care. His first effort was a love song; his next was a tragedy, which he entitled "Mahomet, or the Hegira." At this he laboured until it extended to more than fifteen hundred lines, all of which he had to keep on his memory, being unable as yet to commit them to writing. It was, however, condemned by his most intelligent friends, and ultimately he gave it up.

At this time he had to labour at the dull monotonous loom for not less than fifteen hours a-day, but even this did not prevent him, "at stolen hours when labour done," from wandering out by the Irvine, and among the grand old woods of Cessnock, and there indulging his poetic dreams.

In 1824, when he was only nineteen, "The Retrospect" was announced, though it did not appear for four years afterwards. The whole of the first canto, of fifty-nine Spenserian stanzas, he retained on his memory until he could get a friend to write it down. This he at last was able to obtain, and both cantos, with some minor poems, were written out.

With his manuscript buttoned up in his breast, and hardly a copper in his pocket, he set out for Edin-

burgh. Going by Glasgow, he got an introduction to Struthers, the author of "The Poor Man's Sabbath," and to Dugald Moore, a Glasgow poet of not a little eminence, author of "The African," "Scenes from the Flood," &c. They read and praised his poems, and assisted him with money to proceed to Edinburgh. Here, when well-nigh desperate, he was introduced to a Dumfriesshire gentleman—the late Mr David Hastings, who succeeded in persuading Professor Wilson to peruse the MS. The latter expressed his approval, and commended the poems highly—treating the poor author with great kindness. Henry Glassford Bell also became his patron and his friend. After a stay of three months in Edinburgh, and acting under the advice of numerous other literary men, he procured nearly one thousand subscribers.

Under these cheering auspices the work appeared, and was most favourably noticed by the *London Quarterly Review*, the *Monthly Review*, *Blackwood's Magazine*, and by many others of lesser note. Strange as it may seem, only a few of the people of his native town were proud of his success, most of them envied his fame, and mocked and jeered at the poet, who scourged them in "The Street Remarkers." A second edition of his poems was soon published, and now the poet married, and might have done well, for he had pocketed almost £100 by his first edition alone; but his success had turned his head, or at least had thrown him sadly off his balance. He took to drinking, left Galston for Cambuslang, parted with his wife, and left her two fine boys. He became a wanderer and a hopeless inebriate, looking behind with regret, and before him with hopeless despair. He continued to write occasionally, and at times tried to struggle back into the paths of sobriety. Then he would launch his terrible imprecations at intemperance. But his self-control seemed to be gone.

At last he was found one night about the year 1846, in the streets of Glasgow, in a deplorable and unconscious state, and was carried into the infirmary, seemingly dying. A Galston man was then employed there, whose duty it was to see all patients properly cleaned. He recognised the unfortunate poet to be his old acquaintance and townsman. Wright died the following day, and the official easily enlisted the sympathies of a number of the Galston folk then resident in Glasgow, and they gave him a decent burial—even among the great, and where so many poets lie—in the Necropolis. A cast of his finely-intellectual head was taken, which, however, latterly shared in the disastrous lot of the poet. For a while it was kept at the infirmary. Ultimately it came into the possession of a Galston man, and was brought to his native town, but meeting with an accident, after sundry repairs, it was at last “used up,” as the mistress of the house said, “in scorin’ the kitchen floor!”

Mr Wm. Todd, an elder brother of the bard of “The Circling Year,” tells us that—as showing how little his high talents were valued, or his lofty poetry admired, by the people of his native place—“His poetry was generally condemned by his fellow-townsmen for its obscurity. No one was able to understand it, except Willie Abbot and Rab Young, and one or two others. But then they both were *weavers*, and wore waistcoats with moleskin sleeves, and so their opinions went for nothing!” Notwithstanding his wayward follies, Wright’s works had reached a third edition three years before his death, and they are still gradually gaining an honourable and enduring place in our literature. In his last great work, “The Life of Burns,” we find the gifted George Gilfillan quoting approvingly from “The Retrospect.”

Our first extracts are from “The Retrospect”—the first is an apostrophe to poverty; the second, which is in praise of woman, forms the conclusion of the poem.

Stern poverty ! how heavy and how hard—  
 The struggling heart down-pressing even to death—  
 Thou lay'st thy icy fingers on the Bard—  
 Thy daggers, poesy did first unsheath,  
 Transfix, pale heaving Hope at every breath ;  
 No voice to soothe—of all the world even one  
 Were bliss ; by early friends now doomed beneath  
 Their high-flown love, their kind consolation gone—  
 'Mid the still black'ning storm, unsheltered and alone.

Before thy freezing breath we shrink afar,  
 And when removed, to stand or fly we pause,  
 Thou roll'st upon us like the rush of war,  
 And down we sink in Ruin's earthquake jaws ;  
 And, since ourselves have been the bitter cause,  
 No arm to aid, no eye to pity near ;  
 And what in happier life might find applause,  
 Brings but the rude reproach, and vulgar sneer,  
 To blight the bleeding heart, and sharpen doom severe.

Shower on me all thy plagues ! yet not aghast  
 Will I sink underneath thee ; the wild wave  
 Shall sleep beneath thee—tower-o'ersetting blast—  
 Or ere I shrink before thee to a slave,  
 Or bend beneath thee to a timeless grave ;  
 Creation fails not with the bright day gone ;  
 Fair flow'rs outlive the spring ; and in its cave  
 The diamond wars with darkness ripening on ;  
 The tree stands, and thus I, in bloom 'mid winter lone.

