

THE SWITHER.

SHE swithered gin she'd sa't the broth
 Or gin she'd let it be,
 Her faither vowed he'd never supped
 Sae fooshionless a bree :
 He frooned and drew his broos thegither,
 And said, " That lassie's jist a swither !"

She swithered gin she'd steek the yett
 Or gin she'd leave it wide ;
 The hens cam oot wi' mickle din,
 And fled the countryside.
 Then up and spak her outraged mither,
 " Ye're naething but a feckless swither !"

She swithered 'twixt a sash o' green
 And ane o' darker hue,
 Till a' her folk were late for kirk,
 A waesome thing maist new ;
 Her sisters lauched till ane anither,
 And said, " She's naething but a swither."

But late at e'en a bonnie lad
 Cam linkin' ower the green,
 Wi' gowden words upon his tongue
 And love-licht in his een :
 They drew sae weel ane to the ither,
 That she said " Ay !" without a swither.

BARBARA ROSS M'INTOSH.

swithered, hesitated.
fooshionless, tasteless.
bree, broth.

steek, shut.
feckless, useless.

THE BACKWARD LAD.

HE steps inbye the ferm at e'en,
 And vows he's there to see me,
 But though I hearken, lugs fu' keen,
 Nae word o' love he'll gie me.
 I tell him gin he's really dumb
 He'd best bide wi' his mither :
 He jist sits glowerin' up the lum,
 Twiddlin' his thoomb's thegither.

He follows me to kirk and fair,
 Nae laddie can owertak him,
 There's whiles 'twad be a plesure rare
 To tak the gowk and shak him.
 On craps he'll crack wi' a' his micht ;
 But warmer things affront him :
 I laid my hand in his ae nicht—
 He sprang, as though it brunt him !

But he's nae ranter like the smith,
 Nae spendthrift like the miller ;
 He'll drive a deal, wi' pluck and pith,
 I ken he's laid by siller.
 Sae for this lad I'll aye haud oot
 Till nocht frae me can pairt him,
 I'll gar his bawbees birl aboot,
 And forward Mairch I'll airt him.

BARRARA ROSS M'INTOSH.

crack, talk.*bawbees birl*, money vanish.

TAMMAS, MY SON.

Noo, Tammas, I'll no be aye wi' ye,
To keep ye aye dapper and spruce,
Sae tak tint to the coonsels I gie ye
On weddin' and settin' up hoose :
For love-knots are thochtlessly linkit,
But seldom sae easy undone,
And life may be mair than ye think it,—
Tammas, my son.

There's lassies to choose frae in plenty,
And nane o' them backward or blate ;
But ye'll mind that jist ane oot o' twenty
May mak ye a richt-suitin' mate.
Set cannily on to the courtin',
Nor zeal lat discretion oot-run,
For wedlock's nae daffin' and sportin',
Tammas, my son.

There's them that's aye silk-cled and smirkin',
Braw birds in their feathers sae fine ;
But see them wi' sleeves rowed up workin',
Ere to them yer he'rt ye incline :
For though ye may lauch at dull duty,
And look abune sober hame-spun,
Ye canna dine daily on beauty,
Tammas, my son.

Dinna dance efter some senseless limmer,
Wha trocks wi' lads giddy and young,
For guid reason goes oot wi' a glimmer
When passion rins aff wi' the tongue.

And as for the kind that's aye spendin',
 Their costly companionship shun;
 They'll land ye in snorls nae endin',
 Tamma, my son.

Beware o' the lass that's aye draggin'
 Her neebor's fa'ts into the licht,
 For her sharp wit will sune cheenge to naggin',
 When it's turned on yersel' day and nicht.
 There's nocht i' this world will stop her
 When aince she is fairly begun,
 Sae tak timely warning and drop her,
 Tamma, my son.

But gin yer he'rt steers till it's deepest,
 When some purpose lass maks it fain,
 Wha tackles the hill at its steepest,
 And never sits doon to complain;
 Wha sings though fresh trouble is brewing,
 Wha smiles though her life's nae a' fun,
 Gang briskly aheid wi' the wooing,
 Tamma, my son.

Then when at the hicht o' yer pleasure,
 She traivels the years by yer side,
 Lay afore her yer he'rt's brawest treasure,
 And think o' her aye as yer bride:
 Shower love-tokens freely upon her,
 Croon her wi' the laurels ye've won,
 Sae bide in peace, plenty, and honour,
 Tamma, my son.

BARBARA ROSS M'INTOSH.

blate, shy. *trocks*, gads about. *snorls*, entanglements.

THE SERMON ON DANIEL.

THE minister sat in his study at e'en,
 An' steered up his thochts wi' a clerical mien;
 He was sairly disjaskit an' sadly perplexed
 To wile for the Sabbath a suitable text!
 Ower Pentateuch problems he waggit his heid,
 An' fast frae the Romans he heestit wi' speed,
 Syne turnin' an auld theological manual,
 He plumped ower the lugs in the precepts o' Daniel.

Argumentative lions were thrashin' their tails,
 An' het exhortations were hurtlin' like flails!
 The buiks in their cases, they shook wi' the din,
 As he ruggit the prophecies ootside an' in:
 Three callers laid siege to the manse, a' thegither,—
 A weddin', a christenin'—ae thing an' anither:
 Says the minister's wife, "Mair folk I maun han'le,
 To lat ye get peace wi' the sermon on Daniel."

North, south, east an' west, was that sermon
 esteemed,
 Deputations that harkened, grew canty an' beamed:
 Folk said that its phrases were rich an' sublime,
 An' it aye lat them hame for their tatties in time:
 I' the plate there was few o' that broon copper carl,
 When that movin' discoorse cam furth frae the
 barrel;

Jist ane or twa kent that the minister's spaniel
 Had chowed up three leaves o' the sermon on Daniel.

BARBARA ROSS M'INTOSH.

disjaskit, dejected.
ruggit, tore.

chowed, chewed.