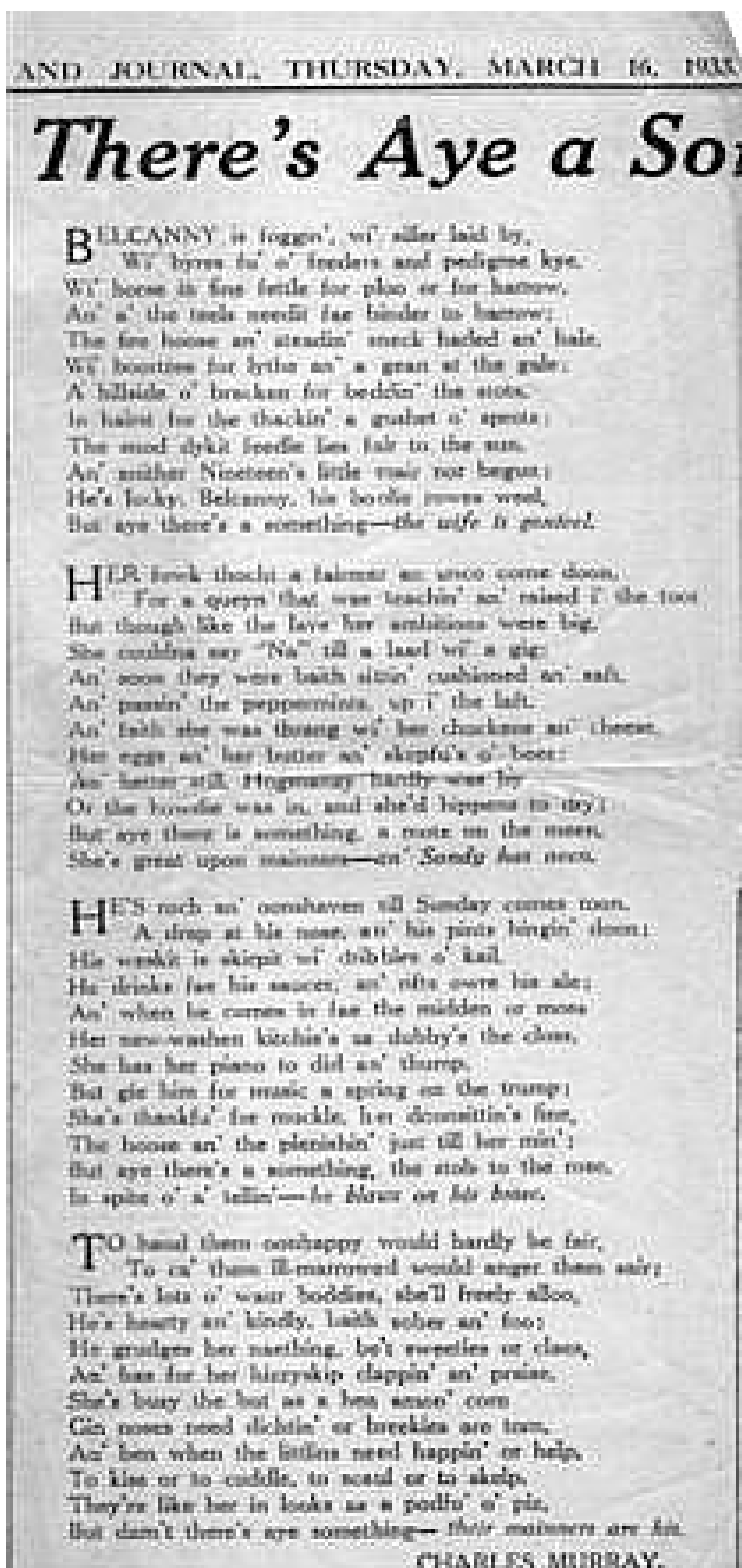


**John Henderson** (Doric Doggerelin' Domine Jake of Paphos, Cyprus), writes:-

Recently, a friend in the United States sent me this cutting from a page of the 16<sup>th</sup> March, 1933 Aberdeen Press and Journal that he had found in the attic amongst his father-in-law's papers.