. . . . .

Man, the proud scoffer, may contemn ; though all  
 His schemes of bliss twine round thee—spurn and threat :  
 Yet ever and anon, when ills befall,  
 He casts himself a suppliant at thy feet ;  
 Frozen apathy not long his wintry seat  
 May fix where thou should'st sway—sole mortal boon  
 That charm'st through life, and mak'st a deathbed sweet ;  
 Grief fades in thy bright beam like mists from noon,  
 Or crags that melt in light beneath the summer moon.

Heaven's fairest semblance, woman ! fount where lies  
 True sympathy alone ; sweet woman's ire  
 Ends with her weeping, like a cloud that dies  
 Away when emptied ; but there is a fire  
 No tears may stifle, rooted, dark desire  
 Of vengeance in proud man, inflamed by time,  
 Which not till life-blood quench it, can expire ;  
 Like show'r of summer dropped from heavenly clime,  
 To soften, brighten earth, is woman ; man, all crime.



Of love unquenched through life, in death that shone,  
 Of their wild woes the tale hath long gone by ;  
 Its last faint, fitful echo heard alone,  
 If chance you roam these woodlands— thus found I  
 This little lovely gem, that well might vie  
 (From its rust fetters freed, its prison strong,)  
 With loveliest treasure underneath the sky ;  
 But as it is, its rays confus'dly throng,  
 Crude cantlet of sweet, wild, and winding, witching song.

## FRIENDSHIP.

I've tried the charms of poesy—  
 I've tried the charms of wine ;  
 But friendship is a holier tie  
 Than both—when both combine.  
 Noth the vague of light minds  
 Which only life in wassail finds  
 And with the goblet's flavour dies ;  
 Which may—or may not—be again  
 Rekindled in the heated brain,  
 When reason spreads her wing and flies.

Not theirs, whose friendship—all of clay—  
 Hath not a spark of fire—  
 Formed out of Mammon's dust, which they  
 Had raked from many a mire ;  
 'Tis thine, Intelligence ! that beams,  
 And undisguised, is what it seems—  
 A ray of Nature's holiest light !  
 Angelic potency its dower,  
 To halo Academic bower,  
 Or gild Creation's mental night.

Such friendship felt the Hebrew pair,  
 The rivals of a crown ;—  
 Yet idol self could claim no share  
 In its unmatch'd renown,  
 So purified and so sublime,  
 It sheds a light on distant time,  
 To vivify a callous world ;  
 And raise its own rich monument  
 Of song—whose beauty will augment  
 As ripper Virtue is unfurled.

What was that friendship ? All unfit  
 Are accents of the earth,  
 With times accumulated wit,  
 Such love to shadow forth :  
 The mingling of fond hearts and free  
 Can all its attributes define ;  
 'Twas a communion of such cast,  
 As love of womankind surpassed—  
 Dominion, glory, wealth and wine.

## THE BATTLE OF PENTLAND HILLS.

Shall that dread hour of glory—  
 Till Time himself grow hoary—  
 Ignobly die in story  
     Or in a Briton's ear :  
 That hour with horror spangled  
 When Liberty lay mangled,  
 Her votaries entangled  
     On Pentland mountains drear ?

A faithful few, unbending,  
 To deathful storms impending,  
 Were seen those heights ascending,  
     At early watch of morn,  
 Pursued—but yet unfearing—  
 They sung their songs endearing,  
 While a bloody foe appearing,  
     Laughed the heavenly sounds to scorn.

For Freedom they had striven,  
 In the open face of Heaven :  
 Afar 'mongst deserts driven,  
     Their front defiance wore.  
 On the heights above Dunedin,  
 Soon that patriot band lay bleeding,  
 And the carrion, foul, were feeding  
     Their young with martyrs' gore.

But while their hands were wielding  
 The spear, their hearts were building  
 On pray'r—hope—faith—unyielding  
     To the myrmidons of crime :  
 By a hell-let-loose of Nero's,  
 Whose names like simooms sear us,  
 Were massacred the heroes  
     Of the Covenant, sublime.

Then songs of mountain gladness  
 Were changed to strains of sadness ;  
 While havoc, in its madness,  
     Wrought all around despair ;  
 Hope seemed forever blighted—  
 Sweet mercy fled affrighted—  
 From blackest fiends united,  
     Tormenting earth and air.

But the sword of justice glancing,  
 Came in the rear advancing,  
 Heaven's armoury elancing  
     Its rays of dreadful sheen :  
 Then came vindictive Ruin—  
 A monarchy undoing—  
 That long had been imbruing  
     In blood its hands unclean.

Then smiled each peaceful village—  
 No more given o'er to pillage—  
 Then flourished trade and tillage—  
     Every blessing we adore.  
 Be hallow'd and defended,  
 The sceptre that's extended,  
 The monarch that ascended  
     To gladden Albion's shore.

## TO THE STREET REMARKERS.

Ye street-remarkin', boohorn'd bitches !  
 Ye idle, lazy, menseless wretches !  
 I'd sooner meet a group o' witches  
     On Hallowe'en,  
 Than come within your curséd clutches,  
     Whaur ye convene.

Ye hae nae sense—ye've nane ava—  
 Low, byre-bred haverils, ane and a' !  
 Ye gape and glow'r wi' loud guffa,  
     At a' that passes,  
 And cock your crests, an' crouselly craw,  
     Though nocht but asses.

