

A dark green, textured book cover with a decorative floral border in a lighter shade of green. The border features intricate scrollwork and leaf patterns, framing the central text.

MY CHILDHOOD HOME

A POEM

BY JOHN LOWE.



DUNKELD



MY CHILDHOOD HOME,

A Poem.

JOHN LOWE.



Go where I may, where'er my footsteps roam,
No dearer, sweeter spot is found on earth.



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TO
HENRY JAMES, Esq. M.D.
OF IRETON WOOD, DERBYSHIRE.

DEAR SIR,

The following verses, composed at short and hurried intervals, were not originally designed for publication. That they now appear in a printed form, is assuredly not owing to any intrinsic excellence they possess, but must rather be ascribed to the influence of those feelings which sway most authors in reference to their own productions.

The Poem, which is intended only for private distribution, is chiefly made up of early reminiscences, with descriptive allusions to some of the more prominent and picturesque scenes which surround the Home of my childhood.

In dedicating the Poem to you, I do so for two reasons;—first, in consideration of the many delightful excursions and fondly-remembered rambles I had the honour, as well as the

happiness, of having with you in days gone by, in that sweet spot

“ Where first my infant eyes beheld the light of day.”

And, secondly, because there is no one I know whose mind is more deeply alive than your own, to the fascinating and attractive charms of natural scenery, and more especially to the beauties of those romantic and sublime scenes which are but faintly and partially depicted in the following verses—scenes which have not only drawn forth your own unbounded admiration, but which have commanded the delight and admiration of thousands of visitors from all parts of the world ; and by which the ancient City of Dunkeld stands forth unsurpassed for picturesque beauty and grandeur by any spot in Britain's Isle.

It is with sincere pleasure, therefore, this effusion is dedicated to you.

That every happiness may attend you and your family, is the heartfelt wish of,

Your faithful and sincere friend,

THE AUTHOR.

EDINBURGH, 1st January 1844.

MY CHILDHOOD HOME.

When Solitude the lonely hour bestows,
And from the mind all worldly cares are cast,
Then Memory in its native channel flows,
And fills the soul with pleasures that are past.

Oft to refresh the mind with bygone tales,
And summon up to thought life's early scenes,
I've wandered forth through lone sequestered dales,
'Mong shaded groves and by the murmuring streams.

And when reverting to those halcyon years
Of rampant boyhood and of happy youth,
My heart has flowed with joy, my eyes with tears,
For *then* was love, tranquillity, and truth.

Sweet the remembrance of my Childhood Home !

Romantic spot ! the cradle of my birth !

Go where I may, where'er my footsteps roam,

No dearer, sweeter spot is found on earth.

Association hallows all around,

And throws a magic charm o'er every scene ;

Each spot is shrined in memory sacred ground,

For each bespeaks a happiness serene.

Romantic spot ! how much I love to dwell

In pleasing thoughts upon those happy hours !

When by the mountain-pass, or rugged dell,

I've sought and culled the rich mellifluous flowers.

The blushing wild-rose, sweetest flower I know,

How oft I've gazed upon its smiling face !

Admiring all its tints of vivid glow—

Emblem of innocence, of love, and grace.

Scarce less in beauty and in love, I deem,

The purpled heath upon the mountain-side ;

Its perfumed bell, all Scotia's sons esteem,

And Highland Scotland holds it as her pride.

Who that has roamed our heath-clad hills so bright,

When summer's gentle breezes fan the air,

But felt transported with untold delight

As o'er the purpled path he sped so fair ?

O Memory ! aid me while I would recount
The joys I felt in boyhood's happy day ;
When the bold hilly cliffs I dared to mount,
To view the gorgeous scenes that round me lay.

To Birnam's far-famed Hill I bend my way,
And up its steep ascent I fleetly climb,
While Rose, the fond companion of my stray,
Heralds my onward path with joy sublime.

Poor Rose ! that name sounds sweetly to my ear,
Recalling many a noble, glorious chase ;
She was my favourite Dog and lov'd most dear,
Unmatched in beauty, fleetest in the race.