*(My transcription of the poem follows beneath this unreadable image that I include for illustration only)*



Please note that the meanings of the Doric words are usually given at <http://www.dsl.ac.uk/dsl/>

*There's Aye a Something*

Belcanny is foggin', wi' siller laid by,  
Wi' byres fu' o' feeders and pedigree kye,  
Wi' horse in fine fettle for ploo or harrow.  
An' a' the teels needit fae binder to barrow;  
The fire hoose an' steadin' sneck harled an' hale,  
Wi' boortree for lythe an' a gean at the gale;  
A hillside o' bracken for beddin' the stots,  
In hairst for the thackin' a gushet o'sprots;  
The snod dykit feedle lies fair to the sun,  
An' anither Nineteen's little mair nor begun;  
He's lucky, Belcanny, his boolie rowes weel,  
But aye there's a something— *the wife is genteel.*

Her fowk thocht a fairmer an unco come doon,  
For a queyn that was teachin' an' raised i' the toon.  
But though like the lave her ambitions were big,  
She couldna say, "Na" till a laad wi' a gig;  
An' soon they were baith sittin' cushioned an' saft,  
An' passin' the peppermints, up i' the laft,  
An' faith she was thrang wi' her chickens an' cheese,  
Her eggs an' her butter an' skepfu's o' bees;  
An' better still, Hogmanay hardly was by  
Or the howdie was in, and she'd hippens to dry;  
But aye there is something, a mote on the meen,  
She's great upon mainners— *an' Sandy has neen.*

He's roch an' oonshaven till Sunday comes roon,  
A drap at his nose, an' his pints hingin' doon;  
His weskit is skirpit wi' dribbles o' kail,  
He drinks fae his saucer, an' rifts owre his ale;  
An' when he comes in fae the midden or moss  
Her new-washen kitchie's as dubby's the closs.  
She has her piano to dirl an' thump,  
But gie him for music a spring on the trump;  
She's thankfu' for muckle, her dconsittin's fine,  
The hoose an' the plenishin' just to her min';  
But aye there's a something, the stob to the rose,  
In spite o' a' tellin'— *he blaws on his brose.*

To haud them oonhappy would hardly be fair,  
To ca' them ill-marowed would anger them sair;  
There's lots o' waur boddies, she'll freely alloo,  
He's hearty an' kindly, baith sober an' foo;  
He grudges her naething, be't sweeties or claes,  
An' has for her hizzzyship clappin' an' praise.  
She's busy the but as a hen amon' corn  
Gin noses need dichtin' or breekies are torn,  
An' ben when littlins need happin' or help,  
To kiss or to cuddle, to scaul or to skelp.  
They're like her in looks as a podfu' o' piz,  
But dam't there's aye something— *their mainners are his.*

CHARLES MURRAY

I remembered that I had inherited a poetry book, 'Hamewith' by a Charles Murray, from my father, James Nicoll Kerr Henderson (1908-1989). It had been one of his reference texts during his Scottish Language and Literature Degree Course at Glasgow University in 1926/27; and, as a lad born and bred in the North-East of Scotland, he had treasured it. I am ashamed now to admit it, but I had never paid any great attention to this 'treasure', or to its author's life and literary works. But after being entranced by the poem in the newspaper, I decided to rectify this situation forthwith. With my own copy of 'Hamewith' out of reach, and probably similarly residing in my daughter's attic in Scotland, the World Wide Web immediately offered me a taste of what I had missed.

v.i.z.

## **Murray, Charles (1864-1941)**

### **Poet**

by

**John A.L. Gilfillan**

Charles Murray was born in Alford, Aberdeenshire on 28th September 1864. After schooling in Alford he trained as a civil engineer in Aberdeen. He emigrated in 1888 to South Africa and became a partner in a firm of architects and engineers. In his self-imposed exile he took to writing verse as he strove to maintain strong links with his family and his native Alford. He wrote in the local vernacular to please his father. Eager to see his verses in print he had twelve copies of *A Handful of Heather* printed privately in Aberdeen in 1893, only to withdraw it and to discard all but thirteen of the forty poems it contained. These were revised and published later in *Hamewith*. In 1895 he married Edith Rogers. They had three children, one son and two daughters. With the outbreak of the Boer War in 1899 he served in the Railway Pioneer Regiment. He also served in the First World War.

His home in Scotland and the language of his childhood were still his inspiration and the publication in 1900 of *Hamewith*, meaning "homewards" makes his motivation clear. *Hamewith* was re-published five times during his life. Its recurring theme was life in the Vale of Alford and its language was the broad Scots of the farming folk. From 1901 Murray's career flourished and he held various senior appointments in the Transvaal before becoming Secretary of Public Works, South Africa in 1910. A new edition of *Hamewith* was published in London in 1909 with an introduction by Andrew Lang who wrote:

"The Scots of Mr Murray is so pure and so rich that it may puzzle some patriots whose sentiments are stronger than their linguistic acquirements." He noted also that Murray's translations of Horace into Scots, "are among the best extant". Still another treasure in *Hamewith* is *The Whistle*, a poem full of humour and high spirits:

*He blew them rants sae lively, schottisches, reels and jigs,  
The foalie flang his muckle legs an' capered ower the rigs.*

His poems in *The Sough o' War* published in 1917 demonstrate yet again the poet's fervour for his own countryside and his pride in the courage of his countrymen. With *In the country places*, published in 1920, Murray's wry humour and deep insight had full scope in poems like *Gin I was God and It Wasna his Wyte*.