Ye stan' upon the street and smoke,  
 An' laugh an' jeer at honest folk,  
 An' drive, an' ane anither knock,  
     Like mob a-skailin' ;  
 I'd sooner far hear puddocks croak,  
     Or grumphy yellin' !

Hae ye nae dub at your ain door ?  
 Ye idle, blethering, senseless core !  
 That ye maun jibe, an' rowt, an' roar  
     Till your sides split,  
 Each telling loud his pig-sty splore  
     O' paltry wit.

I winna say your heads are boss ;  
 They're filled wi' something—gowd or dross ;  
 Let him wha doubts it keek mair close ;  
     An' see the byke !  
 Laying their lazy limbs across  
     The priest's glebe dyke.

Just note the marrow o' their mirth—  
 Ye'll swear that an Egyptian dearth  
 O' common sense out owre the earth  
     Its black wing stretches,  
 An' pray for strength, an' a horse-girth  
     To skelp the wretches !

I needna preach ! sic doctrine's stale—  
 To you at least of no avail ;  
 Ane better wad wi' brutes prevail—  
     Even Hielan' donkeys ;  
 I tell you, ye but want the tail  
     To mak' you monkeys !

## THE MAIDEN FAIR.

The moon hung o'er the gay greenwood,  
 The greenwood o'er the mossy stream,  
 That roll'd in rapture's wildest mood,  
 And flutter'd in the fairy beam.  
 Through light clouds flash'd the fitful gleam  
 O'er hill and dell,—all Nature lay  
 Wrapp'd in enchantment, like the dream  
 Of her that charm'd my homeward way !

Long had I mark'd thee, maiden fair !  
 And drunk of bliss from thy dark eye,  
 And still, to feed my fond despair,  
 Bless'd thy approach, and, passing by,  
 I turn'd me round to gaze and sigh,  
 In worship wild, and wish'd thee mine,  
 On that fair breast to live and die,  
 O'erpower'd with transport so divine !

Still sacred be that hour to love,  
 And dear the season of its birth,  
 And fair the glade, and green the grove,  
 Its bowers ne'er droop in wintry dearth  
 Of melody and woodland mirth !—  
 The hour, the spot, so dear to me !  
 That wean'd my soul from all on earth,  
 To be for ever bless'd in thee.

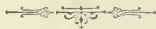
## THE OLD BLIGHTED THORN.

All night by the pathway that crosses the moor,  
 I waited on Mary, I linger'd, till morn,  
 Yet thought her not false—she had ever been true  
 To her tryst by the old blighted thorn.

I had heard of love lighting to darken the heart,  
 Fickle, fleeting as wind and the dews of the morn ;  
 Such were not my fears, though I sigh'd all night long,  
 And wept 'neath the old blighted thorn.

The snows, that were deep had awaken'd my dread,  
 I mark'd her footprints far below by the burn ;  
 I sped to the valley—I found her deep sunk,  
 On her way to the old blighted thorn !

I whisper'd, "My Mary!"—she spoke not : I caught  
 Her hand, press'd her pale cheek—'twas icy and cold ;  
 Then sunk on her bosom—its throbbings were o'er—  
 Nor knew how I quitted my hold.



## ROBERT MENNON,

**A** WORTHY octogenarian poet, was born in Ayton, Berwickshire, in 1797. On asking Mr Mennon for a few particulars of his career, he modestly wrote as follows:—"Although my life has extended over eighty years, and there are many events which have transpired in that period that I can never forget, they would afford little interest to the outside public. I am the *seventh* son *spoiled*; for a sister came in between an elder brother and me." After receiving a "smatterin'" of reading, writing, and arithmetic, he left school, and went to work with his father, who was a "slater, plasterer, and glazier." After the death of his father, in 1824, he went to London in a Berwick smack—there being few steamers then, and railways were unknown. He settled in London for nearly twenty-six years—twenty-four of which he was with one employer. Here he learned a good deal of men and manners, and his calling afforded him many opportunities of seeing different parts of the country. He also courted a young English woman, and made her his wife. After an absence of twenty years he visited the home where he "first began life's weary race," and the following lines in the second part of a poem on "The Big Arm-Chair," were the outcome of the visit:—

I lifted the latch, entered in, and looked round,  
 Made the inmates all wonder and stare ;  
 Then round me they pressed, while the tears trickled down  
 As I sank in the Big Arm-Chair.

The old eight-day clock seemed to welcome me back ;  
 Not a change in its face could I see ;  
 The stool that I rode on had fallen to wreck ;  
 And the cat was a stranger to me.  
 My brothers and sisters, thank God, still survived,  
 But looked older and worse for the wear ;  
 While their offspring to women and men had arrived,  
 Whom I left round the Big Arm-Chair.

Oh, who can describe the emotions I felt,  
 That tumult of painful delight,  
 When I joined the dear circle that gratefully knelt  
 Round the family altar that night.  
 For though lowly the cot, and its tenants obscure,  
 No home with that home can compare,  
 Where the inmates unite in devotion to pour  
 Out their heart round the Big Arm-Chair.

The stream ran as pure, and the birds sang as gay ;  
 All nature looked blooming and fair ;  
 But they wanted the charm of youth's happy day  
 When I first knew the Big Arm-Chair.  
 I've oftentimes thought that the sensitive mind,  
 To be happy, should never leave home ;  
 For a pleasure is lost that we never can find  
 When far amongst strangers we roam.