Now, mid-way up the hill I lay me down,
Breathless and faint—yet O how sweet to rest !
While perfumed breezes o'er me gently blown,
Refresh and vivify with new-born zest.

Th' enchanting scenery of the vale below,
Attracts my wondering and admiring view ;
The woods and lawns with radiant lustre glow,
Of countless foliage and of varied hue.

The cot and mansion-house bedeck the plain,
And sweetly lie embosomed 'mid the scene ;
While circling o'er, the aged oak and plane
Raise high their boughs enrobed in foliage green.

Behind Newtyle's dark-towering wooded height,
The Lakes of Lowes and Butterston are seen ;
Their waters, glitt'ring in the sunbeams bright,
Diffuse a living lustre o'er the scene.

Far to the west from out the mountain throng,
The Amazon of Scotland veers her way ;
Slowly through fairy fields she glides along,
Sparkling with beauty in the sun's bright ray.

Noblest of Scottish streams ! majestic Tay !
How oft thy wooded banks I've wandered o'er !
The morning's dawn, and evening twilight grey,
Have found me musing by thy tranquil shore.

How oft the Angler's gentle art I've plied
Among thy placid pools and streams so pure !
And with the tempting, gaudy fly have tried
The silver tenant from its cell to lure !

With ardour keen and expectation high,
I've *flogged* from morn to eve thy waters deep ;
And O how pleased when at the dropping fly
I've seen the noble salmon bounding leap !

With Angler's skilful hand I strike him fast,
And practise all the tactics of the play ;
Then gently near him to the shore at last,
And now he lies exhausted in the bay.

Another move, the triumph is complete !

The prize is won—he's thrown upon the green !
Down by his silvery side I take my seat,
With joy exulting o'er the happy scene.

Oft thus I've spent the live-long summer-day,
Plying with ardour keen the gentle art ;
None but a lover of the sport can say
What pleasing feelings fill the angler's heart.

Far 'moved from busy haunts and noisy crowds,
Where all is bustle, business, and care ;
He dwells 'mong mountains, waters, fields, and woods,
And breathes a purer, fresher, healthier air.

Far from the pageantry of city life,
Where art and artifice so much abound,
He, with a tranquil soul unknown to strife,
Holds converse sweet with Nature's works around.

'Tis thus upon thy banks, beloved Tay !
I've spent so many hours of pure delight ;
'Tis thus I court and hail that happy day,
That brings me back to view thy streams so bright.

Close by the noble Tay in beauty lies
The ancient Capital of Caledon ;
While to the north Craig-y-Barns' summits rise
With verdure clad, and stately pine o'ergrown.

Above the ancient city walls is seen,
The venerable steeple towering high ;
While nestling 'mid the larch and foliage green
The ruins of the old Cathedral lie.

Its roofless walls with ivy hung around
Encompass now the relics of the dead ;
And where the Choir once occupied the ground,
The homely Parish Church now rears its head.

Upon thy ruins Fancy loves to stay,
And picture up the scenes of other days ;
Ten centuries and more have rolled away,
Since Saint Columba here a Church did raise.

Long chosen as the Primate's chiefest seat,
This spot was marked by many a tragic deed ;
Let History's page the dire events repeat,
When priests and nobles for their faith did bleed,

O sacred spot ! endeared to every one
Whose heart is filled with holy heavenly love ;
Full many a pious Christian here hath gone
To hold sweet commune with his God above.

On Sabbath morn when chimes the worship-bell,
To this, the House of God, he would repair ;
And here with rapture would his bosom swell,
As heavenwards waft his thoughts in ardent prayer.



Very faint, illegible text caption located below the photograph.



Drawn & Engraved by

G. Cumming Dunneild

INTERIOR OF DUNNEILD CATHEDRAL
LOOKING WEST

At such an hour how lovely to behold
A people flock to hear the gospel word !
The narrow pathway throngs with young and old,
All come to worship their great Heavenly Lord.

Here meet the peasant and the noble peer,
The "man unknown" and he of great renown ;
In common *all* the gospel message hear,
All humble suppliants for heaven's crown.