*It was coorse still an' on to be walloped like thon,  
When it wasna his wyte he was late.*

Murray became LLD (honoris causa) of Aberdeen University in 1920 and honoured as CMG in 1922.

He died in Banchory on 12th April 1941. His ashes were interred in the Kirkyard of Alford. There are memorial gates at Murray Park, Alford, officially opened in 1956. The Charles Murray Memorial Trust, founded in 1942, arranged publication of his *Last Poems* in 1969 and *Hamewith - The Complete Poems of Charles Murray* in 1979.

**J. Derrick McClure**, University of Aberdeen, writes in November, 2002,

Charles Murray is the leading figure in the development of the North-East dialect of Scots as a literary medium; and by extension, a major influence in the recovery of confidence in Scots as a poetic language which set the scene for the Scottish Renaissance of the 1920s.

The North-East of Scotland, in the mid-nineteenth century, was a self-contained and self-sufficient agricultural community with a strongly-marked dialect locally known as the “Doric” (which has survived remarkably well to the present day), a splendid tradition of folk-song and folk poetry, and a distinctive social culture based on large-scale arable farms employing workers who regularly “flitted” – moved from one place of work to another – every few terms. Murray's father, a joiner by trade, had a high local reputation for his skill in reciting dialect poetry, including his own writings; and Murray, in his boyhood, absorbed the full range and vitality of this remarkable folk-culture. His career as a poet, however, began during a period of work in South Africa, first as a surveyor and engineer with a gold mining company and later, after service in the Boer War, as Secretary of Public Works for the South African government. Nostalgia for his homeland, its distinctive landscape, memorable individuals and traditional way of life, was undoubtedly a main motivation for his choice of language and subject-matter; but a deeper reason was a perception, increasingly widespread in the later decades of the nineteenth century, that the social changes brought about by industrialisation, standardised education, and increasing social and geographical mobility were undermining the traditional local cultures and the dialects in which they were expressed. Murray's Doric poetry was his personal contribution to a major literary movement, by no means restricted to Scotland, rooted in a desire to preserve or at the very least to commemorate the old ways of life and of speech which the modern world seemed set to overwhelm.

Murray's first published collection of poems, *Hamewith* (i.e. “Homewards”, 1900) contains as one of its first items *The Whistle*, still his most popular work. In rapid and catchy rhythms, and a Scots coloured by words from his local Doric, it evokes the life of a North-East farm in the person of a “wee herd” (shepherd boy) who makes a whistle and delights himself and the rest of the household by playing traditional tunes, only to have it burnt by the teacher when school-days resume.

*He wheeped on't at mornin' an' he tweetled on't at nicht,  
He puffed his freckled cheeks until his nose sank oot o' sicht,  
The kye were late for milkin' when he piped them up the closs,  
The kitlins got his supper syne, an' he was beddit boss;  
But he cared na doit nor docken what they did or thocht or said,  
There was comfort in the whistle that the wee herd made.*

Other poems in the book depict local characters such as Skeely [skilful] Kirsty, The Lettergae [precentor], The Miller. The most elaborate in this series is *The Packman*, in which the life of a man who, starting as a pedlar, rises by dint of hard work, a convivial personality and a marked lack of scruples to a rich farmer and pillar of the community, is related in tones which suggest a certain envy, as well as grudging admiration, on the part of the narrator.

*But tho' his bairns are settled noo, he still can cast the coat  
An' work as hard as ever to mak' saxpence o' a groat;  
He plans as keen for years to come as when he first began,  
Forgettin' he's on borrowed days an' past the Bible span.  
See, yon's his hoose, an' there he sits; supposin' we cry in,  
It's cheaper drinkin' toddy there than payin' at the Inn.  
You'll find we'll hae a shortsome nicht an' baith be bidden back,  
But – in your lug – ye maunna say a word about the Pack.*

The distinctive vocabulary of the Doric is most in evidence in *The Antiquary*, where the title character in his person as well as in his interests represents a vanishing way of life:

*He kent auld spells, could trail the raip and spae,  
He'd wallets fu' o' queer oonchancie leems,  
Could dress a mart, prob hoven nowt, an' flay;  
Fell spavined horse, an' deftly use the fleems.*