I stood by the spot where my parents were laid ;  
 Looked to heaven and hoped they were there ;  
 I wished them not back, but I sighed, as I said  
 " Farewell to the Big Arm-Chair."

Mr Mennon established himself in business on his own account in Dunbar, East Lothian, and for nineteen years was very successful. On retiring from active life, he returned to spend the "winter of his days," "after an absence forty-five years," as he tells us, "to dear old Ayton, to the same old house in which I was born, and where I am now resting on my oars—taking it easy, and daily looking in upon my friends, or taking a stroll amongst the scenes of my childhood and youth. But Time is ever making changes. Death has made several calls since I came back, but the heaviest stroke of all was the death of my dear wife, upwards of four years ago, an event which, in anticipation, I thought I never could survive. We lived happily together for forty-eight years, and might truly be said to be 'one flesh.'"

His wants are kindly ministered to by a widowed niece, and, to use his own words again, "I live in the same room in which I first saw the light— my bedstead standing on the identical spot where I was born; and the same dear old sun is now peeping in at my window."

In 1869 Mr Mennon issued a large and very handsome volume entitled "Poems, Moral and Religious." He published much against his inclinations, and it was only after the earnest entreaties of friends well qualified to judge of the merits of his productions that he consented. He could not be accused of rushing rashly into print, and many of his poems had been written half-a-century before. He would not hear of publishing by subscription, which he looked upon as "asking the public to buy 'a pig in a poke.' I have always said if ever I publish, I will do it at my own expense, and let the work speak for itself, while I confess it is my highest ambition, and will be my greatest reward to see my book appreciated. I launch it then upon the sea of public opinion, and hope it will steer clear of the rocks of prejudice, and never be wrecked upon the quicksands of contempt; but afford amusement, and perhaps instruction, to those who may think it worth their trouble to read it, when I may be laid in the dust." The work was a success, and the poet has received many testimonies that his verses have afforded both amusement and consolation to Scotchmen at home and abroad.

Many of his poems are certainly unequal, but they generally indicate that the author has an eye to observe Nature in her gentler moods, and that he is possessed of an amiable heart, and expansive sympathies. An almost feminine gentleness pervades his writings. He is unpretentious and homely, and yet his sentiments are based on keen observation and ripe judgment of the various phases of human life. He still contributes to the local and district press, and the first two poems we quote have been written

during the present year. "A Retrospect" is inscribed to Thomas Watts — "The Broomhouse Minstrel."

THE HUMBLE PETITION OF A STARVING BIRD.

Oh! ease the sorrows of a little bird,  
Impell'd by hunger to your cottage door,  
I only ask the sweepings of your board,  
The crumb that lies unheeded on the floor.

My feathers, by starvation, stand on end,  
My wings are stiff, I feel afraid to fly,  
My toes around the twig will scarcely bend,  
The blinding tear is trembling in my eye.

Last evening I went supperless to bed,  
All night sat shiv'ring on a leafless tree,  
To-day I cannot find a bit of bread,  
Nought but a snow-clad wilderness I see.

No hips or haws upon the hedges shine,  
No seeds of wild flowers rustle on the breeze,  
The worms and grubs beneath the snow recline,  
And nature seems resigned to sit at ease.

No Sympathy my starving kindred show,  
Their actions all rude selfishness bespeak,  
For when I pick a morsel on the snow  
They ruthless pounce and snatch it from my beak.

But surely man will better feelings show,  
And stay the hunger of a sinless bird,  
Will prove himself God's noblest work below,  
And worthy to be styled creation's lord.

Oh! when reclining on your downy bed  
You feel the comforts of a happy home,  
Think, when the tempest howls far o'er your head,  
Of the poor birds that without shelter roam.

And, oh, remember little girls and boys,  
When a kind hand tucks in your back all right;  
Poor birds, alas, are strangers to these joys—  
A home, a mother, a fond kiss at night.

If these reflections flit across your mind  
You'll need no promptings from my feeble words;  
But a few fragments from each meal you'll find  
To scatter round your dwelling for the birds.

Then ease the sorrows of a little bird,  
Impelled by hunger to your cottage door:  
I only ask the sweepings of your board,  
The crumb that lies unnoticed on the floor.



## A RETROSPECT.

In youth's gay morn, high on Parnassus Hill,  
 I saw Fame's trumpet waiting for a Herald,  
 And thought, could I get there by strength and skill,  
 I'd make its echoes vibrate through the world !

This made me curb my wild, ambitious views,  
 And roam amidst the beauties of the plain,  
 To study Nature, court her for my Muse,  
 And sing her praises in a humble strain.

With Spring, the ever youthful, ever gay,  
 I wandered through the valleys and the woods,  
 And saw her oft her magic power display  
 Upon the early flowers and sleeping buds.

I've seen her, tripping o'er the flow'ry lea  
 With airy step, scarce bent the gowans down :  
 Hang lovely garlands on the naked tree,  
 And on the hedges spread a verdant crown.

'Midst soft west winds, and fertile genial showers,  
 Beneath the splendours of a golden sun,  
 Hid in a galaxy of opening flowers,  
 She leaves her work to Summer when she's done.

I've seen fair Summer, like a blushing bride,  
 Maturing Nature's works on hill and dale,  
 Clothing the landscape with an air of pride,  
 And shedding heavenly odours on the gale.

I've seen the swallow skimming on the air,  
 I've heard the music of the feathered throng,  
 I've joined the laverock in his morning prayer,  
 And listened to the cuckoo's cheering song.