Sweet sacred spot ! enshrined in memory dear,
How oft thy holy courts and aisles I've trod !
Thy very walls I love, thy stones revere,
Church of my fathers ! hallowed House of God !

But farther up the heath-clad hill I climb,
Nor stop until its topmost peak I gain ;
The prospect now is gorgeous and sublime,
Embracing every valley, hill, and plain.

The everlasting hills around are spread,
In gorgeous beauty and in bright array ;
Far west Ben-Lawers rears its giant head,
And to the north Bens Gloe and Vrackie grey.

Here, too, Schiehallion's cone-like summit peers,
Enveloped 'mid the clouds that circle o'er ;
While eastwards "high Dunsinane Hill" appears,
Bounding the fertile valley of Strathmore.



Far to the south the verdant Ochils lie,
Outstretching wide across the distant scene ;
Here, too, the Lomonds rear their tops so high,
Enrobed in sweetest garb of vivid green.

Still do I turn my eyes to Dunsinane,
Confronting Birnam Hill whereon I stand ;
These Shakspeare has ennobled by his pen,
These rendered classic by his magic wand.

There, in the castle near to Dunsinane,
Macbeth, the tyrant and usurper, slept ;
While marshal'd all upon the neighbouring plain
His steel-clad warriors their vigils kept.

With wistful eye they turn to Birnam grove,
Where Malcolm and the brave Macduff encamp ;
To Dunsinane the forest seems to move,
And spreads a terror through the Tyrant's camp.

Still trusts the Tyrant to his powerful arm—
Still feels unmatch'd by "man of woman born,"—
Still thinks he's vested with a potent charm,
At "swords he smiles," and "weapons laughs to scorn."

Now meet the armies on the bloody plain,
The ruthless deeds of war are now begun ;
Already has Macbeth *one* champion slain,
The brave and noble youth, Old Siward's son.

Then seeks Macduff the "bloody villain's" life,
From tent to tent impatiently he flies ;
Behold they meet ! and close in dubious strife—
Macbeth is slain ! the tyrant falls and dies !

A shout of triumph makes the welkin ring,
Macduff is Victor ! echoes every one ;
Then all salute young Malcolm, Scotland's King,
And march with joy to see him crowned at Scone.

But, lo ! the setting sun in yonder sky
Proclaims that evening shades are drawing near ;
So up I start, and homewards quickly hie,
With mind surcharged with Bard of Avon's cheer.

Yet mark the glory of yon heavenly light
Reflected in the clouds with golden hue ;
How dark the mountain's base—the top how bright,
As sinks the orb refulgent from the view !

The balmy zephyrs blow so soft and fair,
Sweet waft the perfumes of the drooping flower ;
The breeze so soothing feels, so cool the air,
O how I love the twilight's tranquil hour !

Sweet is the evening walk—how calm, how cool,
How passing sweet the Holme's dear leafy shade !
How loved this favourite walk by Bran's clear pool,
Adorn'd with foliage of every blade !

Oft by the margin of this crystal stream,
I've many a wondrous tale and story read,
Till long indulging in the glowing theme,
I've found grey twilight's curtain round me spread.

O well-remember'd haunts, and dearly loved,
Along the banks of Bran's pellucid stream!
How oft its wild romantic woods I've roved,
Indulging many a bright Elysian dream!

Oft have I lengthen'd out my little stray,
Until the Rumbling Bridge my footsteps found;
As oft to Ossian's Hall I've bent my way,
A dear lov'd favourite haunt—enchancing ground!

Upon the tufted cliff, o'erstrewn with flowers,
I've sat me down in pleasing thoughtful mood;
And here, in wonder rapt, have lain for hours
Amid the grandeur of this solitude.

From out the glen the boisterous waters sweep,
And dash with fury 'gainst the flinty shore;
Then gushing wildly o'er the awful steep,
Fall in the yawning gulf with thundering roar.

The misty spray gleams in the radiant sun,
While in the deep abyss the waters roll;
Then issuing from the rocky channel, run
In tranquil course into the glassy pool.