Murray's Scots, lively, realistic, and rich in the vocabulary and idioms of his locality, proved an excellent medium for evoking the life of the North-East. In his next collection, *A Sough o' War* (1917), he extended the scope of his poetry by exploring the effects of the Great War on the people of the farming communities. A clear linguistic distinction is visible in this collection between a general literary Scots, with few local features, which he uses for expressions of patriotic pride in Scotland's military tradition and in the contribution of his countrymen to the present war effort, and a Doric more strongly marked than in the previous collection for poems conveying the responses of individuals to the War. In *Hairry Hears frae Hame*, the letters written to a man at the front by his father, mother, young brother and fiancée convey most touchingly the mixture of pride and anxiety in their thoughts of him, and their attempts to keep up their own courage as well as his by humorous banter. In *Fae France*, a young man proudly relates in a letter an incident that has earned him promotion: the irony is that the speaker is, on his own showing, a bellicose and ill-conditioned youth whose quarrelsome disposition made him unpopular in peacetime. The best poem in this collection, if not in Murray's entire oeuvre, is *Dockens Afore his Peers*, the monologue of a farmer explaining to a tribunal why the various members of his household should not be required to enlist. The full expressive force of the Doric is exploited in the self-serving cunning with which "Dockens" manipulates his hearers, triumphantly gaining "total exemption":

*Fat? Gar him 'list! Oor laadie 'list? 'Twould kill his mither, that,  
To think o' Johnnie in a trench awa in fat-ye-ca't:  
We would hae sic a miss at hame, gin he was hine awa:  
We'd rather lat ye clean the toon o' ony ither twa: [...]  
Hoot, Mains, hae mind, I'm doon for you some sma' thing wi' the bank:  
Aul' Larickleys, I saw you throu', an' this is a' my thank;  
An' Gutteryloan, that time ye broke, to Dockenhill ye cam' –  
'Total exemption.' Thank ye, sirs. Fat say ye till a dram?*

Murray retired in 1924 and returned to his homeland, having been previously awarded an honorary LL.D. from Aberdeen University. His poetry was, and remains, enormously popular in the North-East; but though his most characteristic work is in a markedly regional dialect, he is more than a purely local poet. His work is one of the first and finest demonstrations that serious poetry could be based firmly on the life of a community and written in a lively and credible representation of its native speech; and by re-vitalising the connection between written and spoken Scots he contributed to the regeneration of its status as a poetic language. Murray's collected works were published in 1979.

Reference:-

J. Derrick McClure, University of Aberdeen, "Murray, Charles" in *The Literary Encyclopedia* [online database] Profile first published 01/11/2002 [cited 3 Nov. 2005].  
Available from World Wide Web at <http://www.litencyc.com/php/speople.php?rec=true&UID=5201>

## A Selection of the Poems of Charles Murray

Many of them available at: - <http://www.theotherpages.org/poems/murray01.html>

### GIN A WIS GOD

by Charles Murray

Gin I was God, sittin' up there abeen,  
Weariet nae doot noo a' my darg was deen,  
Deaved wi' the harps an' hymns oonendin' ringin',  
To some clood-edge I'd daunder furth an', feth,  
Look ower an' watch hoo things were gyaun aneth.  
Syne, gin I saw hoo men I'd made mysel'  
Had startit in to pooshan, sheet an' fell,  
To reive an' rape, an' fairly mak' a hell  
O' my braw birlin' Earth, - a hale week's wark -  
I'd cast my coat again, rowe up my sark,  
An', or they'd time to lench a second ark.  
Tak' back my word an' sen' anither spate,  
Droon oot the hale hypothec, dicht the sklata,  
Own my mistak', an', aince I'd cleared the brod,  
Start a'thing ower again, gin I was God.

## IT WASNA HIS WYTE

It wasna his wyte he was beddit sae late  
An' him wi' sae muckle to dee,  
He'd the rabbits to feed an' the fulpie to kame  
An' the hens to hish into the ree;  
The mason's mear syne he set up in the closs  
An' coupit the ladle fu' keen,  
An' roon the ruck foun's wi' the lave o' the loons  
Played "Takie" by licht o' the meen.  
Syne he rypit his pooches an' coontit his bools,  
The reed-cheekit pitcher an' a',  
Took the yirlin's fower eggs fae his bonnet, an' fegs,  
When gorbelt they're fykie to blaw ;  
But furth cam' his mither an' cried on him in,  
Tho' sairly he priggit o wait -  
"The'll be nae wird o' this in the mornin', my laad" -  
But it wasna his wyte he was late.