The sober autumn, with a thoughtful air,  
 Came softly peeping just to view the scene,  
 His fading yellow locks and shade of care  
 Show he is not so young as he has been.

He views the ripening fruit with wistful eye,  
 Looks pleased upon the fields of waving grain ;  
 Beholds the withering leaves, and heaves a sigh  
 Reflecting soon they'll turn to dust again.

Next comes stern Winter—Nature's whipper-in—  
 'Midst chilling, stormy winds, and shortening day,  
 With grim, distorted face, and artful grin,  
 Foreshadows of the game he means to play.

But while he thunders o'er the chimney head,  
 Batters my window, rattles at my door,  
 I sit beside the fire, or lie in bed,  
 And by his raging feel my comforts more.

'Twas scenes like these first tempted me to sing  
 On Eye's fair banks when I was yet a boy ;  
 And still I try to make the welkin ring  
 When I behold them with a childish joy.

I've seen the seasons eighty times return ;  
 But, ah ! life's seasons only fill one page :  
 The terms of life we only once can mourn—  
 Childhood and youth, calm middle-life and age.

But while with me earth's pleasures droop and fade,  
 To Him who rules them all I daily pray,  
 And hope at last He'll place upon my head  
 A crown of glory that will ne'er decay.

### THE LASS ON THE BANKS O' THE ALE.

AIR—"Jessie the Flower o' Dunblane."

By the saft rowin' stream at the fit o' yon mountain,  
 Where linties sing sweetly on ilka green shaw ;  
 Where waterfowls sport on the clear glassy fountain,  
 Where hawthorns blossom an' primroses blaw.  
 'Neath the rude, shelving rock where the corby sits croakin',  
 On the snug shelter'd verge o' the green windin' vale,  
 'Mang the tall spreadin' firs where the cottage is smokin'  
 Lives the bonny young lass on the banks o' the Ale.  
 The lovely young lassie, the charmin' young lassie, etc.

She's straight as the cedar, the pride o' the forest,  
 An' pure as the stream on its white peebly bed ;  
 In hamely attire she eclipses the fairest,  
 For beauty's mair lovely when modestly clad.  
 While an air o' devotion presides o'er ilk feature,  
 Her heart ever feels the poor wanderer's tale ;  
 An' the poor's warmest blessings attend this dear creature,  
 The bonny young lass on the banks o' the Ale.  
 The lovely young lassie, etc.

How pleasant to see on a fine simmer mornin',  
 This nymph at the door o' her cottage appear ;  
 When Phœbus wi' gowd is the forest adornin',  
 An' on ilk tremblin' spray hangs the glittering tear.  
 Wi' fluttering wing see the birds flit about her,  
 The lamb frae its mither skips light down the dale !  
 While the cavern'd rocks wi' their echoes salute her,  
 The bonny young lass on the banks o' the Ale.  
 The lovely young lassie, etc.

How happy the dam o' yon newly-fledg'd linnets,  
 To see them sit chirpin' on some lowly tree :  
 How happy the mither may prize the glad minutes,  
 Wha has a' her bairnies in health round her knee.

But happier he to a bliss 'yond comparin'  
 Wha for his dear lassie this fair one can hail;  
 To wander beside her, her kind favour sharin',  
 The bonny young lass on the banks o' the Ale.  
 The lovely young lassie, the charming young lassie,  
 The bonny young lass on the banks o' the Ale.



## ALEXANDER WATT,

**S**ON of the author of "Kate Da'rymple," was born at East Kilbride, a village about eight miles south of Glasgow, in 1841. On asking the favour of a few particulars of his career, he wrote:—"There can be little of special interest in the history of one who has spent his whole life in a secluded village. The seasons as they come and go, or the partings, too frequently for ever, of valued and dear friends, being the chief occasions whereby the round of daily life is diversified. I have no taste for politics. It is a matter of indifference to me who take their places at the State chess-board to play the game of ruling the nation. As for modern theology, the early training which I received in the faith and principles of the covenanters has placed me beyond being enamoured by the Will-o'-the-dance by whomsoever it is led." His father, William Watt, was, as we have already said, a handloom weaver, and enjoyed the reputation of being a sweet song-writer. Some years before the birth of the subject of our sketch, he published the first edition of his songs, many of which had long been favourites through having been sung by several professionals. His paternal grandfather was also a member of the "rhyming brotherhood," and wrote several pieces on the deeds of those who distinguished themselves during the Peninsular War.

When six years of age, Alexander was sent to school, which he attended irregularly till his tenth year, his services during that period being frequently required at home to assist in winding weft, or give a hand in *heddling* webs. In due course he was put to the loom, and spent his leisure hours in the study of literature and music, in which he was assisted by his father, who was precentor of the Parish Church, and was a composer of music as well as of poetry. After his father's death, which took place in 1859, he was apprenticed to a master slater, at which occupation he worked for several years. The difficulty of procuring constant employment induced him to betake himself to labouring work of any kind that could be had, and he has been for the last eight years in the employment of Messrs John Brown & Co., Calderwood, Roman Cement manufacturers.

Although Alexander Watt has written a good deal of both poetry and prose, he has not as yet published in book form. He is a steady and valued contributor to the *Airdrie Advertiser*, and other papers of the district—his sketches of village characters, tales of the past, and others embracing articles on legendary lore, historical traditions, and geological and archæological sketches of the district are able and exceedingly attractive. He is also a story-writer of considerable power, and has been a prize-taker in poetical competitions.