THE HERMITAGE
NEAR SUNZELD

Drawn & Engraved by H. Chapman, Designer

Close by the river's deep and rugged bed
Uprise the ancient oak and stately pine ;
High o'er the gulf they rear their verdant head,
While round their trunks the ivy-tendrils twine.

The Hermitage and Ossian's Cave so dread
Enrich the grandeur of the noble scene ;
While cross the deep a rustic bridge is laid,
And underneath the glassy pool serene.

How sweet to wander in this wild retreat,
When glows the summer's scorching sun at noon ;
How dread to stray when evening shadows meet,
When shines with silver light the fulgent moon.

Then from the chinky rocks the birds of night,
With wild and shrieking note, come forth to prowl ;
O'er the dark pool they wing their tardy flight,
First the grey bat, and then the moping owl.

At such an hour, how solemn all around,
How dark and dismal seem the waving woods !
With gloomy livery all the scenery 's crowned,
While loudly swell the cataract's heaving floods.

But sweeter far the stroll at morning's dawn,
When cheering sunbeams glad the dewy vale ;
More lovely then the woods and flowery lawn,
The heath-clad mountain, and the verdant dale.

O how I lov'd from balmy sleep to rise,
Ere yet the lark had sung its earliest note !
Ere yet the sun had streaked the eastern skies,
Or the lone peasant left his humble cot !

Long ere the misty mantle of the night
Had been uplifted from the mountains grey,
I've gladly climbed Craig Vinean's wooded height,
To watch the rising of the orb of day.

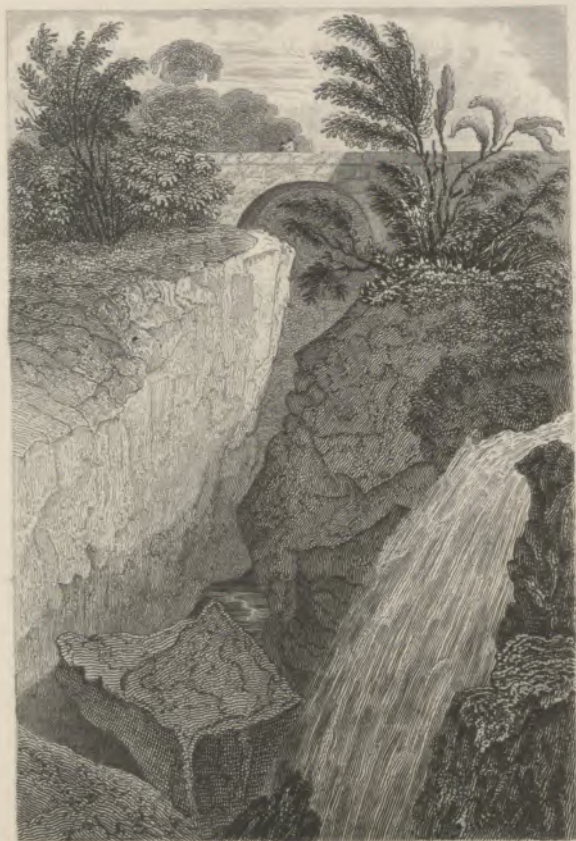
Nature as yet is shrouded in repose,
No sound is heard throughout her wide domains ;
Down the deep glen the brooklet gently flows,
While 'mid the groves a solemn silence reigns.

The whisp'ring breeze is hushed in wood and hill ;
No breath disturbs the calm and tranquil air,
Save Vesta* yelping by the brambled rill,
Where lurk the cony and the timid hare—

Save when the antler'd deer with dread espies
The wary sportsman by the mossy fen,
One instant gazes, then with fury flies
To seek the shelter of the wooded glen.

Now streak the eastern heavens with golden rays,
As Phœbus mounts his pathway in the sky ;
The little warblers now pour forth their lays
In sacred orisons to Him on high.

* A favourite terrier.



THE RUMBLING BRIDGE
NEAR DUNKELD.

Drawn & Engraved by O. Cunningham Dundee.