"Och hey ! " an' "Och hum ! " he was raxin himsel'  
An' rubbin' his een when he raise,  
An' faur was his bonnet, an' faur was his beets  
An' fa had been touchin' his claes ?  
Ach ! his porritch was caul', they'd forgotten the saut,  
There was owre muckle meal on the tap.  
Was this a' the buttermilk, faur was his speen,  
An' fa had been bitin' his bap ?  
His pints wasna tied, an' the backs o' his lugs  
Nott some sma' attention as weel -  
But it wasna as gin it was Sabbath, ye ken,  
An' onything does for the squeel.  
Wi' his piece in his pouch he got roadit at last,  
Wi' his beuks an' his skaalie an' sklats,  
Gin the wag-at-the-wa' in the kitchie was slaw -  
Weel, it wasna his wyte he was late.

The fite-fuskered cat wi' her tail in the air  
Convoyed him as far as the barn,  
Syne, munchin' his piece, he set aff by his leen,  
Tho' nae very willin', I'se warn'.  
The cairt road was dubby, the track throu' the wid,  
Altho' maybe langer was best,  
But when loupin' the dyke a steen-chackert flew oot,  
An' he huntit a fyle for her nest.  
Syne he cloddit wi' yowies a squirrel he saw  
Teetin' roon frae the back o' a tree,  
An' jinkit the "Gamie," oot teeming his girns -  
A ragie aul' billie was he.  
A' this was a hinner : an' up the moss side  
He ran noo at siccan a rate  
That he fell i' the heather an' barkit his shins,  
Sae it wasna his wyte he was late.

Astride on a win'-casten larick he sat  
An' pykit for rosit to chaw,  
Till a pairtrick, sair frichtened, ran trailin' a wing  
Fae her cheepers to tryst him awa'.  
He cried on the dryster when passin' the mull,  
Got a lunt o' his pipe an' a news,  
An' his oxter pooch managed wi' shillans to full -  
A treat to tak' hame till his doos.  
Syne he waded the lade an' crap under the brig  
To hear the gigs thunner abeen,  
An' a rotten plumped in an' gaed sweemin' awa'  
Afore he could gaither a steen.  
He hovered to herrie a foggie bee's byke  
Nae far fae the mole-catcher's gate,  
An' the squeel it was in or he'd coontit his stangs -  
But it wasna his wyte he was late.

He tried on his taes to creep ben till his seat,  
But the snuffy aul' Dominie saw,  
Sneckit there in his dask like a wyver that waits  
For a flee in his wob on the wa' ;  
He tell't o' his tum'lie, but fat was the eese  
Wi' the mannie in sic an ill teen,  
An fat was a wap wi a spainyie or tag  
To hands that were hard as a steen ?  
Noo, gin he had grutten, it's brawly he kent  
Foo croose a' the lassies would crawl,  
For the mornin' afore he had scattered their lames,  
An' dung doon their hoosies an' a',  
Wi' a gully to hooie tho', soon he got ower  
The wye he'd been han'led by fate,  
It was coorse still an' on to be walloped like thon,  
When it wasna his wyte he was late.

It's thirty year, said ye, it's forty an' mair,  
Sin' last we were licket at squeel :  
The Dominie's deid, an' forgotten for lang,  
An' a' oor buik learnin' as weel.  
The size o' a park - wi' the gushets left oot -  
We'll guess geyan near, I daur say :  
Or the wecht o' a stot, but we wouldna gyang far  
Gin we tried noo, the coontin' in "Gray."  
"Effectual Callin' " we canna rin throu'  
Wha kent it aince clear as the text,  
We can say " Man's Chief En' " an' the shorter " Commands,"  
But fat was the " Reasons Annexed ? "  
Oor heads micht be riddels for a' they haud in  
O Catechis, coontin' or date,  
Yet I'll wauger we min' on the mornin's lang syne  
When it wasna oor wyte we were late.



## HAMEWITH

HOT youth ever is a ranger,  
New scenes ever its desire;  
Cauld Eild\*, doubtfu' o' the stranger,  
Thinks but o' haudin' in the fire.

Midway, the wanderer is weary,  
Fain he'd be turnin' in his prime  
Hamewith--the road that's never dreary,  
Back where his heart is a' the time.

## HAME

THERE'S a wee, wee glen in the Hielan's,  
Where I fain, fain would be;  
There's an auld kirk there on the hillside  
I weary sair to see.  
In a low lythe nook in the graveyard  
Drearily stands alane,  
Marking the last lair of a' I lo'ed,  
A wee moss-covered stane.

There's an auld hoose sits in a hollow  
Half happit by a tree;  
At the door the untended lilac  
Still blossoms for the bee;  
But the auld roof is sairly seggit,  
There's nane now left to care;  
And the thatch ance sae neatly stobbit  
Has lang been scant and bare.

Aft as I lie 'neath a foreign sky  
In dreams I see them a'--  
The auld deer kirk, the dear auld hame,  
The glen sae far awa'.  
Dreems flee at dawn, and the tropic sun  
Nae ray o' hop can gie;  
I wander on o'er the deser lone,  
There's nae mair hame for me.

