

THE HENWIFE

THE henwife wi' her tartan shawl
Comes hirplin' doon the brae.
The winter time is comin' on,
When hens are sweirt to lay.
The Leghorns an' the Plymouth Rocks
She kens them a' by look ;
They gether roon her at her cry
O' " Chookie, chookie, chook ! "

She scatters grain wi' canny haun'
The greedy crood amang,
She'd see them eat wi' mair content
Gin eggs were comin' thrang.
She shoos awa' the thievin' crew
That comes wi' eager look ;
Her invitation's no for him,
But chookie, chookie, chook.

The henwife may be auld an' frail,
But faith ! she has the skill ;
An' fine she kens when clockin' hens
Are daein' weel or ill.
She has a cure for a' complaints,
Be it " the gapes " or " pook."
The only sang that she can sing
Is " Chookie, chookie, chook ! "

THE VILLAGE BLACKSMITH

Genus Scotorum

THE smiddy at the clachan fit
Is kent by ane an' a' ;
The smith, a steeve auld man is he,
An' aye he ca's awa' ;
His anvil rings wi' he'rty dings,
An' he gars his bellows blaw.

The bairnies, comin' hame frae schule,
Play pliskies at the door ;
He canna thole their tricks ava',
An' sets up sic a roar,
When he hauds the hoof o' some skeich naig
An' they fricht it for a splore.

But, still an' on, though dour an' thrawn,
The smith's an honest man ;
He peys his wey, but naethin' mair,
Guid wark was aye his plan ;
An oot o' ilka ane he screws
As muckle as he can.

He gangs on Sawbath to the kirk—
An' wha e'er kent him late?
He sits as wyse-like as a stirk ;
His bawbee's in the plate ;
An' a' the lave may gang to hell
He kens that's no' his gait.

Trauchlin' awa', aye even on,
Sin' ever he was born,
The horse he shod at Michaelmas
He'll shoe again the morn.
He's seen sma' change in a' his life,
An' noo he's sairly worn.

THE PESSIMIST

A FERMER's life's unco perplexin',
His troubles are no' faur to seek,
This damnable drooth is rale vexin'—
We ha'ena had rain for a week.
Gude kens what-like corn I'll be stookin',
It'll ripe ere it's heich as my haun';
An', for want o' an 'oor or twa's drookin',
The tatties are sweir to come on.

The neeps? Michty me! ha'e ye seen them?
We ettled to thin them lang syne;
Wee Patey an' Jenny atween them
Could hae feenished the feck o' them fine;
But they're baith o' them thrang at the quilin',
An' the neeps we maun jist lea' alane,
For the hey's the ae thing keeps us smilin',
An' Gude kens whatna day it micht rain.

Says the factor: "What glorious weather!"
He's ane o' thae boss-heidit chaps.
Thinks I: "Man, ye're nocht but a blether,
It's little ye ken aboot craps."
But what was the use o' explainin',
What a'body kens on a ferm,
That whether it's shinin' or rainin'
It's daein' the kintry some herm.

GEORDIE THE POST

YE'D ken him faur aff by the swing o' his airms,
He hirpled a wee, an' he aye had a hoast ;
He cairried the mail to the ootlyin' ferms,
A geyan lang roon' had auld Geordie the post.

To wee muirlan' crofts by the tracks through the
heather,
To faur-scattered fisher-folk roon' by the coast,
An' up the lang glen road in a' sorts o' weather,
Weel wabbit ilk day was auld Geordie the post.

He aye did his duty, delivered ilk letter,
He'd ne'er missed a roon', he was heard whiles to
boast.
He'd been at the job forty year, aye, an' better,
An' folk couldna dae wi'oot Geordie the post.

As dour as the de'il, an' as brave as the bauldest,
That day o' wild snaw that cam' hard on the frost
To a lanely wee bothy, 'mang hills o' the cauldest,
Faur, faur up the glen gaed auld Geordie the post.

They found him clay-cauld in a snaw-drift at
gloamin' ;
To tak' a wee post-caird he nicht weel hae lost
He'd maiched to his daith wi' the pride o' a Roman—
Aye, *semper fidelis*—auld Geordie the post.