The vapours gather from the river beds,
And floating upwards quickly pass away ;
The gorgeous hills unveil their giant heads,
And hail a welcome to the orb of day.

The sombre Tay reflects his orient beams,
As well the crystal dew-drops pendent bright ;
While all the valleys, mountains, woods, and streams,
Proclaim the glory of the heavenly light.

The glitt'ring insects wake to life and light,
And joyous flutter in the sunny ray ;
Beasts quit their grassy couch, birds take to flight,
While teem the sylvan groves with warblers gay.

Perch'd on the topmost bough of some tall lime,
The thrush or blackbird serenades the vale,
Its plaintive notes so varied and sublime,
Thrill the soft heart as by a touching tale.

A thousand strains are wafted to the sky,
A thousand notes attune the leafy grove ;
Each songster with its neighbour seems to vie,
Yet all breathe forth sweet innocence and love.

Go to the groves, ye Lovers of true Song !
List to the warbles of the feathery tribe ;
Hear their soft strains, how sweetly they prolong,
They seek no flatt'ring words, no praise, no bribe.

Come to the groves, thou youthful, Am'rous Swain !

Whose soul is centred in thy beauteous Fair ;
Here you can count in sweet enraptured strain,
The charms of her to whom in love you swear.

Come to the groves, ye Hunters after Wealth,

Whose days and nights are spent in bootless toil ;
Come, that your care-worn spirits may have health,
Come, leave at least your idol for a while.

Go to the groves, thou Meditative Maid !

For you at least a paradise is there ;
Each op'ning flower that skirts the sunny glade
Reflects your excellence and virtues rare.

Go to the groves, thou lovely, Loving Maid !

Where sweetly sing the linnet and the lark ;
Go rest awhile beneath the yew-tree shade,
Go softly wander by the bowered park.

Go to the groves, thou gentle tender Youth !

Ere yet the world has soured thy pliant mind ;
You'll learn in Nature's lessons many a truth,
That lead to virtue, and instruct mankind.

Go to the groves, thou Hoary-headed Sage !

Revive impressions made in early days ;
In Nature's works you read in every page
That God is good and wise in all his ways.

How sweet 'mong blooming paths and fields to rove,
Adorned by verdant shrub and fragrant flower !
How sweet the mossy couch, the shady grove,
The cooling streamlet, and the perfumed bower !

How sweet the bleatings midway up the hill.
How fraught with care, with tenderness and love !
How sweet the murmuring of the trickling rill,
How sweet the cooing of the mournful dove !

How sweet the daisy on the verdant lea,
How passing rich the woodbine's fragrant bower !
How sweet the humming of the busy bee,
How joyously it probes the nectared flower !

How loud the lowings from the distant plains,
How softly echoed from the rocks above !
How sweet the warbles of ten thousand strains,
That swelling issue from the leafy grove !

How sweet the carol of the tuneful lark,
As high it flutters in the sunny ray !
How loud the landrail's croaking in the park,
How short and shrill the robin's humble lay !

How soothing sweet the cuckoo's gentle note,
How faintly echoed in the shady grove !
How sweet the peasant's humble tidy cot,
How full of happiness, of peace, and love !

How sweet the snowy lamokins on the leas,
How full of innocence their bleating voice !
How sweet the breezes whispering 'mong the trees,
How thrilling grand the cascade's hollow noise !

How sweet among such fairy fields to rove,
How blest among such scenes to walk abroad !
'Tis then the mind attuned with heavenly love,
Upturns from Nature's works to Nature's God.

'Tis then on Fancy's golden wing we rise,
And soar among the regions of the blest ;
Where heavenly glory 'lumines all the skies,
And ransomed and immortal spirits rest.

'Tis then the soul, upborne on pinions strong,
And rev'lling in the sweets of holy love,
Foretastes that joy when 'mid the ransomed throng,
It stands acquitted at the Throne above.

Sweet the remembrance of my childhood home !
Romantic spot ! the cradle of my birth !
Go where I may—where'er my footsteps roam,
No dearer, sweeter spot is found on earth !

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