## THE ALIEN

IN Afric's fabled fountains I have panned the golden sand--  
Caught crocodile with baviaan for bait--  
I've fished, with blasting gelatine for hook an' gaff' and wand,  
An' lured the bearded barbel to his fate:  
But take your Southern rivers that meander to the sea,  
And set me where the Leochel joins the Don.  
With eighteen feet of greenheart an' the tackle running free--  
I want to have a clean fish on.

The eland and the tsessebe I've tracked from early dawn,  
I've heard the road of lions shake the night,  
I've fed the lonely bush-veld camp on dik-kop an' korhaan,  
An' watched the soaring vulture in his flight;  
For horn an' head I've hunted, yet the spoil of gin an' spear,  
My trophies, I would freely give them all,  
To creep through mist an' heather on the great red deer--  
I want to hear the black cock call

In hot December weather when the grass is caddie high  
I've driven clean an' lost the ball an' game,  
When winter veld is burned an' bare I've cursed the cuppy lie--  
The language is the one thing still the same;  
For dongas, rocks, an' scuffled greens give me the links up North,  
The whins, the broom, the thunder of the surf,  
The three old fellows waiting where I used to make a fourth--  
I want to play a round on turf.

I've faced the fremt, its strain an' toil, in market an' in mine,  
Seen Fortune ebb an' flow between the "Chains,"  
Sat late o'er starlit banquets where the danger spiced the wine,  
But bitter are the lees the alien drains;  
For all the time the heather blooms on distant Benachie,  
An' wrapt in peace the shelterd valley lies,  
I want to wade through bracken in a glen across the sea--  
I want to see the peat reek rise.

## **SPRING**

SPRING at last comes blawin' in  
Sandy's rankin' oot his wan'.  
Lowse they kye an' lat them rin!  
Spring at last comes blawin' in,  
See the yallow on the whin,  
Pu' yon raggit-robin, man.  
Spring at last comes blawin' in,  
Sandy's rankin' oot his wan'.

## **WINTER**

NOO that cauldribe Winter's here  
There's a pig in ilka bed,  
Kinlin's scarce an' coals is dear;  
Noo that cauldribe Winter's here  
Doddy mittons we maun wear,  
Butter skites an' winna spread;  
Noo that cauldribe Winter's here  
There's a pig in ilka bed.

## **LOVE AND LAUGHTER**

I ROWED a lassie i' my plaid,  
A cosy bield in weety weather,  
An' aye she kissed me back an' said  
"It's fine to love an' lauch thegether."

O kind, sae kind, was she yestreen,  
But lassies' hearts are ill to tether,  
An' here I herd the yowes my leen,  
Flung weary on the drookit heather.

Happy an' happit, Heaven above  
Ket her be that, I'll thole the weather;  
Gie her the laughter, me the love,  
Gin ne'er again the twa thegether.

## THO' I BE AUL'

YE needa think tho' I be aul',  
An' a' my bonnet haps is grey,  
My heart is grizzen, crined or caul'  
An' never kens a dirl the day.

A bonny lass can stirr me still,  
As deep her mither did when young,  
An' aul' Scots sang my saul can fill  
As fu's when first I heard it sung.

Gin throu' the muir ahin' the dogs  
I dinna lift my feet sae cleen  
As swacker lads that loup the bogs,  
I'll wear them doon afore we're deen.

I ken some differ wi' the dram,  
Ae mutchkin starts me singin' noo,  
But winds are tempered to the lamb,  
An' I get a' the cheaper fu'.

An open lug, a gyangin' fit,  
Altho' they've never filled my kist,  
Hae brocht me wisdom, whiles an' wit  
Worth mair than a' the siller miss't.

An', faith, the ferlies I hae seen,  
The ploys I've shared an' daurna tell  
Cheer mony a lanely winter's e'en,  
Just kecklin' ower them to mysel'.

There's some hae looks, there's mair hae claes,  
That's but the brods, the beulk's the thing,  
The heart that keeps for dreary days  
Some weel-remembered merry spring.

The ca' me fey or ca' me feel,  
Clean draft or dotit, deil may care,  
Aye faur there's fun, at Pase or Yeel,  
Gin I be livin' I'll be there.

