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Rehearsal,

OR

The Burning of Church and Spire:

A BALLAD,

BY

THOMAS P. NICOLL,

Author of "Trifles in Verse," &c.

"Thy saints take pleasure in her stones,
Her very dust to them is dear."

ABERDEEN:

JAMES MACKAY, 41 AND 43 SCHOOLHILL.

1874.



TO

MY SORROWING FELLOW-CITIZENS

Is Dedicated

THIS SIMPLE BALLAD.

PUBLISHER TO THE READER.

THIS little Ballad was handed to me the other day by the author, without note or comment. On reading it, I found it so much in unison with my own feelings on the sad and sacred subject, that I resolved at once to print it. It is written in beautiful harmony with the subject, is full of tenderness and sympathy, and appeals to the heart of every true citizen and lover of

“The ashes of his fathers,
And the temples of his gods.”

The subject is a great one; so great that even Edgar Allan Poe would have failed to describe the calamity, not from want of artistic ability, but being “out of tune” with the theme. All that is wanted is that the simple language of the heart be spoken. I believe this has been done, but as the little work was written hastily, and at the inspiration of friendship, and not intended for publication, if any think it unworthy the occasion I am willing to bear the blame.



Ichabod;

Or the Burning of Church and Spire.

I

THE dear old tower, the dear old tower,
We loved it passing well :
The grey old tower, the dear old tower,
That held the far-famed bell.

II.

The fair white church, the rare white church,
So beautiful to see,
Our Silver City's joy and pride,
We loved exceedingly.

III.

The dear old tower, the fair white church,
That in God's-acre stood,
And with the glory of the cross
Made glad the solitude.

IV.

The dear old tower that bore the bells,
The mellow bells and old,
That throbbed to joy and sobbed to woe,
That pealed, and rolled, and tolled,

V.

That wooed to prayer, that fired to praise,
That called to manly toil ;
The dear old bells, the sweet old bells,
Above the dear old aisle :

VI.

How shall I tell, how can I tell,
Their melancholy fate ?

Alas ! the theme is all too sad,
Is all too sad and great.

VII.

The dear old bells, the sweet-tongued bells,
They'll never chime again ;
And never more the rare old tower
Will glad the eyes of men.

VIII.

For we have lived, alas ! to see
The all-devouring flame
Lap up their glory, leaving us
But sadness, flushed with shame.

IX.

Have lived to see the fair white church,
The church, the bells, the tower,
Pass from our sight as lovely clouds
At sunset's flaming hour.

X.

We saw them smoke, and burn, and blaze,
We saw and could not aid ;
Up-blazed the comely house of God,
Down fell the sweet bells dead.

XI.

Up-blazed the sacred house of God,
Its pews and pulpit fair,
Its cherished Bibles, finger-worn,
Its hymnal rich and rare.

XII.

Coiled round the spire the serpent flames,
 Still climbing higher, higher,
Till at the last it glowing stood
 A quivering mass of fire.

XIII.

A glorious sight, and yet withal
 Unutterably sad,
So sad that none but demon soul
 Could feel that moment glad.

XIV.

A glorious sight, but brief as bright,
 For but a little while,
And down the flaming glory fell
 Into the flaming aisle.

XV.

And men did groan, and women wept,
 And children in affright
Clung to their mothers' throbbing breasts,
 And shrieked to see the sight.

XVI.

And well I wot might women wail,
 And strong men bow the head,
To see our city's crowning pride
 In firey ruins laid.

XVII.

And many a day will pass away
 Before that awful hour
That saw Saint Nicholas' Tower go down
 Will lose its saddening power.

XVIII.

And mournful sires to wondering sons
 Shall tell the story dire
Of that sad night, when church and tower
 Were swallowed in the fire.

XIX.

The dear old tower, the sweet old bells,
 The church so fair to see,
O, but we loved them with a love
 We cannot tell to thee.