#### THE BUNDLE O' CLOUTS.

Lang Eppie, the tinkler, cam' thro' the toon sellin'  
 Her cans, jugs, an' spoons on a cauld, sleety day ;  
 In true troker fashion she ca'd at ilk dwellin',  
 An' on ilk floorhead did her cargo display.  
 Her apron was slung roun' her neck like a hammock,  
 But wi' what it was fill'd mony wives had their doots,  
 Some reckon'd it might be aitmeal to mak' drummock,  
 While ithers maintain'd 'twas a bundle o' clouts.

Her sales werna mony, for siller was scanty,  
 An' mony were tholein' fell Poverty's blight ;  
 Ah ! little ken sic as are rowin' in plenty,  
 What pair folk maun dree to gar their hearts loup light.

Oh ! did they but think o' the hooseless an' hameless,  
 They wadna disdainfully turn up their snouts  
 Wi' sic cursed pride at the lowly and blameless,  
 Wha trudge thro' the warld wi' a bundle o' clouts.

The gloamin' brocht Eppie to oor hallin weary,  
 The tear in her e'e, her claes dreepin' wi' weat ;  
 She socht but a glaff o' the ingle sae cheerie,  
 To help her to combat the snell wind an' sleet.  
 We welcom'd her ben, for bauld Boreas was blawin'  
 Frae his muckle horn mony heart-chillin' toots ;  
 An' while wi' bythe face her cauld feet she sat thawin',  
 She laid on her lap the wee bundle o' clouts.

The tale o' her waes that she tauld was heart-rendin',  
 For bield she had nane save the lone whinny dell,  
 Whilk was little worth when hail blasts were descendin',  
 Or pitiless rain drove athwart the bleak fell.  
 Oor bairns gather'd round her, an' curiously keekit,  
 For few o' her craft are noo seen hereabouts ;  
 An' great was their wonder when oot at them peepit  
 Twa bonnie blue e'en frae the bundle o' clouts.

The sweet, smilin' face o' a winsome wee lassie,  
 Belyve was disclos'd to the wee wond'rer's gaze ;  
 An' she stretch'd oot her taes to the ingle sae cozy,  
 That were nitter'd wi' cauld thro' her thin duds o' claes.  
 Her mither socht duds for't at hames o' the wealthy,  
 But unco sma' help 's got frae Mammon's recruits ;  
 They tak' ower guid care o' their gear an' their pelf aye,  
 To bestow 't on a bairn in a bundle o' clouts.

When night's gloomy screen owre the welkin was creepin',  
 Eppie row'd up the bairnie, an' left the fire-en'  
 To meet her guidman, wha was lanely watch keepin',  
 In the lown o' the plantation o' Nerston Mill Glen.  
 Frae Famine—fell spectre, sae awsome an' eerie,  
 That aft like a vampire across life's path shoots,  
 An' Winter's snell breath, sae heart-skaithin' an' dreary,  
 May Heaven shield that bairn in the bundle o' clouts.

There are righteous folk plenty, but, somehow or ither,  
 They aften forget to be kind to the puir ;  
 Yet they claim Him aboon as their leal Elder Brither,  
 Tho' to dae what He bids them they seem no to care.  
 They may trow that their grave, sanctimonious grimaces,  
 Will stand in the place o' true charity's fruits ;  
 But the Ruler on high will confuse a' their faces  
 Wha despise a wee bairn in a bundle o' clouts.

## MAINS CASTLE.

How drear and desolate thou stand'st, and hastening to thy fall ;  
 Thy crest of graceful turrets long have vanish'd past recall ;  
 Thy crumbling tower, and battlements, and broken arches tell  
 Of strength and splendour, e'er thou felt grim ruin's ruthless  
 spell,

The streamlet winding through the vale, the meadows sweet  
 among,

Thy ancient glory seems to make the burden of its song.

The yew that long time wept thy fate, through many changeful  
 years,

Has ceased to mourn thy hapless state with sympathetic tears.

The shrivel'd yew-tree, rent and torn by many a stormy blast,

Did with reluctance quail before destruction's hand at last ;

But in the age of archery full many a trusty bow

It yielded to brave men-at-arms to combat with the foe ;

And on its sturdy branches, too, whene'er the chiefs desired

To wreak despotic vengeance, many a hapless wretch expired.

From the grim cheerless chambers oft in the still noon of night,

The 'lated peasant screams still hear that fill him with affright ;

He hastens from the dismal scene in panic and in dread,

As if the dungeon's gloomy vault had given up its dead ;

Or sprites of such as had within the noisome cell been cast,

Came forth to tell the tragic tales of ages long since past ;

Such is his fear that e'en the owl complaining to the moon,

Seems like a voice from paradise, or friendship's hallow'd boon.

Oblivion's shadows deepen round the glory and the fame,

That long ere while a halo shed o'er mighty Comyn's name ;

But hoar tradition whispers still of wealth and feudal pride,

Which in the noonday of the race was with their name allied.

By treachery to Wallace wight in Scotland's evil hour,

Their ancient dignity was lost, despoiled their rank and power,

And suddenly their sun grew dim, nay set in ebon gloom,

When the Red Comyn from the Bruce received a traitor's doom.

Lost then to them for evermore were these green hills and plains,

And trusty Dunrod in their wake became the lord of Mains,

From whom a race of nobles sprang, long, long, renown'd in war,

That drove with wild Phaetonian haste in grandeur's giddy ear.