## STILL, MAN, STILL

HE'S nae to ride the water on,  
For fear he coup the creel;  
He's never mowse to meddle wi',  
I ken't ower weel;  
He's aften deen a neiper doon  
That never did him ill,  
He may get grey but never gweed,--  
An' still, man, still,

I've kent him lift anither's birn  
When better men were laith,  
An' wi' a nicht-boun' beggar share  
Biel an' brose baith.  
When stirks were doon an' rents were due  
I've kent him back a bill  
That kept a peer man in his craft,--  
But still, man, still,

I dinna doot the story's true,  
Ae Sabbath he was heard  
Gyaun whustlin doon the larick belt  
Like some roch caird;  
He's never ta'ena token yet--  
Suspicious an ye will  
Whaur a' gang forrit aince a year,--  
An' still, man, still,

Nae winter but a starvin wife  
Comes for the bow o' meal,  
His onwal wauger laid an' won  
At some bonspiel;  
To bleeze the burn an' spear a fish  
Therre's few that hae his skill,  
An' nane like him can busk a heuck,--  
But still, man, still,

Nich after nicht till a' the oors  
At catch-the-ten he'll sit,  
At singin' orra strouds o' sangs  
There's few mair fit.  
I've heard him fae the laird himsel'  
Refuse an offered gill,  
Nae honest man but tak's his dram,--  
An still, man, still,

When ye uphaud or I misca'  
There's aye the tither side,  
An' whiles the very best o' us  
Would some things hide;  
We're maistly a' a mixture, man,  
Like pasture on the hill,  
Whaur tufts o' girse an' scrogs o' breem  
Raise stoot tups still.

## FURTH AGAIN

YE'RE hardly hame till furth again'  
It's buckle the brogues an' fare  
To the wearimost ends o' the earth again,  
An' the wark that is waitin' there.  
Ye are keen to gang, but it's lane an' lang  
Lies ever the ootwith track,  
An' its guid to mind there are frien's behind  
Aye wishin ye well,--an back.

## AT THE LOANIN MOU'

THE tears were drappin' frae baith her een,  
When I was sayin' "Goodbye" the streen,  
An' we baith were wae as we weel might be,  
The wife at the mou' o' the loan an' me.

Yet what could I do at a tie like this  
But lift her chin for a pairtin' kiss,  
An' leave her to look to the bairns an' kye,  
An' warsle her lane till the war was bye?

Wi' the country cryin' for mair to come,  
What man could bide at the lug o' the lum,  
Or sleep upon feathers or caff for shame  
To think he was lyin' sae saft at hame?

What scaith may come man canna foresee,  
But naething waur can a mortal dree  
Than leavin' a wife at a time like noo,  
Greetin' her lane at the loanin' mou'.

## **WHEN WILL THE WAR BE BY ?**

"THIS year, neist year, sometime, never,"  
A lanely lass, bringing hame the kye,  
Pu's at a floo'er wi' a weary sigh,  
An' laich, laich, she is coontin' ever  
"This year, neist year, sometime, never,  
When will the war be by?"

"Weel, wounded, missin', deid,"  
Is there nae news o' oor lads ava?  
Are they hale an' fere that are hine awa'?  
A lass raxed oot for the list, to read--  
"Weel, wounded, missin', deid";  
An' the war was by for twa.

## **THE MAID O' THE MILL**

THE cushie doos are cooin' in the birk,  
The pee-weets are cryin' on the lea,  
The starlings in the belfty o' the kirk  
Are layin' plans as merry as can be.  
The mavis in the plantin' has a mate,  
The blackbird is busy wi' his nest,  
Then why until the summer should we wait  
When spring could see us happy as the rest.

There's leaves upon the bourtree on the haugh,  
The blossom is drappin' fae the gean,  
There's buds upon the rantree an' the saugh,  
The ferns about the Lady's Well are green.  
A' day the herd is liltin' on the hill,  
The o'ercome o' ilka sang's the same:  
"There are ower mony maidens at the Mill,  
It's time the one I trysted wi' cam' hame!

## A SOUGH O' WAR

THE corn was turnin', hairst was near,  
But lang afore the scythes could start  
A sough o' war gaed through the land  
An' stirred it to its benmost heart.  
Nae ours the blame, but whrn it came  
We couldna pass the challenge by,  
For credit o' our honest name  
There could be but one reply.  
An' buirdly men, fae strath an' glen  
An' shepherds fae the bucht an' hill,  
Will show them a', whate'er befa',  
Auld Scotland counts for something still.

Half-mast the castle banner droops,  
The Laird's lament was played yestreen,  
An' mony a widowed cottar wife  
Is greetin' at her shank aleen.  
In Freedom's cause, for ane that fa's,  
We'll gleen the glens a' send them three  
To clip the reivin' eagle's claws,  
An' drook his feathers i' the sea.  
For gallant loons, in broochs an' toons,  
Are leavin' shop an' yard an' mill,  
A keen to show baith friend an' foe  
Auld Scotland counts for something still.