TINKLER FOLK

Wi' mony a bundle, pack an' poke,
Doon the lang road come tinkler folk.

The auld caird first, then piper Jock,
Whase rants an' reels would gar ye bock,
A strappin' chiel wi' muckle banes ;
His randy wife an' brats o' weans
Follow ahint, an' at his heel
A tyke that's aft garred rabbits squeal.
The hauflin neist, for mischief ripe ;
Then granny wi' her cutty pipe.
Sic like processions trailin' oot,
Douce folk, like us, fash nocht aboot.
Tinklers are ne'er-dae-weels, nae doot.

An' yet, there's something in their een—
As though they glowered at things unseen—
A faur-aff look folk learn oot-by,
Whase beild is 'neath the open sky.

O queer stravaigin' tinkler men,
Ye ken the things we dinna ken ;
Hoo to keep dry in drookin' weather,
Hoo to snare mawkins in the heather,
Hoo to lie lown oot-by at nicht,
Hoo to mak' wat wude-fires bleeze bricht,
Hoo in the burn to guddle troot.
Ye're wyse in your ain weys, nae doot.

The wisdom o' the gangrel loons,
We canna learn, wha bide in touns.

THE BEADLE

OOR wee kirk at hame has an auld-farrant beadle,
As gleg as a whittrock, as sherp as a needle.
We're hearin' a wheen o' braw preachers the noo ;
For oor poo'pit is vacant—like mony a pew.
When John, that's the beadle, has munted the stair
He lays doon the beuks wi' a reverent air,
Glowers roon him a wee, then he toddles awa'
An' herds in the minister, sermon an' a'.
Syne the door o' the poo'pit he snecks wi' a bang :—
“We've got ye, my mannie, we'll no' let ye gang
Till ye've preached, an' ye've prayed, an' we've
ponder't thereon.”
That's the gospel for beadles, accordin' to John.

Ae Sawbath a wee, perjink preacher appeared,
“As regairds intimations?” o' Johnie he speired.
But the beadle's thrawn speerit had risen in riot :—
“We'll keep them,” says he, “till the efternune diet ;
Mair folk may turn oot, sae I'll gie ye them then.”
Wae's me, for the feelin's o' mortified men !
When the sermon was ower, an' the people awoke,
An' the gantin' an' hoastin' begued 'mang the folk,
Up the stair crept the beadle, wi' paper in haun :—
“Juist gie them oot noo, if ye please,” whispered
John.
An' he didna juist say, but he seemed to imply it :—
“I'll be here a' my lane, I jalouse, at next diet.”

THE TATTIE-HOWKERS

STRAPPIN' lads, wha can haun'le a graip wi' ony,
Hellicate hizzies, no' very trigly dressed,
Booed auld men, an' weemen nae langer bonnie,
Fit for a day's darg yet but by their best ;
Hauflin's tae, wi' their duds rowed up in a hanky,
Cairryin' pots an' pans, or a clarty coat,
The gaffer, wearin' a tie an' geyan swanky—
There gaes a howkers' " squad " frae the Irish boat.

See them settled doon on some auld ferm-steadin',
Ae big barn for their quarters ; maid an' man
Sleepin' heids an' thraws, wi' the strae for beddin',
Drinkin' weel-biled tea frae the coomy can.
Oot to the drills richt early see them steerin',
Ilk lass doon on her knees to the getherin' yokes ;
Men are thrang at the howkin', auld anes cheerin'
Young anes on to the wark wi' their bits o' jokes.

Honest? Aye, but sweir to gi'e ower their poachin',
Thrawin' the neck o' a hen at times for sport ;
Able to wark like twa when the gaffer's watchin'—
Juist like the lave o' their fellow-men, in short.
" Gi'e them better quarters," the folk lang threepit ;
" Gar them wash theirsels, an' dicht their coats."
Laws were passed, but dinna speir if they're keepit,
We still get the same auld " squads " frae the Irish
boats.