How changed the scene since festal mirth and joy's extatic glee,

And minstrel's lay of lady gay, and deeds of chivalry

Rang through the spacious chambers, while the gentle and the  
 proud,

With glad acclaim to Dunrod's fame, burst forth in praises loud.

There Scotland's bravest, brightest sons, secure from war's alarms

Reposed, while gentle peace prevailed in fortune's downy arms.

Oft when the gladsome blushing morn her purple mantel spread

O'er eastern skies, the yelling pack was o'er the drawbridge led,

While knights and squires, and ladies fair, with dignity and

grace,

All mingled gay and joyous in the pleasures of the chase ;  
 And over hill and dale afar, upon the ear of morn,  
 Would burst anon the startling twang of hoarse-resounding horn.  
 Time was when from the portalice, with all a chieftian's pride,  
 To worship in the village church—the church of good Saint  
 Bride—

The last chief of the Dunrod line, that in those halls abode,  
 Went forth with gay attendants that on milk-white chargers  
 rode;

And as in bright caparison they pranced across the fell,  
 There tinkled at each tassel'd mane full many a silver bell.  
 But in oppression's ranks at last for evil deeds he shone,  
 And soon his arm was shorten'd, and his boasted power was gone,  
 Fate—stern, relentless fate—approach'd with fell resistless  
 sweep,

And made the remnant of the race a woeful harvest reap.

Now lonely stands the roofless tower—the mighty storm-king's  
 prey,

Whose howling furies love to sport among the ruins grey ;  
 But time shall from its rocky base remove the ancient pile,  
 Where fame and fortune led the dance with chivalry erewhile.

#### THE FA' O' THE YEAR.

Ye warblers o' the wildwood,  
 Why are ye a' sae wae ?  
 Nae sangs ye raise to cheer me  
 At dawnin' o' the day ;  
 O why that eerie chirpin',  
 Thae waefu' notes o' fear ?  
 Hae ye nae sangs mair canty  
 At the fa' o' the year ?

Tho' Autumn's robes o' yellow  
 The glens an' woodlands wear,  
 An' cornfields ance sae bonny,  
 A' naked noo appear ;  
 Yet some blythe lay be liltin',  
 Melodious, sweet, an' clear,  
 When merry kirns we're haudin'  
 At the fa' o' the year.

O, bonnie, bonnie birdies,  
 The evil days draw near ;  
 The gloomy Storm-king's comin',  
 An' shortly will be here ;  
 But He whase name is Goodness,  
 Will mind ye ; dinna fear  
 When Boreas rude is ravin'  
 The death sang o' the year.

The haws are on the white-thorn,  
 The hips are on the brier,  
 The berries on the rowan tree  
 Your little hearts will cheer,

Until the gloom o' winter,  
 The spring awa' shall clear,  
 An' set ye singin' gaily  
 The life-sang o' the year.

Sweet warblers o' the wildwood,  
 Then why sae sad an' wae ;  
 For man an' beast there's plenty,  
 To meet cauld winter's sway ;  
 Tho' noo the sun be hidden,  
 He yet will shine fu' clear,  
 An' lauch awa this sadness,  
 Gin the spring-tide o' the year.

### THE COMING O' THE SPRING.

The snaw has left the mountain's side, an' ilka upland rill,  
 Careerin' frae its fountain head, rins bickerin' down the hill ;  
 Rejoicin' in the sunny beams the merry midges dance ;  
 While up the caller, crystal streams the minnowy shoals advance.

The robin to the wood retreats to end his wintry cares,  
 The plaintive cushat gladly greets the zephyr's gentle airs ;  
 While on the plantain's sunny side the merles sweetly sing,  
 An' hail wi' love, an' joy an' pride the coming o' the Spring.

Blythe Nature noo wi' eident hand resumes her wark again,  
 An' weaves a web o' verdure grand on wood, an' hlll, an' plain ;  
 The early gowans deck the leas, an' boughs wi' green leaves hing,  
 Whaur sweetly sing the merry bees the coming o' the Spring.

The village bairns among the knowes, or by the burnie clear,  
 Noo gaily wreathe aroun' their brows the firstlings o' the year ;  
 Nae king on coronation day like them can lauch or sing,  
 Or hail mair blythesomely than they the coming o' the Spring.

Auld folk that by the ingle nook—the cheerless winter past—  
 Noo daunder by the wimplin' burn secure frae Boreas' blast,  
 Tho' life's to them a burden grown, yet Hope on joyfu' wing,  
 Wafts high their thoughts to you abode, where blooms unfading  
 Spring.





## WILLIAM MILLER.

**J**UST as the sweetest spots, and the most beautiful scenery in all our mountain land, are often to be found hidden away in nameless fairy glens, and concealed in solitary nooks, far from the common paths of the fussy tourist and the "professional" pleasure-seeker, so frequently the best and the most loveable of the human race are to be met with in the humblest situations, and hidden away altogether from the glare of the great world, and from the busy, bustling walks of life. The lives of such men are not always, however, devoid of interest, or quite without any air of romance. The life of William Miller furnishes a conclusive proof of this. He was a native of Dalkeith, and was born there about the year 1810. All his life was spent in his much-loved native place. To him the wide waving woods which surround it, and the blue purling streams which sweep past it on either side, were an unfailing source of pleasure, as almost all his sweet poetical effusions testify. He delighted in solitary walks, and many of his best poems were composed when wandering alone by the banks of the South and North Esk streams. His father was check-clerk at one of Sir John Hope's collieries, and highly respected. Young Miller, having received a fair English education, was taken from school to be made a tailor. Afterwards, he generally worked by himself in his mother's house, as he greatly preferred being alone to working in the company of others, in the bustle and stir of a workshop.