The grim, grey fathers, bent wi' years,  
Come stridin' through the muirland mist,  
Wi' beardless lads scarce by wi' school  
But eager as the lave to list.  
We've fleshed o' yore the brave claymore

On mony a bloody field afar,  
But ne'er did skirlin' pipes afore  
Cry on sae udgently tae war.  
Gin danger's there, we'll thole our share,  
Gie's but the weapons, we've the will,  
Ayont the main, to prove again  
Auld Scotland counts for something still.



## THE WITCH O' THE GOLDEN HAIR

AULD carlins ride on their brooms astride  
Awa' thro' the midnight air,  
But they cast nae spell on a man sae fell  
As the Witch o' the Golden Hair.

Nay a fairy free 'neath the hazel tree  
That dances upon the green  
Ever kent a charm that could heal or harm  
Like the glint o' her two blue een.

Fae the earth she's reived, fae the Heav'n she's thieved,  
For her cauldron's deadly brew;  
She laughs at the sounds o' the hearts she wounds,  
For what recks the Witch o' rue?

Lang, lang may the vine in its envy twine  
To compass a bower sae rare,  
As will peer, I trow, wi' her broad low brow  
An' her wavin' golden hair.

The bloom fae the peach that we ne'er could reach,  
The red that the apple missed,  
You'll find if you seek on the Witch's cheek,  
Left there when the summer kissed.

The blue drappit doon fae the lift aboon  
To shine in her dancin' een;  
An' the honey-bee sips fae her red, red lips,  
Syn'e brags o' the sweets between.

Wi' a magic wile she has won the smile  
That the mornin' used to wear,  
An' the gold the sun in his splendor spun  
Lies tangled amang her hair.

The soft south wind cam' to her to find  
A haven to sink an' die,  
An' the breath o' myrrh it bequeathed to her  
You'll find in the Witch's sigh.

The dimples there that you still can see  
Are a' she can claim her ain,  
For in Nature fair naught can compare  
Wi' them; they are hers alane.

## THE REMONSTRANCE

NOO man, hoo can ye think it richt  
To waste your time, nicht after nicht,  
An' hunker in the fallin' licht  
    Wi' moody broo,  
Like some puir dwinin' thewless wicht  
    Wi' death in view?  
I've taul' ye aft aneuch i's nae  
As if ye'd aught 'at's new to say,  
Or said auld things some better way,  
    Or like some callants  
Gat fouk to praise your songs an' pay  
    Ye for your ballants.  
Instead o' vreetin' like a clerk  
Till bed-time brings along the dark,  
Ye should be sportin' in the park  
    An' hear the clamour  
Wad greet ye, should ye pass my mark  
    Wi' stane or hammer.  
Or tak' a dauder roon' the braes  
An' hear the blackies pipe the lays,  
The liftward laverock's sang o' praise,  
    An' syne, my billie,  
Mak' nae mair verses a' your days--  
    Shut doonyour millie.

## THE REPLY

THO' loud the mavis whistles now  
An' blackbirds pipe fae ilka bough  
An' laverocks set the heart alowe--  
    Mid a' the plenty  
You'd miss upon the wayside cowe  
    The twitt'rin' lintie  
An' think you, when the simmer's gane,  
When the sleet blows thro' the leafless plane,  
An' bieldless birds sit mute an' lane,  
    The woods a' cheerless,  
    The hamely robin on the stane  
    Sings sweet an' fearless.  
So tho' my sangs be as you say  
Nae marrow for the blackbird's lay  
They may hae cheered somebody's way  
    Wha wanted better,  
An' sent him happier up the brae  
    My welcome debtor.  
Nae care hae I, nor wish to speel  
Parnassus' knowe, for mony a chiel  
Has tint his time, his life as weel,  
    To claim a bit o't:  
I only crave a wee bit biel'  
    Near han' the fit o't.

## BURNS' CENTENARY

"I'll be more respected a hundred years  
after I'm dead than I am at present."--R.B., 1796.

"MY fame is sure; when I am dead  
A century," the Poet said,  
"They'll heap the honours on my head  
They grudge me noo";  
To-day the hundred years have sped  
That prove it true.

Whiles as the featherd ages flee,  
Time sets the sand-glass on his knee,  
An' ilka name baith great an' wee  
Shak's thro' his seive;  
Syne sadly wags his pow to see  
The few that live.

An' still the quickest o' the lot  
Is his wha made the lovely cot  
A shrine, whaur ilka reverent Scot  
Bareheadit' turns.  
Our mither's psalms we may forgot,  
But never Burns.

This nicht, auld Scotland, dry your tears,  
An' let nae sough o' grief come near's;  
We'll speak o' Rab 's gin he could hear's;  
Life's but a fivver,  
And he's been healed this hundred years  
To live for ever.