In 1838 the shy bard published a volume of poems, entitled "Hours of Solitude." It was well received by his fellow-townsmen, and favourably noticed by the press. He died in 1865 in consequence of injuries received at Eskbank railway station on the return of an excursion party, which he had accom-

panied to Innerleithen. William Miller was never married; but to find a true poet who had not been in love, would be about as difficult to meet with as it is to get hold of the philosopher's stone! The humble tailor, therefore, had felt the tender passion. He was engaged to be married to a young woman, an orphan, of the name of Mary Gordon. We think she belonged to some place in the north, and perhaps she was a "Highland Mary;" at any rate she had come south to Dalkeith to service. Miller and she had gone to Edinburgh "to buy the brows," and they had just entered a jeweller's shop to purchase the wedding ring, when poor Mary was taken so ill that she had to leave the place without it. With great difficulty he got her home, and laid upon that bed from which she never rose again. Ere the lapse of two days "her immortal spirit," to use his own words, "had passed from earth, away through the everlasting gates into the new Jerusalem."

Miller left numerous poems in manuscript, which, on his deathbed, he committed to the keeping of Mr Wm. Todd, now of Edinburgh. Although they excel in purity of sentiment, and fine poetic imagery, Mr Todd has not as yet seen fit to publish them. Our first extract from the works of this genuine son of song, whose life was as pure as his poetry, is the poem which he wrote on the death of his affianced, which he entitles—

#### A L A M E N T F O R M A R Y .

I little dreamt that loathsome worm,  
 Would prove my rival dread!  
 I never dreamt that the cold grave  
 Would be thy bridal bed!  
 Nor thought I that thy wedding dress  
 A snow-white shroud should be!  
 Thy marriage guests the voiceless dead—  
 A silent company!

But gazing through a veil of tears,  
 The mournful truth I see;  
 Here, bending o'er thy hallow'd tomb,  
 I sob, and weep for thee.

Though blighted by the hand of Death,  
 My cherished flow'ret fair  
 Enshrined within my memory  
 Shall blossom ever there.

No other human-flow'r that blooms  
 In Nature's garden wide,  
 Shall share the love I bore for thee—  
 My vanish'd joy and pride.  
 Since burst asunder now's the chain,  
 That bound two hearts in one ;  
 In widowhood my heart shall mourn  
 For thee, its partner gone.

While Sorrow, with his keenest dart,  
 Pierces my inmost core—  
 While now, in bitterness of woe  
 Thy absence I deplore,  
 Sweet Hope ! to soothe my anguish'd heart  
 (That boon to mortals given)  
 Whispers, though parted now on earth,  
 We'll meet again in heaven.

TO A SKYLARK.

Blythe bird of cheerful heart ! how sweetly clear,  
 Thy notes melodious fall upon mine ear,  
 Ascending slowly up to "Heav'n's gate" high,  
 Admiring angels list thy minstrelsy.  
 On fluttering wing thou moun'st thy airy way,  
 Thy form a speck upon the face of day.  
 Now thou art gone beyond the reach of view,  
 Lost in the depths of the ethereal blue.  
 Ha ! once again I hail thee—songster wild,  
 Minstrel of morn, and Nature's happiest child ;  
 Once more thy mirthful voice of song to rest,  
 Wav'ring like leaf, thou seek'st thy lowly nest.  
 So soars the bard in fancy's fairy sky—  
 So sinks the humble bard to dark obscurity.

SONG OF THE MOON.

My sire, in the West,  
 Has retired to rest,—  
 The glorious King of day—  
 And my lofty throne,  
 I now mount upon,  
 O'er boundless realms to sway.

As empress of night,  
 'Tis my regal right  
 To reign over land and sea.  
 What monarch of earth,  
 Of mortal birth,  
 Can rival my sovereignty ?

O'er mountain and wood,  
 O'er valley and flood,  
 My silvery veil I spread ;  
 Whilst a silence reigns,  
 Through my vast domains,  
 As if all within were dead.

O'er the regions of Night,  
 By my soft pale light,  
 I emulate cheerful day ;  
 Belated and lone  
 As he journeys on,  
 I illumine the traveller's way.

'Neath my friendly ray,  
 Fond lovers stray,  
 Their mutual vows to plight ;  
 And poets love,  
 Alone to rove,  
 And gaze on my beautiful light.

In their solitude,  
 And dreamy mood,  
 They deem me a lady fair :  
 Or an angel bright,  
 From the land of light,  
 A companionless wanderer.

On the glassy stream,  
 I quiver and gleam,  
 And mirror my fair round face,  
 To the skirting wood,  
 That o'erhangs the flood,  
 I lend an enlivening grace.

The all-potent sea  
 Owns my sovereignty,  
 On which the great ships ride ;  
 The maniac main,  
 To his bed I chain,  
 And over his tide preside.

The starry train  
 Pale their light while I reign  
 Obscured by my splendour bright ;  
 And their sparkling rays,  
 In my glory's blaze,  
 Are lost to the gazer's sight.

A resplendent gem,  
 In Heaven's diadem,  
 I seem to the poet's eye,  
 Or a great lamp bright,  
 Of reflecting light,  
 Hung up in the dome of the sky !